

**4.2 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Sport and Culture regarding the securing of restricted areas of Fort regent: [1(488)]**

In light of further intrusions into the restricted areas of Fort Regent by children during the school holidays, will the Assistant Minister agree to ensure the areas are secured and install C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television) until such time as the derelict buildings on the site are demolished?

**Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade (Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Sport and Culture):**

I thank the Deputy for his question and his clear concerns over this matter. I was pleased only yesterday to host a presentation for States Members regarding a planning application that my colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure, submitted for the removal of several derelict buildings at Fort Regent which form the basis of the Deputy's question. The department, working closely with Jersey Property Holdings, constantly reviews security measures in respect of buildings such as the swimming pool and cable car station at Fort Regent and, where appropriate, adopt additional measures to safeguard public safety by securing the site perimeters. Over the summer there were 4 reported incidents with youths in and around cable car station or on the bridge link. As a result of that, options are currently under consideration to install high level cameras at the south end of the ramparts to cover the pool area, and the east outworks where the cable car station is situated. Clearly though the challenge in these areas is the cabling and getting cabling to areas required but the technical team is working on this at the current time. The option obviously is the use of Wi-Fi technology and this will hopefully overcome issues with the cabling. The submission of the planning application though should be taken as a sign that both departments intend dealing with these issues at source, thus overcoming the need to continue investing significantly with further security measures and building repairs for assets that I think the Deputy would agree are clearly beyond their useful life.

**4.2.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I thank the Assistant Minister for his answer, also for the briefing yesterday which was very informative. I will be sad to see the buildings go but I think we are all agreed that they are very, very dangerous buildings and need to be demolished. My question basically is a temporary security arrangement and temporary C.C.T.V. until such time as the building comes down. I did attend the meeting with the Assistant Minister yesterday and after the meeting I walked down to the cable cars which were very easy to access. Even though one of the main gates was locked there is a way around. I can be on the Glacis Field and in the cable car area within 5 minutes, which is really not on. So these derelict buildings are a magnet; not just at Fort Regent but over the Island derelict buildings are a magnet for young people and we really must make sure that they are secure. Does the Minister not agree?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

No, I totally agree with the Deputy. In terms of the access routes, they are locked and the buildings have been boarded up and secured with fencing. That is the responsibility of Jersey Property Holdings. Fort Regent staff carry out daily checks on the perimeters to check for youths and to check for breaches in the board and fencing. I think ... pleasingly - if it is the right word to use - there has been no access into the pool over the summer. That is where obviously there are deep concerns about asbestos in the building. But in terms of the cable car station, I do not think we can deny that it is not the most difficult area to access but it is monitored on a daily basis and we try to keep youths out as best we can. I think with the

additional C.C.T.V. it will give us extra information in regards to people accessing that and if we need to increase more physical security on the site we will have to consider that. Obviously when the contractors finally get on to site it will become their responsibility in regards to making sure the site is secure. We will do everything in our powers to ensure that children and young people do not access the site and put themselves at risk.

#### **4.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

The Minister may remember before he came into the States that the Scrutiny Panel at the time in 2010 called for the demolition of the swimming pool at Fort Regent and asked for money to be allocated. Does the Minister think that was a missed opportunity and that we should learn from that mistake of inaction?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I do not think there is anybody in the Assembly this morning that would not have liked to have seen these buildings removed at an earlier stage. They have been an issue for some time.

[10:00]

There was money made available earlier on to remove the buildings and I think there was an opportunity at that time to get on with the work. Clearly there have been issues around planning applications and what might have happened with the pool site. That maybe slowed up the movement towards getting these buildings removed. But I am pleased to say, and I think the Council of Ministers have clearly understood the need to get these buildings down as soon as possible, and have made the funding available. We will be looking obviously subject to the planning approval going through to start these demolitions early in the new year and I think we would all agree that the quicker we get these buildings down the better.

#### **4.2.3 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I thank the Assistant Minister for his replies. I would be the first to admit I am no spring chicken but security wise it was remarkably easy to gain access. I am more than happy to meet up with the Assistant Minister and walk him through and show exactly where the children are gaining access. Does the Assistant Minister not agree?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I am quite happy to take that offer up. I would prefer to do that also with the operations manager at Fort Regent so that maybe he can have an understanding as well of potentially the ease of accessing the site. Like I say, both I, he, and I think the department, have sleepless nights about the Fort and those buildings and the risk it poses to the public. But, like I say, everybody is working, I think, at breakneck speed now to try to get this through. But it is subject to planning approval. Once that is done and we can get out to tender then I am hoping we can get onsite early in the new year and rid the States of this problem once and for all.