

STATES OF JERSEY



OUR HOSPITAL PROJECT: REPORTING (P.109/2022) – AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 25th November 2022
by the Connétable of St. Helier
Earliest date for debate: 13th December 2022

STATES GREFFE

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Before the words “with the report to specifically to include”, insert the words “but without the costs involved in the previously agreed remodelling of Westmount Road, St Aubin’s Road, Peirson Road, Victoria Park and the Inn on the Park car park, and the associated land purchases, and the demolition of the Jersey Bowling Club, and its reprovisioning,”

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

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

in order to achieve the best possible clinical and financial outcomes from the delivery of a new Hospital, to request the Council of Ministers to present a report to the States, no later than 20th March 2023, in which a comparison is made between the multi-site option indicated in the report ‘A Review of the Our Hospital Project’ (R.154/2022) and the Overdale project, as previously approved with the adoption of the following propositions –

- Our Hospital Site Selection – Overdale (P.123/2020);
- Our Hospital – Acquisition of land for the new hospital at Overdale (P.129/2020);
- Our Hospital – Preferred Access Route (P.167/2020); and
- Our Hospital – Budget, Financing and Land Assembly (P.80/2021);

but without the costs involved in the previously agreed remodelling of Westmount Road, St Aubin’s Road, Peirson Road, Victoria Park and the Inn on the Park car park, and the associated land purchases, and the demolition of the Jersey Bowling Club, and its reprovisioning, with the report specifically to include –

- (a) a direct like-for-like financial analysis of the multi-site option and the approved Overdale project to include both capital and running costs;
- (b) a direct like-for-like clinical and medical analysis of the multi-site option and the approved Overdale project; and
- (c) additional options for funding the approved Overdale project;

and that no decision should be sought of the States Assembly that would deviate from the decisions previously taken on the Hospital project until the report has been presented.

REPORT

Summary

This amendment seeks to include in the cost comparisons of the approved Our Hospital Project at Overdale and the alternative multi-site option that resulted from the Minister for Infrastructure's 100-day review, consideration of the savings to be made in the approved proposal for Overdale that would arise from abandoning the extensive remodelling of the access route from the south.

Background

One of the more unexpected – and welcome – outcomes of the General Election in June this year was the announcement by the new Government that it would not be proceeding with the Our Hospital Project.

Having spent a considerable amount of time over the past several years trying to protect St Helier's residents, environment and heritage from having the new hospital imposed upon us, first, on our precious People's Park, and then at Overdale, because the latter site apparently required Westmount Road to be remodelled into a 'super highway', with considerable collateral damage to the Parish, I was immensely relieved to hear that the new Council of Ministers considered the approved scheme to be unviable. The outcome of the 100 day review was, however, a disappointment, as it neither provided the assurance that the 'super highway' would not go ahead under a new scheme, nor did it provide a clear route map towards the new hospital that the Island so desperately needs.

I have consistently supported the idea of a single-site hospital, and indeed voted in favour of the funding of the Overdale project even though I had on three occasions lost the argument about how it should be accessed, and as the plans for the hospital progressed I could see why many Islanders were in favour of it. The Overdale site still could provide a site that would be better for patients, staff and visitors than a multi-site option and I was particularly drawn to the concept of a hospital campus, with the obvious benefits involved in co-locating the majority of people involved in primary health care in Jersey.

The review of access routes to the Overdale site that was carried out by traffic engineers and their consultants in response to the Parish of St Helier's objections to the 'super highway' found that there was very little difference between the preferred access solution and the 'do nothing' option in terms of how they would operate and how they would affect traffic movements in and around St Helier. However, the States rejected my suggestion that alternative, less damaging – and less expensive – access solutions could be even trialled, such as a one-way system on Westmount Road. The preferred access solution was essential, we were told, to allow 'active travel' to the new hospital, even though there was to be no active travel route down Westmount Road, only up; furthermore, there was no network of walking and cycling routes into which such an 'active travel' route to and from the new hospital could be integrated.

Conclusion

I suspect that many of the supporters of the Our Hospital Project at Overdale wish they could turn the clock back and had proposed the new hospital without the necessity of

the 'super highway'. There would have been little need for contentious and distressing house purchases along the proposed route, no necessity of replacing the Jersey Bowling Club, no opposition from individuals and groups justly concerned about the loss of car parking, trees, playgrounds, green space and heritage assets, and no need to serve compulsory purchase notices on the Parish of St Helier. No doubt an ambitious 'green travel plan' would have been required to satisfy the Planning and Infrastructure Departments that the new hospital accessed by the existing road network would not lead to gridlock; but given our commitments to reduce our reliance on the private car and the opportunities to improve public transport, with a dedicated shuttle bus service between Patriotic Street car park and the new hospital, for example, I am sure a way could have been found to get patients, staff and visitors to the new hospital without undue difficulty.

I am concerned that the abandoning of the Our Hospital Project at Overdale will send us back to the drawing board once again, with very little to show for the million pound spend on the project to date. I share concerns already raised in the States Assembly and by members of the public that this will lead to further delay in securing a new hospital for the Island. I am also concerned, of course, by the prospect of any re-opening of the search for sites which will require, no doubt, another battle to save People's Park from development.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no additional implications arising from this amendment.