

STATES OF JERSEY



POMME D'OR FARM: REFURBISHMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 1st December 2010
by Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister for Housing to take all possible steps to commence work on the proposed refurbishment of the Pomme d'Or Estate, St. Helier as soon as practicable through the reprioritisation of existing funds voted to the Housing Department and/or the allocation of capital receipts from property sales, and in the event that funds are not available to undertake this work before the end of 2011 to request the Chief Minister to make provision for the necessary funding to complete this work to be included in the draft Annual Business Plan 2012 for approval by the States.

DEPUTY A.K.F. GREEN OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

The purpose of this proposition is to enable the long overdue refurbishment of Pomme d'Or Farm which has been promised for 10 years.

Why should this estate be singled out for redevelopment?

Sited as it is, adjacent to the Island's sewerage works and the old incinerator, the residents of this estate live constantly in an unacceptable environment. They live daily with obnoxious smells, smells emanating from a very old sewerage system which in dire need of redevelopment. Smells which affect their quality of life. Smells which currently they cannot escape, even in their homes.

In July 2009 I met (along with the other District Deputies) the residents of Pomme d'Or Farm, the (then Assistant) Minister for Housing and Officers of the Housing Department. At this meeting the residents explained and described the problems they were experiencing with –

- leaking windows which not only allow water to penetrate, but also allow obnoxious, foul smells from the nearby sewerage works;
- significant damp problems;
- mould;
- inadequate, but expensive, heating systems.

It was accepted by all concerned that these problems are genuine, that Pomme d'Or Farm residents were particularly disadvantaged due to the close proximity of the 50 year-old sewerage works and the frequently unacceptable external environment, as well as the sub-standard internal accommodation, which is both unhealthy and unacceptable.

It was also accepted that promises to take action had been made for many years but never fulfilled. The Minister for Housing categorically stated that this situation was unacceptable and that he would “bring forward” the planned refurbishment. I remember particularly that the residents were promised that they would only have to endure one more winter (2008/9) in these conditions. That winter has passed and we are now in the winter 2010/11, but as yet no action!

During the last summer, rumours indicated that there was no funding available, that funding was dependant on house sales. Contact was made with the Minister and the Department, and residents and Deputies alike were again assured: “don't worry, it's all in hand”.

Survey work has been carried out: this indicated that there is a major problem with the drains, and work was scheduled to commence to rectify this on 22nd November 2010. The survey also indicated that the condition of the accommodation was far worse than anticipated, and instead of the estimated £3.5 million, the scheme will now cost in the region of £7 million.

As there was no information forthcoming from the Department, and as we were entering another winter, a meeting was arranged (11th November 2010) with the Minister and officers to discuss the programme and lack of progress. At the meeting, we were advised that there was no funding available at present, and that residents would have to wait for the sale of homes, which currently were not selling due to the economic situation. Meanwhile, the States and the Housing Department continue to accommodate people in unacceptable, damp, poorly-heated, mouldy and unhealthy conditions. This is totally unacceptable and a disgrace.

The proposal seeks to bring this planned and agreed refurbishment to fruition: it is time for action. The States as a landlord are failing the residents of Pomme D'or Farm, who already live in a challenging environment due to the smells emanating from the nearby sewerage works.

Financial and manpower implications

A maximum of £7 million is required, but there are no manpower implications arising from this proposition.

Letter from one of the residents of Pomme d'Or Farm

“Friday 12th Nov '10

Dear All,

Thank you very much for the arranged meeting last night (Thur 11th Nov) at First Tower School. Although there were some very positive outcomes from the discussions along the way, I feel bitterly disappointed about the decisions for Pomme D'or farm. Nothing more so, than the blatant renegade of publicly promised funds to start the refurbishment. These were confidently confirmed by Sean Power at a public meeting originally held in July '09 and although we are aware the costs have significantly risen in the feasibility study - surely the initial (substantial funds) are still available? And if not, why not - it was already allocated, so where has it gone?

I feel constantly not only are we (as residents and token members of the Residents Focus Group) kept in the dark as to decisions along the way but also fed a variety of differing information which holds no confidence that this refurbishment will 'EVER' take place, in any form and only adds to the frustrations.

I am upset and angry this morning because I have really tried hard for the residents and my family to get this 'promised' refurb up and running and quite honestly I feel like a very small pawn in a large game of chess. Unfortunately, this 'game' is having a massive impact on my and lots of other peoples' lives.

I apologise for once again looking to you the deputies for support to fight our corner for us but please, you must by now get the picture that we, as I have always said, appear to live on the estate better known as: 'The Twilight Zone', (in other words we don't exist and no one cares!).

Yours sincerely,”