

2015.10.05

3.15 Deputy J.A. Martin of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding discussions relating to the consideration of People's Park as a possible location for the new hospital with the Connétable of St. Helier::

Can the Minister explain why People's Park came to be under consideration as a possible location for the new hospital and state how many meetings have been held with the Connétable of St Helier to discuss this possible site?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I do not think I can add much to the previous answer, but to answer the Deputy's question: the People's Park has been considered in the past for underground parking as part of other potential hospital sites but not for the whole hospital. The Island Plan requires that hospital sites and other sites in the built-up area should be fully assessed before development elsewhere is considered. This work has been done and so the People's Park is now being considered as a possible single hospital site. Following the confirmation of the possible suitability of the People's Park for a further assessment by the Ministers of the Ministerial Oversight Group on 2nd September, then an informal meeting was organised with the Chief Minister and myself to meet, in confidence, with the Constable of St. Helier, and this took place on 24th September. I should emphasise, as I did before, this discussion was not part of any formal negotiation which, of course, would be, if required, subject to the usual requirements of *Financial Directions* and led by the Treasury and Resources Department.

3.15.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

The Minister, in the previous answer to the previous question, said this site was first put into consideration on 22nd July. Is the Minister saying they did not approach the Constable before this date and have proper discussions as this is in his Parish? It surely would not have happened in any other Parish, or is Howard Davis Park up for consideration as well and we do not know about it?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

That is certainly a site I had not considered. What I am saying is that it became very clear when we understood the size of the hospital and when we went back and looked at the 20-odd sites that we had reviewed, it became very clear that possibly - possibly - the People's Park might be a suitable site. It took 3 weeks to get a meeting together with myself, the Chief Minister and Constable.

[16:15]

I make no apologies for that. Our diaries are busy. We did try. We did have that meeting with the Constable. It was very informal. It was formal insomuch as it was a particular request, but no negotiations took place. It is just we were wishing to look at the People's Park as an option.

3.15.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

As a follow on from my previous aborted question: the Waterfront site for the location of the new hospital was ranked top of all the 3 sites examined. It seems to me the Council of Ministers are desperately scouting around for new sites because they do not want the taxpayer funded reclamation of the Waterfront to be used for the hospital, which will benefit all Islanders, but would rather explore the potential of green space land-grabbing from the residents of St. Helier. **[Approbation]** Does the Minister agree with me the Council of Ministers are displaying their

usual preference of knowing the cost of everything but the value of nothing? Can the Minister please give an assurance that to minimise the distress to the public, particularly west of town residents, he will confirm publicly that the People's Park site is not being considered further, as soon as he reaches that inevitable conclusion?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

No, I do not agree with the Deputy and, no, I will not confirm that we will not consider this site further. If you wanted to prevent distress to Members, if it was looked at in the same way as all the other sites, confidentially with all the other landowners, no leaking, no massive headlines, if we wanted to delay distress or prevent distress it would have been better if we had done that exercise to see whether that site is suitable, or not, and then said: "We have looked at the Waterfront, we have looked at the People's Park, we have looked at Overdale, we have looked at the current site."

3.15.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Indeed, and the Minister is living up to his logo "To go Green" in 2014, 2015 and 2016, it seems to me, certainly, taking away Parish of St. Helier's green. But more seriously, can the Minister release any minutes that were made of the topics that were under discussion of that meeting albeit it was informal?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

No, but I do believe that some minutes have been released to one of the Scrutiny Panels, who have asked for some information. I cannot remember which one offhand.

3.15.4 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Can the Minister assure us that there is an end line in sight or are we going to get ... if this site is not okay, which I hope it is not, that they are going to go looking around for other sites? There must be an end site for the Ministerial Oversight Group. As he said, I was the Assistant Minister, I thought this was done and dusted in the last Assembly and now we are looking at impossible green lung in St. Helier. When is the end site? When is the closing date for looking for a site?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

When we have done the work. This is the biggest project that the States will ever undertake and we need to get it right. Had we gone down the route that the Deputy suggested, we had gone down with the 2-site, I can tell Members it would have cost considerably more than a new build. That is why I blocked that one. Then we go back to the drawing board and we are looking at the other sites and we will find a site suitable for the people of Jersey.