

3.7 Senator B.E. Shenton of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the overall concept for the development of the Waterfront:

Following the approval of the Castle Quay development would the Minister advise the Assembly whether he has an overall concept for the Waterfront, and if so will this be made public, or will other developments continue to be considered on a piecemeal basis?

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

One of my key 2005 election manifesto commitments was to address the significant public dissatisfaction with the Waterfront. Shortly after my appointment as Planning Minister I launched a public consultation programme and a forum to identify what Islanders wanted on the Waterfront, and this resulted in a Supplementary Planning Guidance authored by Mr. Chris Shepley, C.B.E. The clear message was that the public regarded many of the present buildings as being of poor standard and they wanted something very significantly better. I therefore appointed Sir Michael Hopkins and his team as my Waterfront design advisers. Hopkins Architects were listed as one of the world's 5 leading architectural practices in 2006. The whole concept of this appointment was to develop a strong cohesive design framework for the Waterfront and to stop piecemeal development. As I said in the answer to a previous question, the Hopkins master plan is in the final stages of completion. To reiterate, the plan rests on lowering of the highway that separates the town from the Waterfront. The area comprising Les Jardins, Esplanade Square, and the present road is treated as one, and will be developed using synergistic architectural principles to ensure exceptionally well-designed buildings set in a grid layout to replicate the existing town. To reiterate, the whole of the Hopkins master plan will be taken to the States for debate later this year, and I again confirm that I will only bring forward the Hopkins master plan on the basis that it delivers a lowered road, paid for by the developers, in addition to a significant capital payment to the States.

3.7.1 Senator B.E. Shenton:

Is the Minister confident that he can correct previous planning mistakes on the Waterfront, and does he share the apparent view of one of his colleagues that a poorly-designed Waterfront hotel built to a budget is better than no hotel at all?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am entirely confident that the remaining buildings to be completed on the Waterfront will be of an entirely different quality to those that were built in the past. As I have already given a commitment to the House, the Hopkins team will be retained to ensure quality down to the door handles. We are now in a very different position to the decisions faced by some of my predecessors. The economic climate is more buoyant. We now have developers interested in producing very high quality buildings, and the market has moved forward. I am not sure that the opportunities that are available to me in terms of insisting on high quality buildings were available to my predecessors and that may account for some of the poor quality buildings we now see.

3.7.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept, like me, that the Castle Quay development appears to be a glorified wind tunnel with 2 buildings very close together at 7 storeys high? Will he accept that like Century Buildings, which appeared with pretty pictures of al fresco dining, that in future when al fresco dining facilities appear on architect's plans and design briefs, that they are accompanied by a wind sock to suggest the strength of the wind howling down these high buildings and between them?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Firstly, I would say that the proposals for Castle Quay, because they have been tested by the Hopkins team, are buildings of good quality and we will ensure that with the co-operation of the Société and Save Jersey's Heritage that the façades are appropriate and demonstrate local relevance. The buildings were tested in comprehensive wind-testing models and I am pleased to report to the House that one of the key elements of the Hopkins master plan is to test all future

buildings to ensure that we do not end up with wind tunnels requiring wind socks. But do remember that the key to the Hopkins master plan is a Waterfront predominantly of only 5 storeys.

3.7.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

A supplementary if I may? Will the Minister bring to the House those results he was talking about, wind testing on Castle Quay?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am not sure that it would be appropriate for me to distribute those. I will make inquiries. I will certainly make sure that they are available in private, but they may be the developer's copyright, I am not sure.

3.7.4 Senator J.L. Perchard:

We all look forward to the Hopkins master plan that the Senator has promised shortly for us to see. Could he confirm that the proposal for a youth facility on the Waterfront will be included in the master plan?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The Senator is a Director of W.E.B. (Waterfront Enterprise Board) as far as I am aware, and it is for W.E.B. to ensure that youth facilities are included in the comprehensive arrangements for the Waterfront. I have already insisted that an independent review is carried out of the Hopkins master plan proposals from the perspective of youth and families, and I hope to have that shortly, and it will certainly be distributed to Members.

3.7.5 Senator J.L. Perchard:

A supplementary, Sir? Yes, the Minister is absolutely right, I am a Director of the Waterfront Enterprise Board for the time being, and I have some influence there. But the Minister has already advised the Assembly that the master plan will include specifics like an art gallery. Will it include specifics like a youth facility?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

There are specific youth facility requirements in-built, but they are effectively directed by W.E.B.. In all of the discussions I have had it is W.E.B. that has played the main part in determining what uses are put to various parts of the master plan. I do not think there is a problem here. I have given an assurance that I am reviewing the master plan from the perspective of youth and families. I have no doubt that there will be appropriate youth facilities, but I think it is for W.E.B. to negotiate with the developers precisely where those youth facilities are placed and how they are funded as part of the package that W.E.B. is presently negotiating with developers.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Senator Shenton.

3.7.6 Senator B.E. Shenton:

Is it not a fact that the Minister for Planning has taken over responsibility for the Waterfront from W.E.B. and is now solely responsible for the Waterfront, as opposed to W.E.B., as it was in the past?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

That may be what I would like to have done, but that certainly is not the position that I am in. The position is very clearly that W.E.B. is in charge of directing how the Waterfront progresses. Very clearly, as I am the Planning Minister, I have set a certain criteria. The main criteria are my design aspirations, and it would be foolish for W.E.B. to operate outside of those specifications. So, as far as the deals and the buildings are concerned, those are dealt with by W.E.B. All I will deal with is

determining whether or not they are given a consent. But I have set parameters under which effectively W.E.B. have chosen, I believe sensibly to work, and presently I must say W.E.B. are working extremely well.