

2025.09.08

3.4 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding consideration of the economic and social impact should Jersey Zoo close (OQ.183/2025):

Further to recent media coverage regarding Jersey Zoo and Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, has been given to the economic and social impact should Jersey Zoo close its doors or relocate off-Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

I am sure all Members would agree with me that it would be an enormous shame and disappointment to many Islanders if Durrell Jersey Zoo was to close. I must say that, other than media, I have no specific information to suggest that it is in that situation. I can say to the Assembly that no specific consideration has been given by my department to the economic and social impacts. My department does not hold any data on the number of visitors who come to Jersey specifically to visit the zoo, which would obviously be important in order to undertake such an investigation. I might add as well, that while I completely understand the genuine and positive nature that the Deputy is asking the question, I do get slightly concerned when something is brought to the political level publicly, because I would not want to encourage a process by which such an institution was to close just because it is being brought into that political discourse. I am very guarded because of that.

3.4.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Can the Minister tell the Assembly what metrics are used by his department to measure the economic and social benefits that a visitor attraction brings to the wider economy?

[14:45]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is not and would not be appropriate in the main for any department of Government to measure the impacts of a specific organisation or business. We tend to look at sectors as a whole and so we would look at how attractions perhaps within the visitor sector add to the economy. I must say I do not believe we have done that piece of work but that is how we would look at it. I do not think we would ever look at a single business to see what impact that has.

3.4.2 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Could the Minister confirm whether or not he has met with the board of Durrell to establish what is happening in the organisation?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, I have not. Again, I do not believe it is the place of any Minister or politician to necessarily involve itself in the affairs of what is ultimately a private organisation.

3.4.3 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Durrell has been in receipt of a large amount of public money. What kind of support would the Minister consider now for Durrell, given its international local standing in the world of conservation?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is not a question that I have given consideration to at all before this moment, and so I could not answer it in any meaningful way.

3.4.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister welcome Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust's decision to put an end to deer hunting on their Scotland estate that they announced over the summer, and does he think that will help boost their longevity and reputation for visitors in Jersey?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I see what the Deputy is doing there. I meant just in making deer hunting relevant to this question. I genuinely do not know much about the situation with regard to hunting on the estate in Scotland. But I would welcome anything Durrell does that would enhance its longevity and sustainability.

3.4.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does he think it at least helps resolve some cognitive dissonance that members of the public might have with a wildlife preservation trust previously encouraging the killing of animals on its land?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I can absolutely appreciate the cognitive dissonance that people may feel around that. Very superficially, having not thought deeply about it, I probably share that. But I also do understand how, particularly for instance, in wildlife parks across the world - particularly I know in Africa - they often do use hunting as a way to maintain wildlife levels. It is not a simple black and white answer. The management of wildlife is something that is far beyond my abilities, but it is a very complex issue.

3.4.6 Deputy D.J. Warr:

A major factor for the losses incurred by the zoo is the withdrawal of donor funding. What support could the Minister offer the zoo to ensure it has a sustainable future should the decline in donor revenue be so significant that the zoo is no longer financially sustainable?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I could not comment on what support may or may not be available. But what I would say, and this is partly in reference as well to Deputy Wilson's earlier question, is that my door is open. I will not impose myself on the zoo, but they may well, and I am happy for them to impose themselves on me. So if they do wish to speak to me I would be more than happy to do so.