

2018.03.19

7 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of the Minister for the Environment regarding the feasibility of improved public access to the reclaimed land at La Collette: [OQ.54/2018]

What progress, if any, has the Minister made in examining the feasibility of improved public access to the reclaimed land at La Collette, as agreed in the Island Plan?

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

I believe the Connétable is probably referring to previous comments I have made on this subject and to the provisions and enhancement of the open space section within the Island Plan that he has just mentioned. That states that I will work with other stakeholders to achieve the maximum degree of public access that can be achieved without unacceptable risk. Members will know that La Collette is managed by D.f.I. (Department for Infrastructure) and that the site is an active waste site. Long term, it is envisaged to open up as much of this area for public access but in its current form the site does not easily lend itself to that public access. However, D.f.I. have planted temporary greenery on the waste cells and have landscaped and planted permanent vegetation on the finished area adjacent to the Energy from Waste plant. This planting improves the view of La Collette headland from its neighbours to the east. D.f.I. is still intent on allowing access, where it is possible, and public access as recently as only last week been opened from the footpath from Havre des Pas promenade to the southerly edge of the Energy from Waste site. It is envisaged that that path will be extended when the waste cells to the south are full, capped and landscaped.

3.7.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am delighted to hear that there is some improved access, albeit only agreed a week ago. Certainly I was not aware of that. Perhaps it is a result of this question being asked, I do not know. But is the Minister aware that the agreement by his predecessor to work with stakeholders, to achieve the maximum degree of public access that can be achieved without public risk, was agreed by this Assembly unanimously nearly 7 years ago? Does he not feel that this is awfully slow progress in a Parish which is taking such a lot of urban development; should this feasibility work have been done a little bit sooner?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I do agree with that. In my time on the Scrutiny Panel, well over 3, 4 years ago now, I visited the site and it was then that I identified that there was fantastic opportunity on that east facing side of La Collette for public access. It is a great disappointment that we have not moved faster with this. But I can say to the Constable, as he will know, we had accumulated a very large amount of asbestos waste in containers, quite close to the eastern edge. It is only very recently that asbestos has finally been put in the safest place, which is underground in a damp environment where it cannot get into the atmosphere. Now that site is cleared and we are very much hopeful that we will be able to extend that footpath further. But I take the Constable's point on board and I very much hope, in the new session of the Assembly, that we will be able to progress that even faster.

3.7.2 Deputy J.A. Martin:

It is encouraging, like my Constable, to hear that these small pockets are being opened up down La Collette.

[15:45]

But is it not true, I would like to ask the Minister, that while we have the fuel farm down at La Collette, it is always going to be much more risky than there is about letting the public in. I have seen reports, so who is now telling the truth, or is the Minister sure that the fuel farm is not preventing a lot more access down there? If it is, can he just say it is please?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

If fuel farm was an issue, the footpath the D.f.I. opened last week would not have been opened; of that I am quite sure. I am sure Deputy Martin will be able to understand that footpath is sheltered, secured from the fuel farm by a very large amount of super-fill land, which is built up on that headland, and I am sure that is one of the reasons why this footpath can be extended further and still be safe. We know that the fuel farm in its current location at La Collette does preclude a lot of things happening in that area and I am sure, if the footpath is opened, it has only been done because it is safe for pedestrians to use it.

3.7.3 Deputy R. Labey:

Did La Collette reclamation site feature in the Minister's recent review of the Waterfront?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

My review of the Waterfront does not go down quite as far as La Collette site certainly. In expanding the Waterfront Masterplan and turning it into a document more akin to the North of Town Masterplan, making the edges a bit more fuzzy and expanding it into the ports area, we have included the Norman site, the new North Quay, La Folie, but we have not gone down as far as the Waterfront. That may be akin to more the work that is being done with the Havre des Pas area, I know that sits comfortably between the 2, but certainly it must not be forgotten, it is a fantastic asset, it is an asset that has cost us an awful lot of money to build and we must make sure that we make use of the La Collette area as best we can.