

2.1 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the provision of a new police station at the Green Street roundabout:

Would the Minister state what progress, if any, has been made towards the provision of a new police station at the Green Street roundabout?

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

My Assistant Minister is handling the relocation, so I ask him to answer the question.

Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

We can confirm that good progress continues to be made towards the provision of a new police station headquarters on the La Route du Fort site. Since the completion of the public consultation in March 2012, the design team has been working closely with the States of Jersey Police and with the Department for Planning and Environment, responding to the issues that have been raised. Redesign work has been completed and the height of the building has now been reduced. The team is in the final stages of confirming that the revised scheme will be acceptable in both operational terms and in financial terms. A formal planning application will be made within the next 2 months for consideration by the Planning Panel. We are confident that the scheme will be delivered in its revised form and will provide not only a single site police station; it will also release substantial land for social housing on the Summerland and Rouge Bouillon sites. However, we are still continuing to work closely with our colleagues at T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) in order to deliver additional parking solutions for the town.

2.1.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Supplementary please. How will the removal of a floor, which I understand has been agreed with Planning, enable the new police station to accommodate the needs of the force or future-proof the new building?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

A substantial redesign has taken place. We have removed the plant from the roof and we have removed one floor of the police station to enable us to continue to provide the area and the size of police station required. If Members will recall, the previous design had skylights above the cell block and the cell blocks were not built above. We have been working closely with the Home Office and they have verbally agreed to our solution, which enables us to build above the cell block area, thus maintaining the size of the building required for the police force for now, and to future-proof it, and to comply with the concerns of both the Department for Planning and Environment, and of nearby residents.

2.1.2 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

I am surprised, really, to hear that this project is so far advanced. Before Christmas - as one of the 3 Deputies of St. Helier - we had a meeting and we were told that before anything went forward, a full traffic impact study would be done, and that we would know the outcome. To this day, unless I have missed it somewhere, I have not seen one; I do not know where it is. Could the Assistant Minister please let us have a meeting as soon as possible to see where we are with this?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I am happy to liaise with our T.T.S. colleagues who have been carrying out that work on our behalf, and to bring that information back to the Deputy.

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

I am surprised at some of the comments made by the Assistant Minister. If they have reduced the plant from the top floor, the plant surely has got to go somewhere, so what have you done?

You have reduced one level of operational area, and also reduced the plant area. What are you going to do with the plant that you needed, and secondly...

The Bailiff:

What is the Minister going to do?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Sorry, what is the Minister going to do with the plant that would be required for the building, and was the building too big in the first place, if he can afford to lose a floor and still cram everything in?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The plant is going to be incorporated within the design of the building. Although we are reducing the height by one floor, we are not reducing any of the floor space of the building. We have managed to achieve this by building over what was a single storey part of the design, with multiple stories. So instead of having above the cell block one storey in height, we are now going to have 3 storey heights above the cell block. I hope that satisfies the Deputy's questions.

2.1.4 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John:

Given the Minister has said he is working in consultation with the Home Office in relation to the design of this particular building, on an earlier set of drawings I saw in relation to a new police headquarters on the waterfront, they also included, via the Home Office, tank protection walls around the building. I sincerely hope that on this occasion, in any new design, this is not going to be included [Laughter]. Will the Minister confirm, please?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I am delighted to confirm for the Constable of St. John that we will not require blast walls around our police stations here in Jersey. This is not Northern Ireland.

2.1.5 Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade:

Will the Minister confirm that this site is a very important one in the middle of St. Helier, and it has the potential, putting a 24/7 blue light use, to cause problems for neighbours? Could he tell us, to manage those issues, has he received a development brief for the site from the Minister for Planning and Environment, and if so, has this been to public consultation and has he briefed his design team to follow its requirements?

[9:45]

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I would answer that all our sites in St. Helier are important sites. St. Helier is a confined space, and all States-owned land and privately-owned land sites in St. Helier are important. With regards to the blue light section, I have mentioned this before at Scrutiny Panel last week, the blue light services do not normally dispatch from the police station. Our police force is dispatched from around the Island where they are patrolling, be it in their cars, on their motorbikes or on foot. So it is very rare that officers blue light exit from the police station. We have been given assurances by the police force that only in exceptional circumstances will blue light services exit from any police station, wherever they are located. With regard to the planning issues, we have worked very closely with officers at Planning and have taken their comments on board, and we are now in a position where we have a solution, that we believe, is suitable to go forward for a formal planning application, which we hope to be doing by the latter part of July.

2.1.6 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Would the Assistant Minister agree with me that while the new police station will not, under the present system, pay rates in the Parish of St. Helier, the Lime Grove office building will?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I cannot deny that. Under our current rules and regulations, States-owned property does not pay rates. But the current police station is not paying rates either, so there is no net loss to the Parish. In fact, we are working very closely with the Parish to provide a solution for one of their public conveniences that is in the vicinity. **[Laughter]** I would like to, if I may, take this opportunity of the Parish, thanking my colleagues at T.T.S. and at the Ministry of Home Affairs and at the Department for Planning and Environment, because, along with myself and the Minister and my colleagues at J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings), I believe that we have an exciting project here that we will deliver, and we will deliver something that was not on the cards before, and that is a single site police station, which I think is a prize to be had.