

STATES OF JERSEY



ISLAND PLAN 2022-25: APPROVAL (P.36/2021) – SEVENTY EIGHTH AMENDMENT

REZONE FIELD H1219A FOR ACCESSIBLE HOMES

Lodged au Greffe on 7th February 2022
by the Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

ISLAND PLAN 2022-2025: APPROVAL (P.36/2021) –
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After the words “the draft Island Plan 2022-25” insert the words “except that –

(a) the following should be removed from the list of sites to be zoned for affordable homes in Policy H5 – Provision of affordable homes –

“5. Field H1219, La Grande Route de Mont a L'Abbé, St. Helier (1.20 hectares/6.6 vergées)”;

(b) within Policy H6, after the first paragraph there should be inserted the following new paragraph –

“The following site should be specifically zoned for the provision of purpose-built fully-accessible homes for people with disabilities, and its development for any other use will not be supported:

Field H1219, La Grande Route de Mont a L'Abbé, St. Helier (1.20 hectares/6.6 vergées)”;

(c) the draft Island Plan 2022-25 should be further amended in such respects as may be necessary consequent upon the adoption of (a) and (b); and

(d) the Draft Bridging Island Plan Proposals Map Part A – Planning Zones should be amended to reflect the adoption of (a) and (b).”

DEPUTY S.M. AHIER OF ST. HELIER

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to approve, in accordance with Article 3(1) of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, as amended by the Covid-19 (Island Plan) (Jersey) Regulations 2021, the draft Island Plan 2022-25, **except that –**

(a) the following should be removed from the list of sites to be zoned for affordable homes in Policy H5 – Provision of affordable homes –

“5. Field H1219, La Grande Route de Mont a L'Abbé, St. Helier (1.20 hectares/6.6 vergées)”;

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(c) the draft Island Plan 2022-25 should be further amended in such respects as may be necessary consequent upon the adoption of (a) and (b); and

(d) the Draft Bridging Island Plan Proposals Map Part A – Planning Zones should be amended to reflect the adoption of (a) and (b).”

REPORT

Background/Rationale

The Objective Assessment of Housing Need conducted in 2018 (“OAHN”) reported that “vulnerable groups such as people with mental health issues, learning disabilities, [and] physical disabilities... might not be well supported”, for which they gave three reasons: a shortage of workers; a shortage of volunteers and informal support; and the fact that such vulnerable people are often “not perceived as a high priority”¹. Whilst the Bridging Island Plan does make housing provisions specifically for older people, there are legitimate concerns which arise from its failure to address the future housing needs of disabled people in Jersey.

Although the Draft bridging Island Plan Consultation Document (“DBIP”) did expressly state that “New housing must meet the diverse, specialised needs of people with disabilities”, it went on to make the following observation: “Changes to the island’s building byelaws in 2007 have... meant that all new homes constructed since that time enable occupants with disabilities to cope better with reduced mobility, which is often a factor in older age”². It is important to recognise that, firstly, reduced mobility is but one type or aspect of disability; and secondly, that not all disabilities are acquired later in life. Even then, the Disability Strategy for Jersey (which was published 10 years after the byelaw changes of 2007) noted that 31% of disabled islanders still experienced difficulty moving around in their home³.

As aforementioned, the DBIP does consider that the need for more specialist housing will grow as “the island’s population profile becomes more aged”, but the report also states that a “population-based approach to the future level of provision will... need to be considered against the ambitions of the new Jersey Care Model which seeks to move away from the unsustainable institutional-based model of care, into a more modern community-based structure”⁴. This seems to explicitly advocate enabling independent and supported living for people with disabilities for as long as possible: an aim which simply cannot be achieved unless there is sufficient housing stock to offer a viable alternative to institutionalisation.

There are clearly, then, three very compelling reasons to set aside housing specifically for disabled people: because the island-wide housing shortage acknowledged by the Island Plan will more severely impact people with disabilities; because the needs of people with disabilities must and should be correctly prioritised by this Government; and because the Government has a responsibility to ensure “equal access to housing and equitable social outcomes” for people with disabilities, as enshrined in the DBIP.⁵

¹<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/Objective%20Assessment%20of%20Housing%20Need%20Report.pdf> p.8

²<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Environment%20and%20greener%20living/C%20Draft%20Bridging%20Island%20Plan%20Digital1.pdf> p.194

³<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/R%20Disability%20Strategy%20For%20Jersey%20Standard%20Version%2020170525%20DS.pdf> p.21

⁴<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Environment%20and%20greener%20living/C%20Draft%20Bridging%20Island%20Plan%20Digital1.pdf> p.195

⁵ Ibid, p.194

Attractiveness of H1219

The Strategic Issues and Options Consultation, carried out as part of the Island Plan Review in 2019, found that “Of the seven different spatial strategy options presented in the consultation, respondents showed the most support for focusing development within St Helier, with 71% of respondents supporting this option.”⁶ The independent planning inspectors’ report into the draft Bridging Island Plan (“IPIR”) noted that H1219 “lies well within the urban area at perhaps the most sustainable location of all the proposed allocations [within H5]”⁷ and that the field “appears to have no exceptional ecological value”⁸. It therefore seems as if this site is a strong candidate for rezoning, and the benefits of its urban location are likely to be more keenly felt by people who are more dependent on services such as, for example, public transport.

The OAHN also reports that “homes [which] better meet the needs of older people... are best provided in those parts of the island’s built-up area with best access and proximity to local services, facilities, and public transport”⁹. It is logical to conclude that people with disabilities would likewise benefit from accommodation which affords the best access and proximity to services that they require. If this is accepted, then Field H1219’s proximity to Mont a L’Abbé School might prove a great help to families with disabled children, for example; it would also circumvent the concerns, noted by the IPIR, “about the ability of the schools in St Helier to accommodate more pupils from new development, particularly at primary level”¹⁰.

Data Gap

There is a huge data gap locally when it comes to how many units would need to be built now to support the future needs of disabled children who would prefer to live at home, or whose families would want them to remain at home, for as long as possible. There is likewise no publicly-available data on how many disabled people in Jersey are living in institutionalised settings because of a lack of specialist housing.

It is not for politicians to provide this information. Rather, if the provision of this housing must be dependent on a needs assessment, then it is for the Government to order that such an assessment be undertaken; and, for the purposes of this amendment, it should be assumed that any assessment undertaken will uncover a need for (at least) a proportionate provision of housing. For the sake of clarity: this amendment is proceeding on the assumption that at least some affordable housing will be needed by disabled people in future.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications in relation to the inclusion of the site as identified.

⁶<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/IP-findings%20report-digital%20111219.pdf> p.1

⁷<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/R%20Jersey%20Draft%20Bridging%20Island%20Plan%20EiP%20Inspectors%20Report%20to%20Minister%20for%20the%20Environment.pdf> p.31

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.32

⁹<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/Objective%20Assessment%20of%20Housing%20Need%20Report.pdf> p.194

¹⁰<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/R%20Jersey%20Draft%20Bridging%20Island%20Plan%20EiP%20Inspectors%20Report%20to%20Minister%20for%20the%20Environment.pdf> p.38

CRIA statement

This amendment has been assessed in relation to the [Bridging Island Plan CRIA](#). It is envisaged that this amendment would benefit disabled children as well as adults, who both have a right to suitable accommodation that they can remain in long-term.