

21.05.11

11 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding CYPES and the allocation of the Rouge Bouillon site (OQ.109/2021)

What consultation - and I emphasise the word "consultation" because I recognise other questions around this area have been asked today - has been undertaken with the Department of Children, Young People, Education and Skills regarding the allocation of the former police headquarters site at Rouge Bouillon; has a decision been made that it will not be used for an extension to Rouge Bouillon Primary School and, if so, who made that final decision regarding the allocation of the site?

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

As the Deputy has just stated, most of this has been covered by the Chief Minister previously. As I stated in my response to Oral Question 85/2021 from Deputy Alves, the primary school estate review has commenced. C.Y.P.E.S. are fully engaged with the process and have been furnishing data and information about the current configuration of the school estate and the issues they are seeking to resolve. The outcome of this review will be considered alongside the review of C.Y.P.E.S. for a combined fire and ambulance station completed by the Department of Justice and Home Affairs. No decision about the future use of the former police headquarters site has been made and will not be made until the primary school estate review has concluded.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I just confirm from the Minister who makes that final decision?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

That would be a matter for review for the Council of Ministers and the States Assembly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

A supplementary?

The Bailiff:

Yes, I think that dealt with the original question, so a supplementary is acceptable at this stage.

2.11.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Does the Minister have a timescale for the final decision and, within that timescale, will that decision as you have just inferred, come back to the Assembly given that the final responsibility seems to be for the Minister and the Assembly from your answer just now?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As the Chief Minister stated previously, the report should come back between 4 and 6-weeks' time and then it is a matter for the Council of Ministers and the Assembly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The timescale for that decision?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have a date for ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am being very precise about the wording, sorry, Minister.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have a timescale; I will endeavour to find out for the Deputy.

2.11.2 Senator S.Y. Mézec:

Just for the avoidance of doubt, can the Minister confirm that that there is every possibility that the old police station site could be used to extend Rouge Bouillon School on to and that remains something that is within the realms of possibility and it is not simply a done deal with the Justice and Home Affairs Department for that site?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I can assure the Senator there is no done deal and the decisions will be informed by the report.

2.11.3 Connétable A. Jehan of St. John:

Has the Minister visited the school and is it his view that work needs to be done to improve it and additional space is required?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I have not revisited the school for many years but I know that Property Holdings are reviewing all of the schools as such and any repairs that need to be made will be done.

2.11.4 The Connétable of St. John:

Would the Minister visit the school in the near future?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As I say, the team from Property Holdings are doing all the schools. I do not have a problem visiting the school again; more than happy to do that.

2.11.5 Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I ask the Minister when the review started on this site and how long the expectation of this project or this review was meant to take?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have the exact details of that so I would not like to hazard a guess. But, as I have just stated, it will be back with us between 4 and 6-weeks' time.

2.11.6 Senator T.A. Vallois:

What reassurance can I have from the Minister that this will be the case when in 2019 in an answer to a written question, myself as Minister for Education of the time, requested a strategic review of the property portfolio held by Schools, Education and Children's Services which was linked to the department's growth in the long-term capital programme and now we are only just going to see the product of the review in 4 to 6 weeks' time?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Well obviously it is a cross-departmental report and there have been considerable delays due to COVID but everything takes time and now we are trying to encourage this to be delivered as soon as we can.

2.11.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I just want to go back to the original question regards the final decision regarding the allocation of the site. Can I ask the Minister very clearly, what will your role be in making that final decision; your specific role in making the final decision over the allocation of that site?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

My specific role is not that clear. I am a member of the Regeneration Steering Group, as is the Constable of St. Helier and others; that will be a primary focus. Also, I am a Member of the Council of Ministers and a Member of the Assembly, so it will disseminate down through the line and the decisions will be made. But, as I say, I look forward to seeing the report.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just say that I did ask very specifically, and I have got a very generic answer? It is about accountability, we just simply do not know ...

The Bailiff:

The answer that the Minister gave specifically, as I heard it, was that it was uncertain as to what his final role was and I am not sure the Minister can ...

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The final decision will not be mine alone.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you for that clarity.