

**2.3 Deputy J. Renouf of the Minister for the Environment regarding the extension of mains water services to properties with elevated PFAS levels in private boreholes in proximity of the airport ‘plume area’ (OQ.34/2026):**

Will the Minister explain why the Government will not currently fund the extension of mains water services to properties with elevated P.F.A.S. (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) levels in private boreholes in proximity of the airport “plume area”, including residents at La Pulente, and advise in what circumstances the Government would consider paying for the provision of mains water services to these properties?

**Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):**

Between 1998 and 2009, properties in the plume were offered mains connections by the former Airport Committee. All properties have been connected with the exception of 2; they were individual choices in those 2 cases. Currently there is no programme for mains connection based on the plume area. The plume, defined by Arcadis, is the area of groundwater contamination where the level is above 100 nanograms per litre, which is the drinking water inspectorate guidelines. La Pulente is below this level and therefore not within the defined plume area.

**2.3.1 Deputy J. Renouf:**

The residents had their water tested by Jersey Water relatively recently and it was determined that the signature of the water had the same signature as the plume. In other words suggesting that the water was contaminated in the same way as the main plume area. If this were the case, would the Minister be prepared to sanction the extension of mains water, since it would be the same pollution that other residents in the plume area had also benefited from a mains connection?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Groundwater can contain P.F.A.S. from a range of sources, including potentially the historic airport activities. My officers have not confirmed the direct link in the case of La Pulente, but what I can say is that P.F.A.S. levels in drinking water in that area are below the drinking water inspectorate guidelines. I am not going to say anything very much more, other than we did put a requirement on those houses to be put on to mains water that were above 100 nanograms per litre, and that the homes in the La Pulente area are not in excess of that number.

**2.3.2 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:**

As the Minister said, a number of properties in St Brelade with wells and boreholes have been connected to the mains to avoid further contamination, but there does not seem to be a consistent approach. Some households have had to pay for themselves and for others it was provided. But some are paying water bills and some are not. In the cases where they are not, it is Ports that are paying. Could the Minister explain why there is no consistent approach to the provision and billing of mains water services to those households?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

It is not my understanding that there is an inconsistent approach to this problem. As I have said, houses that were in the defined plume area, which had a water level reading of over 100 nanograms, were under an agreement from the Airport Committee of the day to have a mains connection made to them. If other houses have had mains connections which they have had to pay for, I can only presume that they are outside of the plume area or that the testing that was done to their water supply was less than the required amount in order for them to get a free connection.

**2.3.3 Deputy H.M. Miles:**

It is not so much about the connection as the ongoing water bills. Some households are paying for their own water; other households, their water bill is being funded by Ports of Jersey. This is what residents are telling

me. Would the Minister agree to audit those households to ensure that there is a level playing field and to ensure fairness to all households?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Water bills paid by the Airport are confidential, as far as I am concerned, but they are certainly not part of what I would regard as Government policy. If Ports want to come to a private arrangement with certain houses to pay for their water bills that is up to them and their board. But all I can say is the consistency has been applied. We have connected houses to mains water free of charge, under that initial plume area, where the levels of contamination were above 100 nanograms per litre. That is what is being done. As far as I am concerned, this is a Ports issue that the Deputy is talking about, not a Government issue.

**2.3.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:**

From the Minister's answers, I understood that there is no level found at La Pulente to justify connecting to the mains. But from the question from Deputy Renouf, I understood that Jersey Water has found traces, a signature, in the water. Would the Minister explain the difference and if the Minister would agree to testing by the department of La Pulente boreholes to settle the question whether the plume's signature is found or not?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I have had an amount of correspondence with the residents in the La Pulente area, and I can tell the Deputy that I instructed my officers to arrange tap water testing at the 9 properties that are not connected to the mains water in that area. Jersey Water took those tests. None returned P.F.A.S. levels above the water inspectorate guidelines, as I have said. Four properties, which have in-home filtration under the sink, tested lower than one nanogram per litre. I can only go back to the area and say the area defined as the plume is over a particular 100 nanograms per litre. The connections and stuff like that were done under historic with the Airport Committee of the day.

**2.3.5 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:**

I wonder if the Minister would agree to meet with the residents in this area, and if not why not?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I have, as I said, had a number of email exchanges with the residents of the area. I owe them another response, which I will endeavour to do at the end of this States sitting. As for meeting with them, I am not sure what a meeting can achieve. I have certainly set my case out very clearly and, as much as I sympathise with their concerns, there are solutions, which officers of mine have visited them all to advise them on those solutions. I could not say more than that, really. They are asking for mains water supply. I am aware that that would have a considerable cost involved with it, although cost is not a consideration for me particularly. But as for a meeting, if the residents want to meet me I will meet them, but I can say here and now that I am not sure that there is anything I can offer them other than what I have done so far, and what I will do in the forthcoming email that I will send them at the end of this week.

**2.3.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

The Parish and District representatives, as well as others, have been copied into or been sent the email that the Minister received, where our constituents are saying that they believe it has been unequivocally confirmed that their boreholes contain signature firefighting foam from the airport, but also the fact that the levels that they have seen in their water of P.F.A.S. have increased from 2022 to 2025. I note the Minister saying that he will be responding to some of the latest emails that have been sent, but does the Minister agree that - like other colleagues who have asked - first of all this increase, if it needs to be clarified because there does seem to be a discrepancy in what the Minister is telling us with what the residents are telling us they have been told by the scientific panel? Secondly, that all residents in the area need to be treated equally if they are all experiencing consequences of that firefighting foam pollution.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

The connection between the P.F.A.S. in the water in the La Pulente area and the airport has not been confirmed to me. It was suggested, I am told, informally at a meeting of the P.F.A.S. panel with some residents. I can definitely say in order to the questions around has this water been analysed to make sure that it has the same signature as the firefighting foam at the airport, that this work has not been done on those specific water tests taken from that area. The scientific P.F.A.S. panel did not undertake that type of testing. That type of testing was done by Arcadis. It is usually expensive. But that is not the reason for my answer. The reason is that Arcadis have not been asked to test the water from the La Pulente area. Therefore, I can stand here now and say I have no detailed evidence in front of me to tell me that this is absolutely the same contamination that has come from the airport.

#### **2.3.7 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Does the Minister accept the statement of the residents that the P.F.A.S. in their water has increased since 2022?

#### **Deputy S.G. Luce:**

As I said, I instructed my officers to arrange tap water testing. It is quite a while now, I cannot quite remember the date that those tests were done. But if the residents are telling me that - and I have nothing else to go on, I have to take them on their word - it would certainly be, in my experience, unusual inasmuch as other tests in the area are falling.

#### **2.3.8 Deputy J. Renouf:**

It seems to me as if the Minister is dancing around the issue here. What we have is a situation where the residents are reporting their P.F.A.S. levels are rising. They have been told, after a meeting with the P.F.A.S. panel, that the signature was the same - or the fingerprint rather - of the P.F.A.S. in their water was similar, if not the same, to the airport plume. The Minister now says that he does not accept that that is proven to him, therefore, why will he not agree to do the testing that would settle this matter once and for all? Surely that is the least we can do for those residents.

[15:00]

#### **Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I take the sentiment of the Deputy's question on board, but I have to ask myself, if I committed to a very expensive test of the water for a few residents in the La Pulente area where the water coming out of the ground was not above 100 nanograms per litre, if I agreed to do that, I would then be obliged, if I am going to be consistent, to do it for anybody else on the Island. There is no direct link that I can see at the moment with evidence to show that La Pulente is linked definitively to the airport side. Therefore, I have to treat La Pulente area as outside of the plume area and then as the same as any other area on the Island. Arcadis have been brought over from the U.K. (United Kingdom) to do testing and we may have to look at it, but I cannot unequivocally say that I will do that because once I set the precedent, I might be opening myself to multiple claims for similar testing throughout the Island, which could run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds.