

3.8 Deputy J.M. Maçon of the Minister for Environment regarding the masterplan for five Oaks: [9737]

Will the Minister explain what action, if any, he or his department have taken regarding the masterplan for Five Oaks that was proposed in the Island Plan 2011?

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin (The Minister for Environment):

Since the adoption of the Island Plan 2011 neither the former Minister, myself, nor my department have undertaken any action to progress the proposal to develop supplementary planning guidance for Five Oaks. It is unfortunate but the progression of proposals set out in the Island Plan are dependent very much on the availability of resources during the 10-year period of that plan. Since the adoption in 2011 the limited resources of the planning policy team in my department have been prioritised on other work, including the delivery of affordable homes, the regeneration of St. Helier, and the revision and development of other new supplementary planning guidance to support the objectives of the plan.

3.8.1 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

It comes as no great surprise that St. Saviour once again is put as a bottom priority or no priority, as the case may be. Can I ask the Minister: will he be honest with the Assembly then, given the restrictions and just say that within the period of this Island Plan that Five Oaks will not be receiving a masterplan, then at least we know where we stand?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I will always be honest with Members. I can say to the Deputy that resources are also currently involved in the masterplan of St. Helier, the revision of planning guidance for planning obligation agreements on space standards for new homes, parking standards among others. We continue to work on Future St. Helier project and other strategic priorities and we have given a commitment to do some work in St. Brelade's Bay. Planning guidance is usually developed to address specific planning challenges and issues. I am always happy to listen to any Members, especially Deputy Maçon, to get a better understanding of his thoughts about the Five Oaks area. But I would say to him, I drive through the area at least twice every day. I am fully aware of the importance of green open spaces and I would hope he would appreciate my views through my work with the Future St. Helier. I am aware that this proposal came about probably because more open space was wanted to be safeguarded in the Five Oaks area, but I would say to him it is always in my thoughts and I have raised this issue with officers before. I will always safeguard open spaces.

3.8.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I am surprised that the Minister is confusing supplementary planning guidance with a masterplan. I did not think there was that similarity. However, does the Minister have a list of the masterplans and the local development plans that were in the Island Plan so that he can have a proper schedule of works set up and then we can all find out when our various local development plans or masterplans are going to appear?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I would just repeat to the Senator, as I said just now, planning guidance and work on masterplan, any work in the Planning Policy Department is done as specific challenges arise, and sometimes very specific challenges arise during the course of a plan which have to override others. We will, and I will, prioritise my work as I see fit. Certainly the Senator has raised the issue of St. Brelade, and that has been brought up the agenda and is something we have committed to do during this Island Plan. I fully understand, as the Senator would expect, the difference between supplementary planning guidance and masterplanning, but it is all work

that comes out of the Planning Policy Department. In some cases an S.P.G. (supplementary planning guidance) update may be more important than work on a masterplan.

3.8.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Perhaps the Minister would be prepared to put resources into the policy and the planning guidance and masterplans and adjust his budget because, as we speak, there are houses all over St. Brelade's Bay being knocked down and reconstituted. Will he consider speeding up the plan of putting in planning guidance and masterplans and so forth?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Certainly I am happy to assure the Senator I will look at how I might reprioritise that work within my department. But I can only say again that as important matters come to light we have to address them. Recently we have been told by one of our inspectors that our parking standards are not good enough and that is quite clear that there is work there that had to be done. That has been raised up the agenda again. Certainly I will look at the priorities.

3.8.4 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

Does the Minister not agree that with relatively little money urban areas could be improved, street furniture, tree-lined avenues, open spaces, because there are many areas like Five Oaks, Georgetown and, as I say, urban areas that could be improved with relatively little money or resources from his department? Could he not see to it to comply with the Island Plan in some regard and areas could be improved like that?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Certainly I agree that relatively small amounts of money can make vast differences to areas. The Future St. Helier project is St. Helier not a Parish - St. Helier a town - and it encompasses areas like Five Oaks, Georgetown, as far out as First Tower, and I can assure the Deputy that as money becomes available to the Future St. Helier project we will look not only at the regeneration of the heart of St. Helier but at other areas outside where we can make them more pleasant and interesting for people to be.

3.8.5 The Deputy of Grouville:

Would it not make sense to be working with the Parishes now so they can have some input rather than just be part of the St. Helier sprawl? Once you have done St. Helier you then get on to the outlying areas. The Constables of the Parishes and Parish representatives could be working on ideas for his department now.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Certainly if any Member of the Assembly wants to come and speak to me about how their particular constituency might be improved I am happy to see them and happy to help them where possible. I work as close as I can with the Minister for Infrastructure and I know that he has had a number of village schemes over the years which have been hugely successful in trying to green up areas and make them more pleasant, and I welcome any initiatives by Deputies or Constables, Senators, that can improve the Island.

3.8.6 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Given that over the next few years, given the priorities the Minister has outlined, the fact that 2018-2019 will be seeing the development of a new Island Plan, as this one expires in 2021, given that context, is it not fair to say that despite the promises of what might go into St. Helier and the outlying areas, the fact of the matter is St. Saviour will remain a poor relation from this Government and the States Assembly and simply will not be receiving the type of support the

Minister has indicated? That simply this masterplan will not be produced during the lifetime of this plan.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

It is disappointing that the Deputy has not raised this issue with me. I have been Minister nearly 2 years now. If he feels strongly about making St. Saviour and parts of Five Oaks more heavily safeguarded he could quite easily have raised that with me. But what I will say to him is this: I have said to officers at my department more than once in the 2 years that I have been Minister that there are fields in the Five Oaks area that I will be looking to put additional safeguards on in the next Island Plan. I am looking at the Senator of St. Brelade. There are fields in St. Brelade as well. Indeed I drive round the Island and think to myself, as I drive through St. John; there is another one there. There are fields all over this Island that need to have additional safeguards placed on them because they are green open areas which the public have got used to enjoying and they need to be safeguarded even more strongly than they are currently.