

21.05.11

5 Senator S.C. Ferguson of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding current services at Overdale (OQ.105.2021)

Further to the response to Written Question 172/2021, will the Minister advise whether at a Les Quennevais community meeting recently attendees were informed by a healthcare professional that services currently at Overdale would not be relocated to Les Quennevais until late 2022 and, if so, will he explain how such a statement tallies with other Government communications regarding the relocation?

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

I can confirm that ...

The Bailiff:

Minister, I am afraid your sound is entirely muffled and I am not quite sure what might be done about that. We can hear you talking but we cannot hear what you are saying.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am hoping that is better, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Yes, that is better, thank you.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I can confirm that the timing of the relocation of services to the former Les Quennevais School site has been discussed at local community meetings. There is currently no precise date for the decamp of health services from Overdale to the former school, as this aspect of the project is still being planned. It is now looking likely that services will begin moving across in stages, commencing in spring 2022, with the facility being fully open by December 2022. The healthcare professional quoted by the Senator was correct, based on the information available to him at that time.

2.5.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

The Minister felt he had to email me to ask about my source of information. Is he not concerned that his officers were well aware of the time delay to 2022 and the increase in costs to £15 million?

[11:00]

Is he not concerned that they appear not to have briefed him on the changes?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I emailed the Senator after receiving her question and I asked her in reference to how the statements tallying or not tallying with other Government communications regarding the relocation and I.O. (Information Operations) officers were not aware of any different Government communications regarding the timing. I wish to provide clarity in answering this question as to what the Senator may have heard in other Government communications, simply because you were not aware of it. The Senator talks about a time delay. This work is being planned, it is a project that is in train. There has been no previous estimate of time earlier than 2022 that certainly I.O. officers are aware of.

2.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

About 3 weeks ago I was contacted by a constituent who lives in the Le Clos des Sables area asking me what the neighbourhood forum was and why she was not informed about it and how it was made known. This is on the back of a media article which talked about that said community forum for residents in the area. Can the Minister explain exactly what this forum is? Who was invited to it and whether or not all of the residents of the area were informed and invited to be part of that forum?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, Minister, your sound is fading in and out again. You have become muffled. Whatever you did on the last occasion perhaps you could do it again because that seemed to work.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I will do my best. Thank you, Sir, I am sorry this is causing problems. My understanding is that all residents of the area were invited to the forum. If the Deputy wishes to contact me outside of this Assembly with the details of his constituent, I can investigate why he or she was not involved and ensure that that person is involved in all future communications from the forum.

2.5.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I would like the Minister to provide the exact details of what was sent out to whom and when because I certainly was not informed about it and then to get emails or messages on social media from constituents who live within a stone's throw of that site, to not know about it I think is a jolly poor show. If he could provide that information that I have asked for and perhaps circulate it to all Members but certainly those of us who represent the area in St. Brelade.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Certainly but the Deputy was not informed because I had to simply ask that Parish representatives be informed. Clearly there were a number of attendees at the meeting, so communications had been made directly and were responded to. But perhaps it is difficult if a building might contain 2 households, for example, all sorts of reasons why perhaps it may be individuals who have been missed. But as I have said to the Deputy, we will try and make up any deficit if he or others wish to let me know of people who have an interest and were not contacted, we will certainly put them on the list for future contact.

2.5.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It seems to me that the communications at the Parish level have dismally failed. Would the Minister agree that the consultants have not been advised how the Parishes work? They have not been advised that the first port of call in the Parish is the Roads Committee and the Roads Committee will, in turn, disseminate to residents the findings or any proposed changes. Could I ask the Minister, in the light of our experience not only in St. Helier with the Roads Committee there and also now in St. Brelade, that the consultants being used for this work should be revisited?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I will pass that message on the Constable's views to our hospital team. I am sorry the Constable feels that way. It certainly was the intention and wish to engage with the Parish, Parish representatives and that direction was given. Sorry, if it has not worked out in practice but I will speak again with members of the team to ensure that this is thoroughly done in the future.

2.5.5 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I thank the Minister for his response and would let him know that I had a presentation yesterday from the director general and others on the matter. It seems to me that the traffic management plan is delayed; would he be able to tell Members when this traffic management plan will be presented so that residents can be given comfort?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Right now I am not able to inform the Connétable of a precise date but I will have that investigated and will let him and Members know.

2.5.6 Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade:

Just to let the Minister know I did attend that meeting that is in question. Will the Minister agree that keeping communication going, particularly in the community, is essential to bring this project to fruition? I do live within a stone's distance of Les Quennevais School, so that is possibly why I was invited. But, yes, communication is paramount, does the Minister agree?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Yes, I wholeheartedly agree. I thank the Deputy for emphasising that. I acknowledge that the future use of the school is a matter of importance to the neighbourhood and the Parish. Health is planning to be there for a limited time but it is a huge facility within the Parish that has served public needs for a long time and whatever its future might be, whether temporary by Health or longer term, parishioners always need to be engaged; I hope they always will be.

2.5.7 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

The original explanation of the services to be transferred to Quennevais was that we would not pay for the services but the explanations being made now is that it will be user pays. Is the Minister not concerned that this is yet another development about which he has not been briefed?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I really am puzzled at the occasional comments I receive that suddenly we are going to have to start paying for services that were previously free. It is the case that all health and care services currently provided by H.C.S. (Health and Community Services), that is by the public sector, will continue to be provided free of charge. There is no plan to start charging for services that are currently taxpayer-funded.