

2018.03.19

2 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the agreement in respect of the swimming pool on the Waterfront; [OQ.47/2018]

Will the Minister advise whether the agreement with Serco in respect of the swimming pool on the Waterfront comes to an end in 2022; will he further advise whether discussions to negotiate a new deal have started and, if so, who is leading those negotiations and, if they have not started, will the Minister explain why not?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

With Deputy Martin's kind consent, the Assistant Minister with responsibility for sport will take the question.

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

I thank Deputy Martin both for the oral question and the written question. A 20-year agreement with Serco was signed by the Waterfront Enterprise Board in August 2001. It came into force when the pool opened in 2003, so this means the lease and Serco contract both expire in July 2023. Discussions regarding a new contract will begin as part of a review meeting scheduled for 2018. It was due this month but it was called off because of the snow. Our department, Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, will be leading on negotiations for the States of Jersey.

3.2.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I brought this to the attention of the Minister because I see a lease coming to an end and it made me go cold thinking about the fuel farm and how we were informed retrospectively. I thank the Assistant Minister for his reply but can he understand that with the change in maybe political things and who is leading this, can he assure this Assembly that we will not get another retrospective or we left it too late, nobody was dealing with it, and we have had to sign because this is our only option coming up in a few years' time?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I can absolutely assure the Deputy that it will be Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture that will be leading on this. We are currently carrying out a review of all sport facilities in the Island, which I think is vitally important, not just for the next few years but for the next 15 to 20 years. As part of that we will have to look at pool provision, I think, Island-wide and make some decisions fairly early about the future of AquaSplash and whether it remains in private or public use. But I can assure you that it will not be left to the last minute. As I say, negotiations will start this month based on a review the department have done over recent months.

3.2.2 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:

Can the Assistant Minister state the level of subsidies paid to Serco annually and whether it is his plan to pay subsidies into the future in the next agreement?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That will very much depend on what the agreements are in future and whether, I say, it stays in private or public use. But the subsidies are clearly set out within the answer we have supplied to Deputy Martin. They started off, I will go back to 2005 when it first opened, the States subsidy was £218,000 with a developer subsidy of £87,000. As of last year, the subsidy was £291,000, which was

agreed in the heads of terms, which were renegotiated in 2015, with a developer subsidy of £136,000. So if you add the 2 up in 2017 it comes to about £425,000 per year.

3.2.3 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Can the Minister inform me, I know he said this is part of a bigger piece of work looking at the facilities we need for swimming pools, but can he absolutely assure me there is nothing nowhere to say the States are obligated to this company from 2023 onwards? Nowhere.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Absolutely not. The contract expires in 2023 and I think it is an absolute duty of the department and the States to ensure they get best value for money for the site. I think we do need to assess whether it will form part of our public pool provision or whether it stays in private use. But that is a decision that I think we need to look very closely at. We have pools that are currently getting to the end of their working life but we do need to have, I think, a review of what we are going to need and what capacity we are going to need in the Island over the next 15 to 20 years and how AquaSplash fits into that provision.