

22.12.12

**8 Deputy L.J. Farnham of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding Northern Irish hospitals (OQ.129/2022)**

Following *A Review of the Our Hospital Project* stating that a visit to Northern Ireland was “exceptionally valuable”, is the Minister aware that the Northern Ireland Healthcare Service is in crisis following years of underfunding and policy disfunction, including the suspension of unplanned surgery in some hospitals and, is it his assessment that Northern Ireland should continue to be used as an exemplar for Jersey’s future hospital and healthcare facilities?

**Deputy T. Binet (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

The objective of the visit to Northern Ireland was to view various modern hospital facilities constructed over the past 10 years. It was also to gather information about the relative merits and challenges of delivering different types of healthcare facilities and further insight into options for modern methods of construction. The delivery of the facilities visited have been recently overseen by the principal expert adviser to the Our Hospital review who was able to advise on the benefits and challenges. Neither the visit nor the review places any emphasis on the system of care in Northern Ireland. This was about facilities and learning what we can to deliver an appropriate project for Jersey.

**4.8.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

I thank the Minister for a very well-read technical answer provided by an officer. However, can I refer the Minister to his previous answer where he agreed with me that the delivery of healthcare in the region is intrinsically linked and associated to the design and delivery of a hospital. I am trying to match it up with his answer so they would just bear to see the fabrics of buildings which is not in accordance with the objectives in his review. In a recent review ... I am coming to the question very quickly ...

**The Bailiff:**

Well, no, if you could come to it pretty well straight away, Deputy, because it has been a while ...

**Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

Enniskillen Hospital was recently ranked 120 out of 121 hospitals in the U.K. Can I ask the Minister why did he choose Northern Ireland over some of the best performing hospitals and healthcare systems in the U.K. for this review?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Well firstly I am very happy to give the Deputy an unscripted answer, I do not have any problem with that at all. In terms of linking the 2, as I said, I agree entirely that a new hospital has to marry up with the healthcare services provided. I can state the position again. We went to Northern Ireland to look specifically at buildings, and I do not really see that that particularly relates to the healthcare services running within them because the quality of the buildings were excellent. We could have gone elsewhere but it seemed to make sense to go where the expert adviser had been responsible for delivering projects over a 10-year period.

**Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

Will I be allowed a final supplementary?

**The Bailiff:**

It is not normal. Normally if there are no other questions intervening between the ... you have had one supplementary. The question has a final supplementary but only if there are other questions intervening. Do you have a question intervening?

**Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Yes, I do.

**The Bailiff:**

Well in which case just under the wire. 74

**4.8.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Not intentionally coming to Deputy Farnham's rescue here but if it has that effect. The previous hospital project members I understand undertook a visit to hospitals, I believe, in parts of England and in France as well. Has he taken account of the work that was done in those previous iterations about different forms of hospital projects as delivered in those jurisdictions and included the evidence that was gathered from those visits to provide a more holistic approach in this report?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Yes, I think it is fairly safe to say we have got a very skilled team that have been working on various iterations of the hospital for a long period of time and they have access to all of that information and draw on all of that when they do any work, to be honest with you, not just the review. So, all of that will be carried forward in any event.

**4.8.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Would the Minister like to give his assessment of the differences and the specifics that were uncovered in the most recent exercise in Northern Ireland as compared to those previously done?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

No, that is not something that I could do because it is not something I have done. I have not personally overseen a comparison of those 2 elements, no.

**4.8.4 Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

I have here a dossier of approximately 100 pages of media clippings and other reports dating from December 2022 back as far as 2016 about the crisis in the healthcare service in Northern Ireland, and I will leave this in the Members' room should Members feel a desire to look at it at some time during the sitting. Will the Minister agree to look into the shortcomings of the Northern Irish health service and correlate that to any findings in his trip and the review has come up with to ensure that he is not taken off the right course by just looking at the fabric of a building and not how it can deliver services?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I am still struggling to see the connection. We were not in Northern Ireland to look at the delivery of their actual health services. I am certainly happy to look at any evidence that the Deputy feels is relevant but, as I say for my part, I really cannot make the connection as strongly as Deputy Farnham can.