

3.2 Senator B.E. Shenton of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the total amount spent by WEB and the States in developing a scheme for East of Albert.

What was the total amount spent by W.E.B. (Waterfront Enterprise Board) and the States in developing the scheme for the East of Albert, including the relocation of the port, fuel farm and the development of residential units?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

This was originally started in early 2007 when discussions commenced between Harbours and the then Property Holdings about long-term planning and how potentially surplus land released from the Harbour could be utilised in the longer term plan for the port. A plan was developed and completed in 2007. It identified the potential creation of between 1,800 and 2,000 additional residential units by relocating the port and the fuel farm, thereby releasing land on the Elizabeth Terminal, New North Quay and La Collette. The plan considered all of these from a high level point of view, including wave modelling, safety issues, relocating the fuel farm and assessment of the construction potential. The total spent on the project was £548,000, including £351,000 paid by States departments, which included £70,000 from Harbours and Airports and £75,000 from T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services). Clearly, more work will need to be done on any implementation plan but it was decided in 2008 that the plan, while exciting and bold, would need to be delivered in phases. So I believe that this is an exciting and potentially highly interesting and lucrative proposal which the new Council of Ministers will need to consider the phasing and delivery of.

3.2.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

It seems that this is an enormously expensive project with a need for a cash injection halfway through of about £400 million. Does the Minister for Treasury and Resources really think that it is viable?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not know where the Senator gets her information. Certainly, there is cash flow and there is whether or not the project is financially viable. The new Council of Ministers will no doubt be wanting to turn its attention to the long-term requirements of a port delivering a modern port for the 21st century and the appropriate allocation of land for not only a port but releasing land in order to deliver housing. On the contrary, it is a potentially beneficial plan for the overall finances of the States but obviously, as she rightly points out, there are cash flow issues which will need to be worked through.

3.2.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

In fact, I get my figures from the Managing Director of W.E.B. as was and from the Acting Chief Executive of the States who I believe was chairman of the group working on it. I understand, furthermore, that the project is talking in terms of something like £900 million, so which pot is the Minister for Treasury and Resources going to produce the money from?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Minister for Treasury and Resources would not produce any money from any pot. Clearly depending on who ends up where and if I were to continue at Treasury, we would need to look at it in terms of whether or not it would be funded or underwritten,

but certainly I would not envisage that this project would see the light of day if it required a public subsidy. There is a constructive discussion to be had with Harbours, Property Holdings, Housing and T.T.S. in relation to the best allocation of land resources. There is a significant amount of land, as the Senator will know, and all Members will know, which has been reclaimed down at the Harbour which also needs to be factored into an overall allocation of land for commercial endeavours for an operational port and for residential housing and we also need to deal with the issue of the eventual relocation of the fuel farm. So there are very many aspects that need to be considered and this is a phased development. This first piece of work was very valuable in identifying some potentially good options for future Assemblies to consider but these are years away, perhaps 20 or 30 years.

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

I wonder if the scheme will be passed before the Shadow Harbours and Airports Board that is looking at the Harbours?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Deputy raises an important point about an appropriate segregation of duties. I regard the States as needing to have a proper discussion with Harbours about what the land is which is required for the future of harbour facilities to ensure that our infrastructure in terms of our vital daily services to bringing in 90 per cent of goods consumed in Jersey coming from the U.K. (United Kingdom), they will continue, I imagine, to do so and we need a 21st century port to deliver that. There is also potentially exciting opportunities if Harbours was to relocate for creating residential units on currently Harbours land. La Folie is an embarrassment; it should have been vacated and turned over for housing before. There are also opportunities of extending the waterfront and rebuilding our traditional waterfront and putting some life in it.

3.2.4 Deputy A.E. Jeune of St. Brelade:

Could the Minister advise who were the politicians involved in developing this scheme?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Politicians have not been involved. It was a sub-group of the Council of Ministers, as I recall then, that was overseeing it. They were not involved over in the Steering Group and I think it was the then Chief Minister Walker, it was myself when I was Minister for Economic Development, the then Minister for T.T.S. and probably Jersey Resources, but I cannot recall.

3.2.5 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

But no Minister for Planning and Environment?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think Planning would have been a part of it because obviously they are responsible but they will be aware of some of them and they will have been consulted on the development of the very, very initial plans.

3.2.6 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

The £548,000 is not an insignificant sum. Can the Minister tell us how that money was spent, who it was spent with and whether it was in the Island or out of the Island?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Clearly, some of it was spent in the Island and some of it was outside, and I am not ashamed about that. Clearly, one has to bring in expertise in relation to wave modelling and whether or not it is possible to relocate the roll-on roll-off service which was the original proposal to move the roll-on roll-off terminal to the site of land next to the hill terminal. Clearly, expertise about wave movements does not exist in the Island and has to be brought in in addition to all of the expertise of what is, as Senator Ferguson rightly says, hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of plans. So some of that expertise does not exist on Island and some of it was off-Island spent, of course.

3.2.7 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

Hopefully, I will get a much quicker answer. I wonder if the Minister would let all States Members have a complete and detailed breakdown of how this large amount of money was spent and what, if anything, was incurred and what departments these monies were tallied up with because you have only given us a few breakdowns of the States.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think I am already in trouble of speaking too much but probably a better written question if Members want an answer. This is obviously going back some years in terms of the decision-making of it but I am more than happy to get my officials to create a note to explain to Members, and I thought this question was the normal sort of giving the waterfront a good bashing is a good thing. This is a pretty good programme and it is a long-sighted, far-reaching, long-term planning of infrastructure of the Island which is positive, but I am happy to provide a note.

Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

It was just a simple yes or no really.

3.2.8 Senator B.E. Shenton:

My view is slightly different inasmuch as I think this is £540,000 of taxpayers' money wasted on an unrealistic pipe dream. Will the Minister for Treasury and Resources be doing something to keep spending under control in the future so that we do not have these harebrained schemes and the waste of taxpayers' money on them?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think that my record in terms of States spending can be testified by the Business Plan. It is easy to just simply carp from the sidelines. We are delivering reductions in spending and we are doing what I hope the Public Accounts Committee chairman would want. I also would say that, no, I do not agree. There is a debate to be had about what land Harbours need and how Harbours is served for the 21st century for Jersey. There is an opportunity to create some release of land from within Harbours properly constructed, taking account of the new land created and which can be used for valuable residential land in the future. It needs proper planning and this was an important first phase in it and I would ask the Senator to revisit the fact that this is a good project but will take many years to deliver.