

2.3 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the future plans for Haut de la Garenne:

Will the Minister inform Members the future plans for Haut de la Garenne?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

Could I ask the Assistant Minister with the responsibility for property to deal with that question?

Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur)

I will just give a quick update as to where we are with Haut de la Garenne. It was given back to Property Holdings in July and since then we have had to do quite a lot of urgent health and safety works which have been undertaken to ensure the building is not hazardous now, for both visitors and those who are still working on the site. Also there are obviously additional security measures that are in place to deter access to those who want to get in but should not be going in. In terms of the future, at the moment ... well, the present situation is that the Council of Ministers, and myself and a few other individuals, met with the Haut de la Garenne trustees and the chief executive of the Youth Hostel Association last Thursday, hopefully, which was 4th September, to consider how to move everything forward. The conclusion that was arrived at, at that meeting, is that in view of the extreme sensitivity of the subject and the continuing uncertainty regarding legal proceedings, the Council of Ministers considers it is not appropriate for any decision to be taken at this stage. The Council of Ministers has directed that an officer working group is set up to consider the various options and to advise on cost benefits and any other implications that might arise. But at the moment it is a wait and see approach.

2.3.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I know what the Assistant Minister is saying, but could we have some form of timetable? I do understand it is very sensitive, and certainly that goes without question, but I think one is concerned about the nature of the property itself, it is quite possible that there will be vandalism, while I know a security company is there, but I think people in the area, and certain people in the Island, would like to know what the future is and at least are you working with the Minister, working to some timetable so the public can be fully informed?

Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

It is very difficult to put a timetable on it at the moment, Sir. Certainly, speaking personally, I agree entirely with the Deputy in terms of dealing with the fabric of the building. But obviously there are wider issues associated with it. Just to clarify, there is somebody on site, the building is not empty. Obviously, as you say, there is a security company as well. The idea effectively is one does have to make judgments according to how circumstances change or become clear, and I think in the meantime we do need to let the officer group as well get together and report back. The intention I think would be for them to report back to the Council of Ministers relatively swiftly.

2.3.2 Senator S. Syvret:

Could the Assistant Minister explain exactly what he means by a cost benefit analysis in this particular context? It does not seem to me to be at all an appropriate methodology for deciding the future of this site. Will he give the Assembly an undertaking that the primary consideration will be the views of the survivors?

Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I think we are veering into the grounds of legal matters, and I am not going to even go there, Sir. In terms of the remit of the working officer group, they have to start somewhere and one has to have a look at the costs of repairing the building, the potential benefit in light of the circumstances, but I think one would have to be naïve to assume that that would be the only circumstances that would be taken into account by the working group, Sir.

