

2019.12.10

3 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the future use of the current Les Quennevais School site: (OQ.309/2019)

Further to his answer to Written Question 502/2019, regarding the consultation on the future use of the current Les Quennevais School, in which the Minister stated that the consultation “will take place once the options have been developed and are available”, will the Minister explain why the consultation cannot take place now, as a means of developing the options to be shortlisted?

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

Regarding the consultation on the future use of the current Les Quennevais School, while there will, obviously, be a strong local feeling about what is required, the site clearly has a strategic value to the whole of the Island and careful consideration of all the options will be required. A form of consultation is currently underway. There is a call for sites public consultation, for the Island Plan, currently underway, which is asking members of the public to propose areas for development, or protection. I am aware that the Minister for the Environment is keen to encourage as many Islanders, as possible, to participate in this consultation and so I would, therefore, encourage all residents and the wider community to use this opportunity to now put forward their ideas for this strategically important site. With the healthcare provision in development, discussion around the future housing requirement and investigation into well-being and the provision of local services, we want to ensure that well thought-out options are presented for consideration both locally, but also for the Island as a whole. This site will be part of this wider discussion and debate. The Deputy and this Assembly will also be aware of the significant piece of work that is currently underway to review the Island Plan. I look forward to reading the public’s views over the next few months.

3.3.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

With respect, I do not think that answer washes and I do not think it is satisfactory that the future of the current Les Quennevais School site be lost in what will be an expansive consultation on the future of the whole of the Island. Does the Minister agree that he needs to start consulting now, both with the residents of the area - who are already very keen for this to start and have been contacting local representatives on that issue - in order to develop options which can be put both to local residents, but also to the wider population to make sure that this is not, when it is presented, a *fait accompli*.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Not really. Islanders can now register areas of land in Jersey, which they think should be considered for development, or protection from development. In the next Island Plan, the call for sites is open until 14th February and is open to anyone, whether they are the owner, agent, or simply someone interested in the area. I would urge residents of the area to participate in this.

3.3.2 Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier:

I have to agree with Deputy Tadier that these answers are not washing. This site, where the school currently is, is in the built-up area anyway and I cannot see anywhere in the Island Plan where this would be changed.

The Bailiff:

Can I remind anyone asking questions, there has to be a question? I mean, it is question time.

Deputy S.M. Wickenden:

I want to ask the Minister, the plans that are being drawn up, are they going through a planning process now, to see how options could be fitting on the site?

[10:00]

Or are they going to be handed over to Andium Homes and ask them to look at building the plans for the site?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

To the best of my knowledge, there are no plans for the area, at the moment. That is why we are asking for public participation to write in, or call in, and register their views with the Environment Department and Planning, to what should happen to the site in the future. I do not think we need 3 or 4 different lists going at the same time. This is open to everyone on the Island and I would urge residents in the area to participate.

3.3.3 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister confirm that the right way in which this should be processed is through the Regeneration Steering Group? Would he agree that my approaches to date, obviously with similar concerns of Deputy Tadier, that the site may lay unattended for years, if we listen to the Minister, would he agree that an approach to the Chief Minister's Regeneration Steering Group might be best? If that were to be the case, would he be able to give a timescale in that approach please?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have a timescale, but I agree, it is a very valuable site, that needs to be made the most of. As I say, I would encourage all people to participate in this research, but I do not see any value of having 4 or 5 different schemes running at the same time. If everybody focused on this particular one, put their views in, they can register the site, what they would like to see there. If it needs preserving, preserve it, if they want it to be demolished, it can be a medical centre, a community centre, housing, whatever. That is not my decision. But everyone should participate in this scheme to register their views.

3.3.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could the Minister agree that the Regeneration Steering Group is the right body to be dealing with it?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I am more than happy for the Regeneration Steering Group to take this up. But, as I say, the Minister for the Environment is encouraging people to register their views on all sites in the Island, to see what they would like to do with this particular site.

3.3.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I have got your attention. What role ... the routine is, I ask the question and you try and answer it.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, we are going to run out of ... I think those sorts of messages probably best come through the Chair, so if you ask me to say that then I might be prepared to say that. But similarly let us ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Thank you for that consideration, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Let us push on.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

What role does a replacement library play in his consideration and if none, why not? Will he consider taking on that consideration?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Absolutely. More than happy to talk that over with the Minister for Education and others.

3.3.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just confirm, with the Minister, that the consultation he is asking all Islanders to feed into, whether about the old Les Quennevais school, the current Les Quennevais school site, or any other site, is whether it should be developed, or whether it should not be developed? Is that the binary choice that is available to Islanders?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The call for sites, as I say, is open to 14th February. It is for members of the public to express their views whether they would like it developed into something else, whether they would like it demolished, whether they would like a healthcare centre, a library, or whatever; that is what we are inviting people to participate in.