

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 18th MARCH 2003, BY SENATOR E.P. VIBERT**

Question

- (a) On 11th April 2000, the States adopted a proposition of the former Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee, P.181/1999 – Fort Regent: redevelopment, which stated that the proposed scheme was “intended to upgrade and re-develop the Fort in a new and exciting way, by creating a workable, attractive sporting and historic facility which is appropriate to its important prominent location in the heart of St. Helier. The scale of the building and the all-encompassing sport and recreation facilities to be provided under one roof, develops the idea originally mentioned in the 1997 Roger Quinton Associates (RQA) report”.
- (i) Would the President explain to members why the Committee has changed its thinking regarding the use of Fort Regent since the Assembly debated and approved P.181/1999?
- (ii) Would the President inform members how much was spent by the Committee on preparing the report by Roger Quinton Associates (RQA)?
- (b) Would the President also inform members how much has been spent at Fort Regent by the Committee for repairs and maintenance in the last three years excluding any costs relating to the pool facility, and provide members with the details of what is currently necessary to be spent on any urgent repairs and maintenance and the upgrading, where necessary, of any of the current facilities?
- (c) Would the President confirm that the Committee is now planning to carry out two feasibility studies on the future use of Fort Regent, and describe what the Committee has in mind?
- (d) Will the President undertake to bring to the Assembly full details of the brief that will be provided to the company engaged to carry out the first feasibility study, together with the costs, so that the Assembly can consider the matter before any contracts are signed in order to avoid any potential unnecessary expenditure?

Answer

- (a) (i) Whilst the States adopted P.181/99, the associated funding was not allocated. Subsequently, each year, the then Sport Leisure and Recreation Committee applied for resources through the capital allocation process to undertake the redevelopment of Fort Regent. However, each year, the project was not considered to be of a sufficient priority when compared to other projects, and, consequently, funding was not allocated. During 2002, the Committee Presidents undertook a prioritisation exercise for applications for funds for the 2004 capital programme. The submissions included an application for the redevelopment of Fort Regent, seeking funding of £2 million per annum over a ten year period. Again this application was unsuccessful, falling short of other States’ priorities. It was clear to the then Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee that under the current fiscal climate the Roger Quinton Associate’s proposals for the redevelopment of Fort Regent was not of sufficient priority to attract funding from the Capital Budget for the foreseeable future.

With no significant investment, standards will inevitably decline at Fort Regent, particularly when compared with nearby modern facilities. These include the pool and fitness centre on the waterfront, Haute Vallee pool and sports hall and the Langford pool and sports hall. The merger of the former Education, and Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committees to form the Education, Sport and Culture Committee presents the opportunity to make better community use of school sites, and I have previously expressed a commitment to ensuring that full advantage is taken of this opportunity.

In 2002, all States Committees were asked to undertake a fundamental review of their business and

budgets. The then Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee completed an in depth review of its services and facilities to determine how it could best meet the needs for sport and recreation in the Island in the future.

These are the reasons that have prompted the Committee to review its range of provision. The review will determine whether the facilities at Fort Regent can continue to serve the Island while maintaining current high level standards of customer service, without further significant States investment, or whether more appropriate arrangements may be provided at little or no additional cost to the States.

- (ii) The preparation of the Roger Quinton Associate's report cost the former Sports, Leisure and Recreation Committee £49,625
- (b) Over the past 3 years, £960,500 has been spent on repairs and maintenance at Fort Regent. In addition £2.4 million has been spent on amenity improvements and minor capital works. Other than provision contained in the Roger Quinton Associate's report for the proposed redevelopment, there are maintenance requirements estimated at £1.8 million that cannot be met from the Fort's existing annual maintenance budget. These include replacement of glazing, access road repairs, the upgrading of mechanical and electrical equipment and the demolition of the former aquarium area. All of these items have potential implications for Health and Safety.
- (c) The Committee is intending to carry out a single feasibility study in two stages. The study will, in the first instance, examine the market potential for a mixed development within the Fort Regent site, set out a number of development scenarios and prepare an overall business case assessment of the Fort's potential. This will ascertain whether a mixed use development can be self funding and not reliant on any capital or revenue contributions from the States. The study will also examine the possible displacement of existing Fort user groups and set out options either for their relocation or retention on site. The study will of course, address the implications of no changes being made to existing provisions and arrangements.

The second stage intended to examine the potential development of sport and leisure activities to the Le Rocquier school site will only proceed if it is clear that the needs of the community living and working in St Helier may adequately be met.

The study is due to commence in June 2003, and will take approximately 16 weeks.

- (d) The Education, Sport and Culture Committee is charged by the States to fulfil its mandate on behalf of the States and this is what it is doing by preparing the Terms of Reference of the study, prior to the recruitment and selection process of the consultants. For States Members' information I attach the Study Brief and Request for Expressions of Interest. However, I do not wish to make known the amount being requested from the Finance and Economics Committee for a planning vote until such time as the tendering process has been completed so as not to undermine that process.