

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY A.K.F. GREEN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th APRIL 2009**

Question

Could the Minister -

(a) advise the Assembly what, if any, design changes he, as the Minister for Planning and Environment, made to the original specification to the Energy from Waste plant which was discussed at a meeting on 6th November 2008?

(b) Provide a copy of the minutes of the meeting of 6th November 2008?

Answer

(a) As Minister for Planning and Environment my first formal involvement with the Energy from Waste Plant was in considering an application for outline planning permission – PP/2007/0050- submitted in January 2007. That application sought only to establish the principle of development of the Energy from Waste Plant.

During consideration of that application I was conscious that the scale of the building would have to be such that its impact could only be mitigated by an architectural design of exceptional competence complimented by similarly excellent landscaping proposals. I felt that the originally proposed ‘armadillo like’ steel building would not achieve the necessary high standards and therefore Hopkins Architects were appointed to advise on appropriate architecture.

Hopkins agreed that the existing scheme was unacceptable and suggested a completely revised design whereby the building mass was reduced by externally expressing the roof structure. Hopkins have used this device in other building designs, most notably at Glyndebourne where it helps to reduce the perceived bulk of their multi award winning fly-tower.

TTS retained Hopkins to prepare an outline planning application. I determined the outline application in October 2007, requiring that the details of the scheme be the subject of a further reserved matters application.

I must emphasize that I was not party to the decision by TTS to engage Hopkins as their architects for the preparation of the reserved matters application.

The reserved matters application was prepared by Hopkins and a consent was given. Conditions attached to the consent will ensure the quality of construction and the delivery of the detailed finishes are all of the necessary high standards.

It would appear that if the cost of the building rose it was between the outline application and the reserved matters application. During that period I was not materially involved in progressing the design and therefore cannot be held responsible for any cost increases.

This is a hugely important building as it will have a massive impact on the southern approach. Not only will it have an impact from the perspective of Islanders but it will also be seen by the approximately one million who enter the port. I have been clear throughout my tenure as Minister for Planning and Environment that Jersey deserves outstanding architecture and design. This must apply to all buildings whether public or private and only by adhering to my philosophy will the quality of the built environment of the Island improve to the standards which I consider reflect the unique nature and character of the Island.

I fully accept that the approved proposals are likely to be more costly than the cheapest alternative. However this is always the case with proposed buildings and it is my job as Minister to deliver buildings of architectural competence and to set a high standard.

Furthermore I made it very clear throughout the development of the proposals that Hopkins should endeavour to work within TTS's budget and indeed was complimented by the former TTS Minister for taking this approach.

- (b) I would like to clarify the situation regarding the meeting of 6 November 2008 referred to in the question. That meeting was, I understand, held between TTS and the Treasury and no-one from my Department was involved. I am only aware of the meeting through the disclosures that have been made in respect of the finance issues regarding the EfW project. Consequently I have no notes or minutes.