

20.10.20

4 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier of the Assistant Chief Minister regarding the prospect that compensatory payments would be made to residents in the immediate vicinity of a hospital built at Overdale (OQ.273/2020):

Will the Minister advise whether, if the new hospital is built at Overdale, the Government will consider making compensatory payments to residents in the immediate vicinity of the development due to any disruption caused?

Senator L.J. Farnham (Assistant Chief Minister):

As with all government construction and infrastructure projects, it is incumbent on us to minimise any disruption to residents through the design and planning process, so careful management and of course regular communication will play a big part of that. Planning permission conditions can be imposed regarding hours of working, the demolition process, site access and other operational matters. Also an environmental impact assessment will identify the screening measures needed. It is not the Government policy to provide compensation for disruption caused by construction and infrastructure projects since all activities will have to comply with statutory requirements in relation to the building and development process.

4.4.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Will the Minister accede to the request of the residents to meet them in person at the Town Hall to discuss their concerns as soon as possible?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, of course, I would be very pleased to meet with residents or anybody affected, impacted or even interested in the hospital development. But I think I would wait until the States Assembly has made a decision because at the moment the Overdale site is only a proposal and requires States Assembly approval. So as soon as that debate has been had, and depending on the outcome, I would be pleased to meet with any Islander interested to learn more.

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

Does the Assistant Minister agree with me that of course it is very important that we find out exactly how neighbouring properties could be impacted by the development of the hospital at Overdale, if that is where it is placed, and at the same time that we are relieved? Does he share my relief that both the countryside and woodland below Overdale is going to be protected and that, in particular, the King George V Cottage Homes will not need to be affected by the development?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I do completely agree with the statements made by the Constable. Not only pleased but very relieved for having minimal impact on people's homes and the woodland area, notwithstanding there are 3 homes that the States will have to purchase. I hope that can be agreed amicably, subject of course to the States decision to approve the site. I think that played a big part in the selection of the Overdale project, was the reduced impact on the area that the new proposals had.

4.4.3 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

In the Minister's answer to my Written Question 380 that was tabled for this sitting, the Minister has indicated that around 75 residents are in close proximity to the site but the impact of the

construction is difficult to define until more details of the process are available. Would the Minister commit to engage with the 75 residents that will be affected from the construction and reconsider several different possible types of arrangements, first of all to reduce the disruption, and maybe also to think about compensation that was mentioned by Deputy Ahier?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I just repeat, that I am, as with all members of the political oversight group, I am sure, prepared to meet and engage with neighbours and all Islanders, either located near to or just interested in the project. I can give that commitment absolutely but I think it would be wise to wait until the States has made a final decision before we fully engage. In the meantime, the design and delivery partners have been in touch with the majority of neighbours, as I understand it, and provided some information and a contact phone number, a direct contact person and email address so neighbours, in the meantime, can start to gather information as the project progresses. Of course, I, and members of the group, are also available to any States Member or any neighbour or Islander who wants to ask us questions between now and the debate. In relation to the second part of the question, I am afraid it is not in my gift to agree to give compensation. There is no precedent of that, that is ultimately a discussion for the States to have if it deems necessary to do so in the future, but I would perhaps caution against that without a great deal of thought on the implications that would provide. Of course, it is the intention of the project to deliver the project with minimal impact on the residents and ultimately the end product will significantly enhance the area of Overdale and the neighbouring area and hopefully the neighbouring properties.

4.4.4 Deputy J.H. Perchard:

It was confirmed in a previous sitting that there exists a log of conversations with residents in the vicinity of each of the then shortlisted sites, detailing their willingness to move from their homes if needed. Have the residents of the 3 homes mentioned, those homes being the ones that will need to be subject to compulsory purchase, expressed any desire not to move?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I am happy to have that conversation offline with Members, I am not sure it is in the interests of the home owners, in their private interests, to discuss their views on the matter publicly at this stage but I understand that positive communication has and is taking place. Of course, that has to remain slightly stalled until the States make a decision but, again, I can promise full engagement with all residents and neighbours of the area at the appropriate time.

4.4.5 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier:

I was pleased to hear the Assistant Minister say there will be standards when building happens, wherever the hospital happens, but can he commit to improving the ability for residents wherever the hospital is built to contact and complain about noise, dust, *et cetera*, particularly during out-of-hours times and at weekends because the system is not working well?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I can absolutely commit to that. The design and delivery partners will commit to that and also they are working on a social engagement programme which will overlap with this process to provide additional opportunity for Islanders to become involved in the project. Also, I would remind Members that people who live within 50 metres of a development site have a statutory right of appeal under planning legislation, if necessary, so they do have recourse to the Statutory Nuisance Law if things do get out of hand but of course we are going to be working to avoid that at all costs.

4.4.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

There is no doubt that they have recourse to the law but the problem is that people cannot complain unless they have a direct contact. The system itself is not conducive to making those complaints and getting action quickly if this happens. There are many cases of this around the Island, so can the Assistant Chief Minister commit to a particular helpline, a particular contact for those residents should those issues arise?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Thank you to the Deputy for the question. At the risk of repeating myself, I think it is probably the third or fourth time I have said it this morning, yes, I can absolutely commit to that.

[10:15]

To repeat myself once again, contact has gone out to the majority of neighbours with the name of the person to contact, their phone number and the email address, so that is currently in place as we stand.

4.4.7 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Will consideration be given to purchasing those properties within the site perimeter which owners are now willing to sell?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I think the short answer to that is, yes, and that perimeter is outlined in the proposition and, I believe, the Compulsory Purchase Order proposition, which is coming to the States.