

2015.05.12

3.3 Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the new Les Quennevais School:

Will the Minister inform Members what progress, if any, has been made regarding the plans and siting of the new Les Quennevais School?

Deputy R.G. Bryans of St. Helier (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

A draft feasibility study has been referred by Property Holdings and is in the process of being finalised. It looks through a number of sites and options, 10 inclusively, including the fields to the south of Rue Carree near the airport, and Les Quennevais sports field. The detailed study includes environmental traffic and land assessments and preliminary discussions with planning officers are now taking place regarding the planning issues. In fact they are taking place this Wednesday.

3.3.1 Deputy G.J. Truscott:

I thank the Minister for his answer. Can he also provide assurances that there will be a public consultation regarding his proposals, that the money is in place and ring-fenced for the new school and can he also give the Assembly an indication of when he thinks building will commence?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Yes, I think I can. Once we have met with the planning officers and we have a clear sight of what the options are we will then meet with yourself, other Deputies and the Constable and interested parties and then subsequently we will go out for public consultation, particularly to the primary schools who will be affected in that area. Subsequently the £40 million ... you are right, £40 million has already been identified. The Education Department currently is working very closely with the Treasury Department to ensure the funding is available to commence building during the M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan), subject to planning of course. I forget what the last part of the question was. [Aside] Obviously it is really important for me that this happens as quickly as possible because as soon as you start this consideration or time lapses that the costs of the building increases, so in my own mind I think we will look at a school. Building should start commencing around 2016, if that is possible, again subject to planning. Then we should see a school around September 2018.

3.3.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister will be aware that of course this subject is of particular interest to the constituents of St. Brelade No. 2 District and in March, indeed, I am sure we were both getting correspondence and I asked one of the Minister's officers for progress on the report. We were told on 10th March that: "I can advise you that the feasibility study is currently being finalised and Deputy Bryans will be taking a view on how we would like to proceed." This is already 2 months ago and why has that report not been finalised? Why have the Deputies, in particular of the Parish, seemingly being kept out of the loop as to where the progress is going on this?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

I do not know that Deputies have been kept out of the loop but in regard to the delay, there was one particular aspect of the site that had not been considered before so on the Green Zone, the initial site that was looked at was placing the school completely on to the Green Zone with various fields being utilised in that area by Rue Carree. Another site was then subsequently identified, and this is the reason for the delay, where there was a football pitch, which would take the school off the Green Zone but still allowing the Green Zone to be utilised for playing fields.

3.3.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Minister confirm that the choice... because we have been labouring under the impression that the preferred option was the one next to the airport pitches, which is currently agricultural use,

and the choice now being moved to extend the school on to the Les Quennevais playing fields, which will be equally contentious for those living in the area? Can he give us an indication as early as possible so that we can start having this dialogue with our constituents?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

We do not have a preferred choice at this moment in time. I have just outlined that we have received the feasibility study, we have 10 options. We think 3 of them are particularly possible from our consideration. We will be, as I have already said, meeting with the Constable and the Deputies, including Deputy Tadier, to discuss this matter in detail and then hence going out to public consultation.

3.3.4 Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier:

Following Deputy Truscott's question, would the Minister please be able to elaborate a little on where he expects the funding to come from with his discussions with Treasury at the moment?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

That is a matter for Treasury. We have sat with Treasury and identified ... we managed to keep it away from the cuts that we have already made with regard to the Education budget, but Treasury is working closely with us and hoping to produce that funding during the M.T.F.P.

3.3.5 Deputy R.J. Rondel:

Sorry, just to confirm, you do believe there is a funding source?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Yes, I do.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Thank you for your response and we look forward to further discussions in future.