

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
BY DEPUTY M.B. ANDREWS OF ST HELIER NORTH  
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 17th JUNE 2024  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 24th JUNE 2024**

**Question**

“Will the Minister advise what actions, if any, he has taken in 2024 to –

- (a) encourage increased footfall in St. Helier, with particular reference to King Street and Queen Street;
- (b) engage with local businesses to promote and encourage footfall in St. Helier; and
- (c) address the empty shops in Town?”

**Answer**

- a) Footfall is one of the key indicators of the health of a High Street, however it only paints half the picture. If the footfall is not being converted to store entry or sales, it is not valuable on its own.

Work continues on a series of ‘quick wins’ for the Central Markets to improve both the retail and cultural experience of shoppers and drive increased footfall. Events programmes are also important to encourage footfall, particularly in the off-season and events such as Public Voice Common Ground, the Lunar New Year festival and La Saison Française have been employed to drive increased footfall to St Helier.

Footfall is now monitored by the introduction of two additional footfall cameras (installed in December 2023) on Queen Street and King Street. This has given us more data around the concentration of footfall and will be comparable year-on-year from this December.

- b) Work is underway with retailers and the Parish of St Helier to shape the forthcoming Retail Strategy and identify public realm improvements, marketing opportunities and meanwhile-uses for Jersey’s high street.

In line with the findings of the 2023 Consumer Survey, officers are also working with local businesses to provide greater flexibility for Sunday trading.

Furthermore, Jersey Business is in constant contact with local businesses to help them develop compelling business plans to entice more footfall.

- c) The Retail Strategy, due to be published this year, will address the various levers we can use to drive down vacancy rates. Amongst the early actions identified from this are the creation of a playbook for prospective retailers interested in investing in St Helier to encourage further investment, this will be published in July 2024.

However, there is not a silver bullet, and it will take a combination of efforts, as well as the acknowledgment of market changes to feel a marked difference on the high street. Landlords’ decisions also play a big part in vacancy rates.

There will always be some natural vacancy as the nature of the High Street changes, and where buildings are sold and redeveloped there may be a period in between tenants. Where this is the case, government has sought ways to work with landlords on meanwhile use in some of the empty shops.

To date, this has included charity promotion, photography exhibitions, art auctions and public engagement activation.