

Chief Minister



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Chairman
Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
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26 Sep 2019

Dear Chairman,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th September. In your letter, you ask a number of questions which I will answer below:

Piquet House – Family Court Centre

1. *What work do you expect to be conducted for the renovations of Piquet House?*

Piquet House requires substantial work internally and structurally in order to modernise and future proof the building. At present the building lacks appropriate disabled access which has been considered in the plans for renovation. A feasibility study (commissioned by Jersey Property Holdings) has been undertaken by Axis Mason and demonstrates that the envelope of the building is capable of meeting user requirements.

2. *What “modern facilities” do you expect to be installed at the renovated Piquet House?*

In addition to appropriate disabled access, the court will include a technical fit out that will accommodate video courts which enable courts to operate remotely and on occasion from different jurisdictions. The proposed infrastructure follows the latest applications and it is anticipated that the infrastructure will last a minimum of 10 years considering the rate of development with digital courts and associated hardware.

3. *What role will your Department have within Piquet House following the renovations?*

None. The building will be allocated to the Family Division of the Royal Court, under the auspices of the Judicial Greffe.

4. *Is it envisaged there will be a need to partner operations at Piquet House with other facilities, such as Greenfields, for certain tasks/functions?*

No such need is envisaged. However, it is expected that an office will be permanently allocated to JFCAS who attend the majority of family hearings.

5. *Are you confident that the level of funding requested is sufficient to enable the project to meet its stated aims?*

Funding is in line with the business case submitted in 2019 and therefore the building work and subsequent infrastructure fit out will be achieved, provided that the funds applied for are granted in full.

6. *Are you satisfied that the renovations will be a long-term sustainable option?*

The use of this building and planned work will ensure a valid use of the current site as a Family Court Centre, in close proximity to other court facilities in the Royal Square. The building work will modernise and enhance the current building and ensure that it is put to good use, rather than remaining obsolete.

Courtroom 1

7. *The business case states four options that were considered and that converting the Magistrates courtroom 1 was the most favourable option. Please can you detail the process you undertook to reach this decision.*

As set out in section 3 of the business case four options were considered. The options were identified during a high level desktop exercise to consider viable options of converting an existing court room in the Magistrates Court, building a new courthouse, converting an alternative site or doing nothing and shouldering the risk of only having the capability of conducting a single Assize trial at a time. The option to convert Courtroom 1 was deemed the most appropriate, taking account of affordability, established security arrangements, and the ability to deliver the project within a short period of time whilst minimising disruption to the Court Service. Implementing this project will mean that the Court Service has a viable alternative location that allows the running of concurrent Assize trials, hence improving access to justice.

8. *Are you confident that the level of funding requested is sufficient to enable the project to meet its stated aims?*

At the time of submission of the business case in January 2019, the funding for this project was appropriate. At present this remains the case, however there have been increases in the price of various building materials, such as concrete, that may affect the final cost. It is unlikely that this project would exceed the amount of £500,000.

9. *Are you satisfied that the conversion of courtroom 1 will be a long-term sustainable option?*

The court will include a technical fit out that will accommodate video courts which enable courts to operate remotely and on occasion from different jurisdictions. The proposed infrastructure follows the latest applications and it is anticipated that the infrastructure will

last a minimum of 10 years considering the rate of development with digital courts and associated hardware. Incorporating these technological enhancements will not only benefit the Court Service for an Assize trial capability, but will ensure when used as a courtroom for other purposes, it remains current with the latest technology available.

I hope these responses answer your questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Le Fondré', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Senator John Le Fondré
Chief Minister

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