

3.12 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the impact of the closure of Fort Regent for 3 years (OQ.91/2025):

Will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, was given to the potential detrimental impact on the physical, mental and social well-being of Islanders, that the closure of Fort Regent for 3 years will have, and explain why a phased approach that would not require closure, as suggested in 2014, is no longer feasible?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. To support the physical, mental and social well-being of Islanders, we are investing £8.4 million in a new purpose-built sports facility at Oakfield and it is on track to be finished on time. I am also strongly of the view that mental well-being is not only impacted by one's current surroundings, but also through having hope and optimism for the future. Our proposals for the Fort Regent offer that hope, whereas the current condition of the Fort is hardly conducive to good mental well-being. Successive Governments, including the Government and the Regeneration Steering Group, of which Deputy Warr was a Member, took decisions to close and then renovate Fort Regent. Having reviewed those plans carefully, we are continuing with that approach through to delivery. As I have said previously, having a clear site will enable the regeneration of Fort Regent to be safer, quicker and more cost effective, enabling the reopening of a 21st century facility by the end of 2028. A phased approach would add significant complexity and cost to the work, which would almost certainly mean that large parts of the Fort would be closed to the public for longer.

3.12.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

It was reported today that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service saw 934 new referrals in 2024. We have a mental health crisis among our young people; we have an obesity crisis. To paraphrase, we appear to know the price of everything, but the cost of nothing. Why has there been ...

The Bailiff:

Could we have a question, please?

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Thank you, Sir. I was just starting that. Why has there been no real engagement with the community prior to the announcement of the decision to close the Fort? Why is engagement only taking place after a decision has been made? Does this not undermine trust in Government?

The Bailiff:

Whichever of those questions you can ...

The Connétable of St. John:

I would just like to correct the Deputy in as much as that we have been consulting with users of Fort Regent for many years. We have officers dedicated to that task and we are engaging with those user groups to find better alternatives. If the Deputy heard the radio last week, he would have heard a great example of the ballet who were a tenant at the Fort and they are now delighted to be tenants of a better facility.

3.12.2 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Very briefly, noting that this question was originally directed towards the Minister for Treasury and Resources, will the Minister kindly confirm that in matters relating to development at Fort Regent, that the proper course for Scrutiny to follow is to ask questions of him as Minister rather than the Minister for Treasury and Resources?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, that is not within the 4 walls of the question, which was related to detrimental impact on the physical, mental and social well-being of Islanders. Final supplementary, Deputy Warr.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sorry, Sir, I am not sure I get one.

The Bailiff:

So, you are quite right. Thank you, Deputy. **[Laughter]** That was an altogether positive intervention. Thank you very much indeed.