

3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the impact of the decision not to build on the Millennium Town Park site on the North of Town Masterplan:

Will the Minister inform Members what impact, if any, his decision not to build on the Millennium Town Park site has on the North of Town Masterplan and advise when he intends to bring forward an amended plan for debate?

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

The decision not to build on the town park site and deliver an unencumbered park over the whole of the site will have a significant impact on the Masterplan. I am presently engaged in discussions with the various States departments involved in the project together with the Parish to ascertain the best options to ensure the delivery of the key objectives of regeneration, parking and housing provision. We are working on a very promising possible solution involving a key site but this must remain confidential at this stage. I take this opportunity of advising Members that if we are to deliver the key objectives at anything like cost neutrality we will need to consider the introduction of a developer levy on the privately-owned sites in the area. I will bring forward the revised Masterplan in a few weeks, however, I can say there will be no delay to the commencement of the town park. T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) will shortly be making a planning application which will be fast-tracked.

3.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister prepared to give at this stage any details of the developer levy that he referred to?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am unable to give precise details. It is very much in the embryonic stage but, very clearly, if the public is providing regeneration benefits to the north of the town area it is appropriate, as has been the case in many other jurisdictions, to expect developers to provide something back into the central pot for the benefits that they will receive through an improved regeneration.

3.1.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

It is an interesting answer the Minister has given us because in my written question to him this morning in relation to my question: "What are the financial implications arising out of endorsing the development rights of different sites individually?" the answer is: "There are no financial implications to the States whatsoever" and he goes on to say that there may be ancillary benefits. Does the Minister stand by the written answers he has given me?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The oral answer I have given is an update based on a meeting that was held with the various States departments in the Parish yesterday and provides the very latest position. Thank you.

3.1.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister assure the House that the changes to the North of Town Masterplan, including changing the arrangement for making underground parking on the site, will cause no further delay in the development of at least the town park site as a park?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I can give that assurance.

3.1.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

That rather contradicts with item 6 in his written answer earlier which says that he may require a further environmental or health impact assessment and that the restructuring or rearrangement of the parking that he envisages, underground, on the car park site has not even been drawn up. We do not even know where we are going to dig. Is the Minister sure that there will be no further delay in delivering a town park?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes. As I have explained, the oral answer that I have provided is based on an update that emerged from a meeting that was held yesterday involving most of the interested parties, although not all the interested parties, and I stand by the oral answer.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

A final if I may? Penultimately, perhaps?

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

I saw Deputy Martin; I will come back to you.

3.1.5 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Deputy Southern has learned how to listen in Scrutiny. If you listen to the Minister he says: "It will not stop the start of the town park" it does not say anything about how long it would take. My question is around the parking. I notice, as I am around the area a lot, the old Ann Court site, which is out to private parking... I have never seen it more than at least a third full in the day and at weekends it is completely empty. Is the Minister working with an updated plan from Transport and Technical Services? Because I feel that maybe the message is getting through now that people can park a little bit further out and there may be not so much parking needed in this immediate area. That is what I think we should be aiming for. Does the Minister not agree?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

We are working very closely with T.T.S. and, yes, I do agree with the principles of the comments made by the Deputy.

3.1.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In that case I will ask the final question which is: when does the Minister expect to be cutting the tape on the Millennium Town Park? Can he give us a date because my diary is filling up?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

One thing I can assure the Deputy is that it will not be me cutting the tape.
[Laughter]