

## **2.5 Connétable G.F. Butcher of St. John of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the proposed development and by-pass scheme for St. John:**

Would the Minister advise the Assembly when he or his department's officers were first made aware of the proposed development and by-pass scheme in St. John? How many meetings were held to discuss the proposal? On what dates they were held, and who was present?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):**

I am advised that the proposal, or something similar to it, was raised informally by its designer with the Planning Department many years ago. I do not have precise details of any discussions that took place at that time. The matter first came to my attention on 19th February 2007 when I held a meeting at their request with a representative of a land owner in the area and the scheme's designer. I was accompanied by a principal planning officer. My general view on such a significant proposal in a rural Parish is that the first step should be to gain the support of the Constable. Therefore, I advised the promoters that I would not offer an opinion and suggested they speak directly to the Constable. This is the only meeting held to discuss the recent proposal of which I am aware. Furthermore, I have decided that I would not determine any planning application should one emerge. The son of one of the key landowners was a close friend. Sadly, he has recently died but I do still occasionally have contact with his mother. Therefore, the matter will be referred to the Planning Applications Panel.

### **2.5.1 The Connétable of St. John:**

Would the Minister also confirm that he is not currently recommending rezoning any of the fields connected with this plan?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

I am not entirely sure, because I am uncertain whether some of the fields connected with this plan may be involved in the Constable's recommendations in relation to the provision of sheltered housing. I do not think they are, so if they are I will send a revised answer out. But I think you can take it that we are not.

### **2.5.2 Deputy F.J. Hill, B.E.M., of St. Martin:**

I may have misheard what the Minister said, but I understood he said he consulted landowners in the area, or was it all the landowners concerned? Could he inform the House whether the landowners within that area were also consulted?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

I did not say that I had consulted the landowners. What I said was, and I will repeat it, the matter first came to my attention on 19th February 2007 when I held a meeting at their request with a representative of the landowner in the area and the scheme's designer. I was accompanied by a principal planning officer. I did not offer an opinion and I directed them to the Constable.

### **2.5.3 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John:**

If indeed necessary would the Minister be prepared to attend a public meeting in St. John, should one be held?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

No, Sir, I think it would be inappropriate for me to do so. I think, bearing in mind my relationship with one of the families involved, I think it would be more appropriate that the Assistant Minister, Deputy Pryke, attended such a meeting.

### **2.5.4 The Deputy of St. John:**

Would the Minister be prepared to explain who exactly he has met and discussed this with so far?

**Senator F.E. Cohen:**

I think I have already said that the only meeting I have held was one meeting on 19th February 2007. I have had a brief discussion with the Deputy himself, of which he is aware. That was a private discussion. Again, I offered no opinion.

**2.5.5 The Connétable of St. John:**

Would the Minister confirm that the other person at the meeting was a Mr. Spencer-Nairn?

**Senator F.E. Cohen:**

I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment on exactly who was at the meeting in a public forum. I am prepared to give the answer to the Constable in private.

**2.5.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Could the Minister outline under what conditions he does meet people who have development plans and wish to discuss the viability of those plans?

**Senator F.E. Cohen:**

I have got an open-door policy. I am prepared really to meet anybody, providing the meeting is in the presence of a planning officer. I meet occasionally applicants; I meet regularly objectors. In fact I held a number of meetings yesterday with objectors. I believe that it is very important that Islanders have direct access to the Minister and I spend a great deal of my time interacting as much as I possibly can with Islanders who have concerns, either for, or against developments.

**2.5.7 Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen:**

Could the Minister inform us whether or not he is suggesting that the Planning Department would seriously consider this form of development in the countryside?

**Senator F.E. Cohen:**

As I have explained, I have no opinion. I have directed those present at the meeting to the Constable. If the Constable was prepared to bring this forward as some sort of a proposal then, yes, of course, we would look at it. I am not prepared to comment until I hear the Constable's views.