

3.1 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding consultation in respect of proposed changes to the location of sewage treatment equipment within the Department's complex at Bellozanne: [1(269)]

Will the Minister advise how much consultation, if any, has occurred with the residents most affected by the proposed changes to the location of sewage treatment equipment within his department's complex at Bellozanne?

Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The planning application for the new sewage treatment works at Bellozanne was submitted on 13th March this year and first advertised on 21st March. As the Deputy will already know, this opened the formal consultation period for the project, as with any other planning application. However, to provide local residents and Islanders in general with an opportunity to view the proposals and ask questions of the department ahead of the formal application submission and the formal consultation period, the project team organised a drop-in event at Bellozanne on 2nd February of this year. This event consisted of display boards providing information about the project and drawings showing a proposed final layout of the new works. The event was well attended and a number of officers were on hand to answer questions from the public. As well as the event being advertised on media outlets on a number of days preceding 2nd February, over some 200 residential and business properties, local to the Bellozanne area, were specifically invited by letter and an invitation was also issued to the members of the First Tower Residents Association. However, and I must apologise here, it transpires that approximately a dozen properties on the south side of West Hill were inadvertently missed off due to, we believe, postcode differences. I and my officers have since met with a number of these residents to discuss the concerns they may have and my officers are indeed on hand at any time to meet with residents, or indeed Islanders or politicians, to answer any questions they may have on this planning application.

3.1.1 Deputy A.D. Lewis:

The Minister will be aware that this has been the subject of consultation over many years and I would like him to cast his mind back to 2006 when P.34 was debated in the Assembly about the smell. It was a petition that was presented to the States and during that petition Senator Routier, for example, and Senator Gorst both voted in favour of doing something about the smell. At that time, the Minister for Transport and Technical Services said a solution is available, but it is down to funding. There was then another application for funding on the Annual Business Plan in 2009. It was amendment 9, which again was voted through by the States. So, please, could the Minister answer as to why an adequate solution to mitigate the smell from the plant does not appear to form part of his redevelopment plan? There was a clear expectation from residents, and indeed this Assembly, that some sort of capping and processing of noxious gases would be developed, but it does not appear to be in his plan. Could the Minister explain why?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I have got a second question later on this morning from the Constable of St. Helier asking about those details. We have put mitigation plans in place to deal with the odour. Over the weekend I have discussed with officers about one of the additional measures that we have put in had not been assessed in the final figures as part of our planning application, which will bring the mitigation down even further. So, we are remodelling that data to provide an update and I will be able to give an answer to the Deputy's question in more detail when I answer the Constable's question.

3.1.2 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Would the Minister confirm that moving the sewage treatment works further up Bellozanne Valley, while taking it away from areas like Pomme d'Or Farm and so on, it is moving it closer to 2 properties in particular: an important hotel for our tourism industry, Westhill and, of course, closer to Haute Vallée School where hundreds of Islanders receive their education? Would he confirm with me that it is absolutely important that we get this right, as it is a new development and we do not want to prejudice either our tourists or our young people?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Absolutely correct there; everything that the Constable has said is, indeed, correct. I will circulate to Members 2 detailed plans. One shows the current status of the odour zones and one shows the predicted future status of the odour zones. They have moved slightly to the east, ever so slightly, but what it is in fact at the moment there are 10 properties that come within what is known as the 5 band, and I will explain that later. It is a complicated scientific measurement. I will circulate the definitions to States Members later. There are currently 10 properties that are within the 5 band. After our proposals for the new works, there will only be 7 properties within that band. Overall, the mitigation has brought the odour levels down predicted by at least 18 per cent. As I mentioned, after the remodelling of the additional piece that we are doing, that will come down further. Yes, the Constable is correct, but please be assured that our aim always is and always has been to transform the area of Bellozanne and the waste water treatment plant to minimise any possible nuisance and attenuating the smells is a key part of our plan.

[9:45]

3.1.3 Deputy A.D. Lewis:

It does seem a little odd, though, that those that were most affected by the movement of the works as you have described were not consulted with earlier, not least, perhaps, the Education Department - you may have consulted and not said so - and also the major hotel very close to what is now going to be open pits. It is also amazing that not more attention has been given, or explained at least, to the mitigation of the smell, simply attention being given to the movement of where it is located. That is still affecting residents, perhaps less of them, but these residents are particularly vociferous. I am very sympathetic towards their plight, but not least the hotel and, in particular, the school. It seems that this plan has not necessarily been fully discussed with those most affected, rather discussed with those that are less affected.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Is it possible to seek clarification from the questioner? I hope he is not insinuating that the 12 properties that were missed off were missed off intentionally, because it certainly was not the case. Of the 10 properties that are currently in the 5 zone and the 7 that will remain in there, there are no new properties within that 5 zone and that particular establishment, that hospitality establishment which has been in that company's ownership for a significant period of time, is currently outside of that zone and it remains outside of that zone given the plans. It is unfortunate that they were one of the properties that did not have the mail drop, but the drop-in workshops and the work that has happened over the past 18 months they have been involved in.