

2026.03.24

3.7 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the decision to sell Philip Le Feuvre House and Huguenot House (OQ.47/2026):

Will the Minister advise how consideration of obtaining value for money informed his decision to sell Philip Le Feuvre House and Huguenot House and will he explain why the decision was taken to sell the site in 2 parts (excluding 38 La Motte Street)?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. Value for money is always at the forefront of my mind. I think I have explained in this Assembly that every fortnight I get an update on empty properties, including their rental value and the value of the property. In respect of the question, it is natural that when someone is selling a property, they want to get the best deal possible, and this property sale was no different. To drive the best value, we used an experienced, independent external agent and have marketed the properties twice in the past 2 years. I believe we have delivered the best overall value for the Social Security Fund. The property is not being sold in 2 parts. La Motte Street is being retained and will be transferred in due course to Health and Care Jersey for their ongoing use.

3.7.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Does the Minister recognise that by selling the site in 2 parts - and I appreciate he has just said that we are not selling the site in 2 parts, but the fact is that it is being split out - there is a real danger that the site may well be land-banked while the developer waits for the adjacent site to come on the market? Are there any mechanisms in place to ensure that the development of the site is not delayed?

The Connétable of St. John:

The part of the site that we have retained is going to be used for very important mental health services. I would encourage Members to go and see the facility that is currently being served at the back of that site, which will be moving to the front of the site. In terms of the site being delayed, I think the market value dictates that it is a tough time in the market, and that is why we got the price we got.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

That has not answered my question about are there any mechanisms in place to ensure the development of the site is not delayed?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Can you help with that Minister?

The Connétable of St. John:

The sale of the property will see us receive a significant sum on passing contracts in court, and then we receive the balance within 6 months of that contract being passed. There is nothing in the contract to ensure that the development takes place in 6 weeks, 6 months or 6 years.

3.7.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

The Minister just answered part of where I was going to ask on this. But given that the site was zoned in this Island Plan with designation or anticipation for a type of housing in that the most recent Government Plans have also re-emphasised a level of affordable housing provision on that site, and given that the market value was based on those, will the Minister just clarify that, notwithstanding there is no protection within the contract of sale, to actually deliver what the market value was based upon? That obviously all things in and around those policies could change and that his officers have not baked in any protections whatsoever?

The Connétable of St. John:

The sale has been made, subject to the debate we are going to have later in this Assembly, for freehold property, and any development there will be subject to planning guidelines at the time.

3.7.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could the Minister just then further clarify if there is any policy consideration when it came to sale that the site would be providing housing, or whether he considers this just a pure disposal of a site for ... well, he describes a large amount, a small amount of £2.3 million? I should declare I own and live on the road and we should declare on questions.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Noted.

The Connétable of St. John:

I understand that the site is going to be developed for housing, but that, as I said earlier, will be subject to receiving the appropriate planning.

3.7.4 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am concerned, and I follow up with my colleague here, Deputy Curtis, is this a sign of a flog-and-forget approach which is being taken here by the Infrastructure Department? The Minister must recognise that we have sites around town, and I am not sure if I am allowed to name them ... am I allowed to name sites around town, which remain undeveloped at this time? Yes. We have the old Apollo Hotel site, we have Les Sablons site; there is a real danger that we yet again end up with another site which is sitting there empty, which is not encouraging people to invest in our capital city. Does the Minister understand why it is important that we get on with these developments and they are developed?

The Connétable of St. John:

I certainly do, and this Minister for Infrastructure has taken decisions to invest in our capital St. Helier, invest in public realm, invest to try and encourage other people to invest in St. Helier, to make it a nice place to live, to work and to visit. I certainly hope that the sites mentioned by the Deputy are developed as soon as possible. The same Deputy criticises us for holding on to empty sites. Here we have a fund that owns the site, not Property Holdings. We act as the agent. We have sold the property on behalf of the fund, and we will encourage the buyer to develop as soon as practically possible.