

2019.02.12

14 Deputy L.B.E. Ash of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding problems with parking in close proximity to the Hospital: [OQ.35/2019]

Is the Minister aware of any current problems with parking in close proximity to the hospital, and if so, what plans does he have to ensure that more provision is made?

Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Public parking in close proximity to the hospital is the responsibility of the Minister for Infrastructure or the Connétable of St. Helier, specifically the Minister for Infrastructure for Patriotic Street Car Park and the Connétable in respect of on-street parking. But Members can rest assured that should this Assembly decide that the hospital will remain on the current site for up to 10 years, then I will have discussions with both of those parties, because clearly we all know there is pressure on parking. It is known that people arrive at the hospital clinics sometimes in quite a harassed state, having been unable to find parking spaces. It may not be about the absolute number of spaces, but we can also give consideration to how they are managed, for example, could all-day parking be replaced perhaps by parking for 2 or 3 hours? On the part of the Health and Community Services, we could look at how we organise appointments to perhaps reduce or stagger demand for parking. If we can deliver more care in the community and in G.P. (general practitioner) surgeries, that will alleviate some of the pressure. We can look at times of appointments, we can try to extend the working day and make appointments available in the evenings, and finally, make better use of clinical facilities.

3.14.1 Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

Would the Minister agree with me that with the delay in the hospital, it is absolutely paramount that we make every effort to make the patient experience as comfortable as possible over what will become a very challenging next few years?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

That is certainly a very high priority and I would welcome discussions with the Deputy and any other parties as to how we might do this, but I certainly see the continued use of the hospital and particularly the outpatient facilities there as needing those facilities for parking, they are needing to be improved.

3.14.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Does the Minister not accept that the lack of parking and even with an extra floor on Patriotic Street is a very good reason why the hospital should not be located where it is, in fact, it should be at some other location where proper parking facilities can be put in place?

The Bailiff:

This is not a question about where the new hospital should go, it is a question about parking.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

It still relates to parking, because if we have got problems now, we are going to have even more problems if it stays.

The Bailiff:

That was just a warning to Members, that we are not going to go questioning about where the new hospital is going. Carry on then, Minister.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

As you rightly say, Sir, this is about current difficulties and not hypothetical difficulties that might arise in the future. The current scheme that the Assembly approved was subjected to all sorts of testing and traffic studies and it was considered sufficient that the extra floor on Patriotic Street would meet the need. We do not know how we will be accessing facilities in the years to come, when our hospital might be delivered on the Gloucester Street site. As I mentioned, it is imperative we give more care in the community and in G.P. surgeries. I do believe we are bringing people into clinics where we do not really need them to come in from rural Parishes or wherever they live to a clinic. We can deliver the care they need in their homes or perhaps in community hubs, so there are various ways of mitigating the pressures on a hospital.

3.14.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I just wanted to start by correcting the Minister when he said that the Constable of St. Helier is responsible for the on-street parking. Obviously, that only applies if there are Parish roads rather than main roads and there is clearly not much provision of that around the hospital. Could the Minister confirm that the 40 per cent of users of the hospital who currently do so without needing to park takes a great deal of pressure off the demand that we already have and would he further agree to look at, with the Minister for G.H.E. prioritising parking in Patriotic Street for users of the hospital? Because there are a lot of very able-bodied people who currently park in there who are perfectly able to park in Pier Road if they are, for example, commuting. That would free-up space for people who really need the space in Patriotic Street.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

A number of questions there. I think I should have jotted down some notes, but yes, I will discuss with the Minister for Infrastructure and D.f.I. on the use of Patriotic Street Car Park. Some parts of that car park are presently used exclusively for hospital users. As to the first comment made by the Connétable, yes, they are of course States main roads around 2 sides of the hospital site. I was thinking more so of the Newgate Street and Patriotic Place parking, where I think people tend to try to park if they are visiting clinics. I hope that answers the question.

The Bailiff:

A final supplementary? We now come to Questions to Minister without notice. The first question period is in relation to the Minister for Treasury and Resources and I invite questions.