

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY K.G. PAMPLIN OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 21st MAY 2019**

Question

Will the Minister explain what input and advice he has provided to the Chief Minister in respect of the newly-presented proposals regarding a new hospital and explain whether he has any concerns in relation to those proposals from the perspective of his portfolio?

Answer

I have, in my capacity as Minister for the Environment, provided advice to the Chief Minister about the new hospital project which has naturally focussed on its relationship with the planning process.

In this, I was particularly concerned to ensure that the development of new proposals were based on some key requirements, including:

- a sound understanding and consensus that any new proposal adequately meets current and future clinical needs, relative to the overall plan for health care in the island;
- a site assessment process, which is objective, evidence-based, consistent and sound; and
- an open, transparent and participative process of engagement with islanders, as a prerequisite to any subsequent planning application.

I am pleased to note that these elements are contained within the Chief Minister's proposed process, as set out in his report to the States Assembly on 03 May 2019.

Perhaps what was disappointing and of concern to me, as Environment Minister, was the finding of the report, based on the discussions of the Chief Minister with States Members, which stated that '*it was conclusive that the Island Plan was inhibiting the process.*' This suggests to me a failure of States Members to recognise the role and purpose of the Island Plan.

It is important to recognise that the Island Plan is there to provide a framework – approved by the States Assembly - against which to test the implications of new development and to ensure that balanced decisions are made. Importantly, it ensures that the adverse implications of development – where they arise - are properly considered. This is important where the effects of development might be to otherwise create serious harm.

It was my judgement, and that of my predecessor, that the two applications for a new hospital submitted to date had such adverse implications that they could not be approved. In both cases, there was not considered to be sufficient justification to outweigh and override the policies of the Island Plan.

The Chief Minister's proposals envisage that the work to progress the new hospital project will be progressing in parallel with the preparation of the new Island Plan. The new Island Plan will need to ensure that the key elements of public infrastructure that are required over the Plan period – including the need for a new hospital – can be provided. This will either take the form of a site-specific allocation or a policy regime that enables a new hospital to be delivered.

Should the new hospital project progress more quickly, any new proposal would fall to be considered under the current Island Plan. Should this come about, I propose to bring forward changes – in planning guidance and the way in which major planning decisions, where there is a clear and significant public interest, are made – to help ensure that the provision of a new hospital could be enabled under the current planning policy regime, whilst still following a due and robust assessment process that is provided by the planning system.