

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023- 2026 (P.97/2022): TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT

GAS PLACE PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

**Lodged au Greffe on 28th November 2022
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023-2026 (P.97/2022): TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (i) –

After the words “set out in Appendix 3 to the Report” insert the words –

“except that, on Page 55, after the words “while the review of the project is concluded.” insert the following words –

“This Head of Expenditure is also expected to be used to secure sites relating to the use of the Gas Place for a new primary school. The school would be set in an extension to the Millennium Town Park and Islanders should enjoy the maximum possible community access to and use of its facilities. In addition, the current Springfield School and Le Bas Centre sites will be transformed into new community open spaces, helping to create green access corridors for moving to and around the new school, and improvements to public realm and local active travel access routes, including to St. Saviour schools.””

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

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

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

to receive the Government Plan 2023–2026 specified in Article 9(1) of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (“the Law”) and specifically –

- (a) to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2023 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law;
- (b) to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2023, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approvals;
- (c) to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2023 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law;
- (d) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2023 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 4 to the Report;
- (e) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated

Fund for 2023, for each Head of Expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report;

- (f) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2023 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report;
- (g) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2023 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report;
- (h) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2023 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report; and
- (i) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2023-2026, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report, **except that, on Page 55, after the words “while the review of the project is included.” insert the following words –**

“This Head of Expenditure is also expected to be used to secure sites relating to the use of the Gas Place for a new primary school. The school would be set in an extension to the Millennium Town Park and Islanders should enjoy the maximum possible community access to and use of its facilities. In addition, the current Springfield School and Le Bas Centre sites will be transformed into new community open spaces, helping to create green access corridors for moving to and around the new school, and improvements to public realm and local active travel access routes, including to St. Saviour schools.”

REPORT

Introduction

The Common Strategic Policy, recently adopted by the States Assembly, commits to modernising school facilities, particularly in St. Helier. It makes a firm commitment to: *“create schools that are hubs within our communities, hosting multiple services for children and families, and making the best use of our education facilities.”*

At the same time, the Policy commits to ensure that, *“Jersey’s children and young people can...access green space wherever they live, learn and play.”*

This Amendment seeks to get to the heart of these two vital and related issues, by presenting an ambitious and balanced route to create new, modern and high quality primary school facilities for children and families living in the east of town, and to ensure that all town residents and visitors to the area have access to more, and well distributed, open spaces.

Creating a greener and more liveable St. Helier

It is a stark fact that, in 2018¹, only 36% of adults living in St. Helier were ‘very satisfied’ with their local neighbourhood, compared with 60% of adults Island-wide. The trend is also for St. Helier residents to feel less satisfied than previously: 45% of town residents felt very satisfied with their town neighbourhood in 2014.

To close this satisfaction gap will require a sustained, coordinated and strategic response. It will be achieved by the Government facilitating and leading closer joint working with the Parish of St. Helier; residents and community groups; local businesses including many of those in the retail heart of town; arms-length partners including Andium Homes, the Jersey Development Company and Ports of Jersey; and the island’s construction sector.

Working in partnership in this way, we will bring forward ambitious plans and the investment to deliver them. We will transform our public realm, creating more space for pedestrians and cyclists and more opportunity to move around town and to make those connections – with new people, places and opportunities – that lie at the heart of what makes urban environments exciting and vibrant.

We will use active delivery partnerships to improve both the quality and the affordability of housing, ensuring that the right public service infrastructure is built and maintained to support these homes.

In particular though, we will address the fact that, in St. Helier, access to amenity green space, natural green space and in particular, equipped children’s play facilities, falls below standards that are expected elsewhere². As the number of people living in St. Helier increases, so does the demand and need for good quality, accessible open spaces.

Attractive and accessible parks, squares and streets make for a better quality of life and help to support physical and mental health and wellbeing. A network of well-designed and cared-for open spaces and streets adds to the character of places where people want

¹ [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2018](#)

² [St. Helier Open Space Audit \(gov.je\)](#)

to live, work and visit. Open spaces provide sporting facilities, areas for children to play or beautiful parks for people to relax in.

The availability of this local green and community infrastructure becomes increasingly important in those neighbourhoods where there is higher density housing.

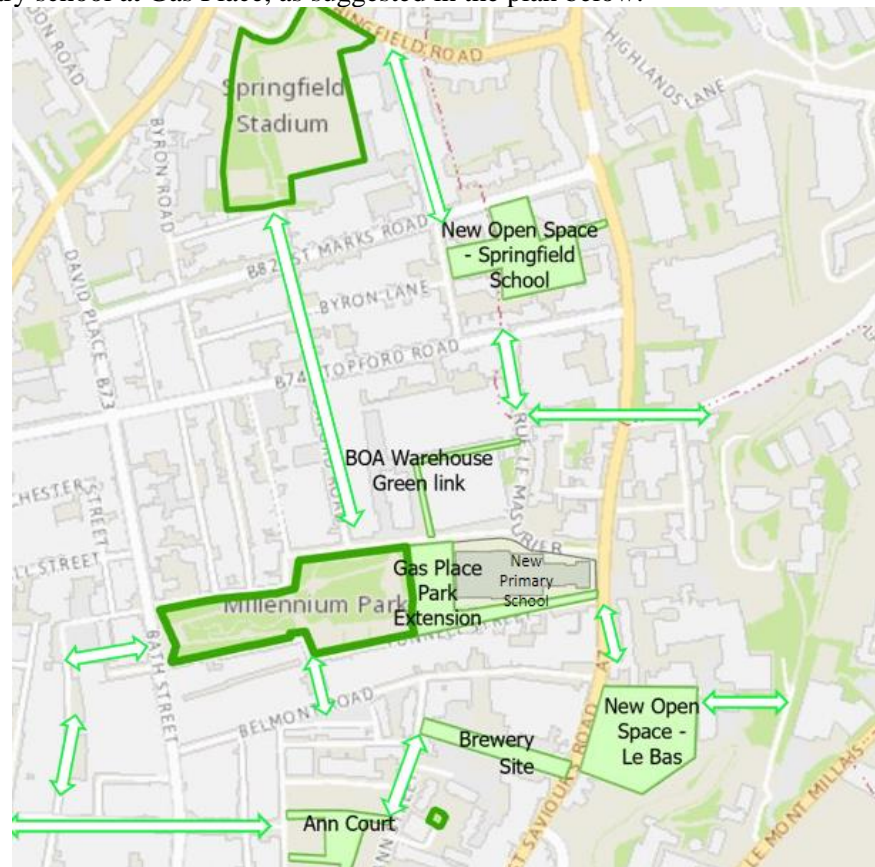
New public open space at Springfield and Le Bas – enhancing green infrastructure in St. Helier and St. Saviour

Vital green infrastructure, comprising open spaces and trees, enables us to deal with floods or mitigate and adapt to climate change, contribute to urban cooling, provide shade and store water and carbon; they also provide important wildlife habitats.

This Amendment proposes the creation of around 12,000 m² of new public open space at the Springfield School and Le Bas centre sites³; a space around one-third larger than the 9,072 m² potentially available at the Gas Place site.

Quantity of space though carries much more value if it is situated in the right places and connected in the right way. By distributing open space across the north of town, as proposed, the amenity value is spread across a range of neighbourhoods.

New open space at the Springfield School and Le Bas centre sites, together with improvements at key junctions and crossing points, also offers the opportunity to create new green movement corridors that will connect local children and families to the primary school at Gas Place, as suggested in the plan below.



³ The Springfield school site is 5,079 m² and the Le Bas Centre site is 6,873 m²

Investing in the future of all Jersey children

At the same time, ministers have agreed with the previous assembly's conclusion that the right site for a new East of Town Primary school is at the old gas works site adjacent to the Millennium Town Park. This decision is informed by the extensive consideration of requirements and analysis of options, which is summarised in the published concluding report of the Town Primary School Review.

There is a very strong case for investing in our whole Primary School estate in the town area. This is based on:

- the poor condition of many town area schools (in both parishes of St. Helier and St. Saviour), including Rouge Bouillon, Springfield and La Sente schools. Victoria College Prep. School is also in poor repair, but with an Island-wide catchment rather than a local one, and is being developed as a discreet project.
- the current inability of schools' building and facilities to offer wider services to children and families that are much needed, including the response to new and emerging conditions and needs.
- the opportunity to have a well-planned, modern and efficient school estate of fewer, bigger schools in the main urban area of Jersey, to achieve a 'better and more efficient' system.

The challenges facing schools in town are significant; including the delivery of the curriculum for all pupils, many with additional learning needs, and within buildings that are aging and built more than half a century ago.

In particular, the present schools estate in town is a barrier to the provision of wider services to children and their families, if wrapped around schools and families in a coordinated way, have significant potential to improve outcomes. New school facilities provide an excellent opportunity for services to be co-located, fostering relationships between families and professionals and facilitating access to a range of community services, delivered by both Government and the third sector. There are strong examples where collaboration between services appear seamless to the end user and deliver better outcomes for children and families.

What do our children need for the future?

The requirements identified in the Town Primary School Review have driven the identification of the Gas Place site as the most appropriate location for the required two-form entry school and SEMH provision. These requirements are to:

- provide a catalyst to improve teaching and learning practice across not only town but all primary schools, delivered through the Education Reform Programme
- create centres of excellence for inclusion practice and support for children with the most significant needs, in St. Helier and beyond
- provide a central community hub supporting children and their families and carers to access services to improve their lives, and

- enable key policy options within the Education Reform Programme to address the poor condition of some primary schools in the town area, and make the delivery of primary school education more efficient and effective.

Our planning for new primary school provision in the town area builds from the needs and talents of our children and their families, and learns from the best international practice. These developments are a key part of our ambitious Education Reform Programme, funded in the Government Plan, to move Jersey's education to compare favourably with the best in the world.

Our vision is for new town schools to be the centre of their communities for a full and inclusive range of services for children and families. Accordingly, the new school will:

- Be the centre of modern language learning and will be a hub for emerging and early English language learners.
- Offer a modern and innovative curriculum that focuses on the environment, providing additional facilities for pupils to contribute to Jersey's understanding of the impact of globalisation on the local environment.
- Foster the innovative use of information technology; creativity and curiosity will be the heart of learning.
- Our schools will develop excellence from the youngest years, and provide dedicated spaces for community use, inclusive practice and a focus on specialist subjects – such as modern languages, art, environmental sciences and information technology.
- Child development and school readiness will support the high ambitions of the school with a focus on parenting skills and child and family health not only for children attending these and neighbour schools.

In addition, the construction of the two new town primary schools provide the opportunity to create a fully integrated inclusive early years and primary provision with a multi-disciplinary team supporting both children and their families. The vision is:

- To provide a centre of excellence for inclusion to inspire, challenge and innovate exceptional leadership in inclusive educational practice, improving the outcomes for all young people and their families across Jersey.
- To enable the inclusion services to be fully integrated, providing training courses; specific areas of leadership such as support in behaviour management; and bespoke school-to-school support for both early years, primary and secondary transition.
- To enable a focus on co-educating, supporting both young people, practitioners and families in understanding and supporting with education and the broader contexts of social & emotional well-being, health and mental well-being.
- To develop a truly integrated therapeutically trained specialist service, which would help to improve early identification of needs and allow for the relevant support strategies and interventions to be put in place at an early stage for both children and their families.

Why start at Gas Place?

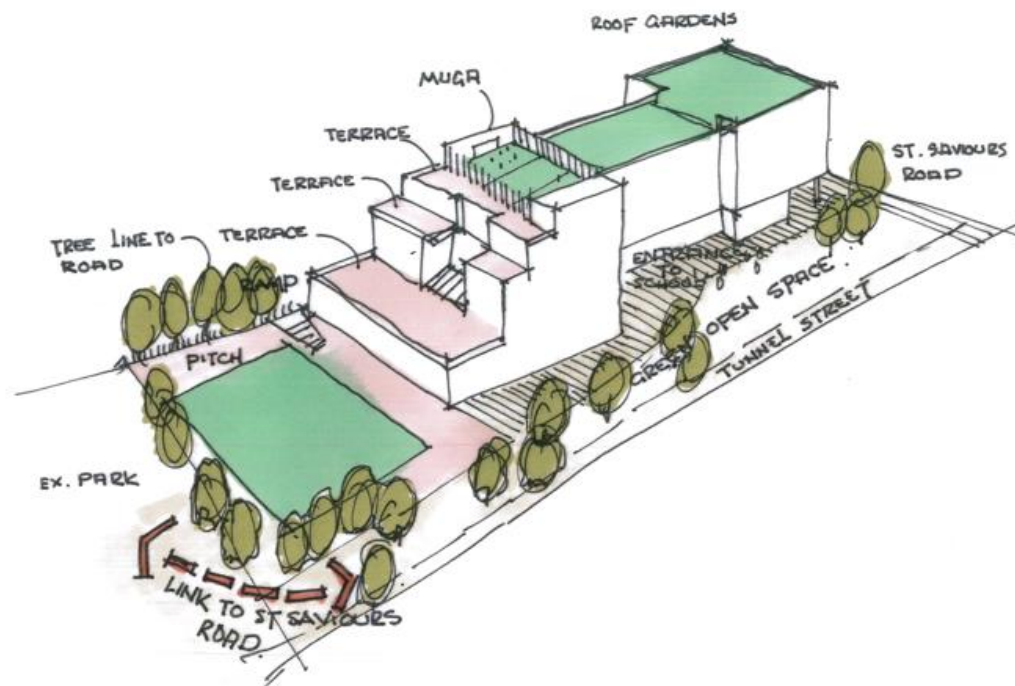
Work to date has concluded that two new primary schools are needed in order to meet these requirements, with the current number of forms of entry retained following any building programme (there are currently 14 forms of entry across 8 'town' schools).

Although there has been focus on replacing Rouge Bouillon School remains key, there is also an ongoing identified need to address other aging primary school buildings.

Ministers believe it is appropriate to start with the new east of town primary school, accepting that some pragmatism is required to ensure new facilities are brought onstream within sensible timeframes, and recognising the opportunity presented by the currently vacant sites at Gas Place.

In reaching this conclusion, Ministers have made clear that:

- work must be expedited to develop options for the new west of town primary school;
- new open spaces and other green and active travel infrastructure must be brought forward to off-set the alternative use of gas place as an extension to the town park; and
- that the design of the new school facility will maximise community access and movement across the Gas Place site, and take full advantage of new approaches to creating green spaces within the fabric of the building, in order to retain the maximum at grade access to the park extension, whilst designing in appropriate safeguarding arrangements. The indicative sketch below suggest how such an approach might work.



Thorough consideration of alternative site options

States Members will recognise that the Town Primary School Review report⁴, published by the Minister for Children and Education on 20 October this year, sets out the findings of a wide ranging site assessment process undertaken by Jersey Property Holdings supports the approach taken in this Amendment.

The site assessment considered publicly owned sites and explored the potential of sites in private ownership, concluding that there were no private sites of sufficient size or appropriate location within St. Helier. In the same context, ministers have expressed caution about the suggested potential to divert the BOA Warehouse site from its planned development for affordable and open market homes.

We will continue to support Andium Homes, taking care to avoid detracting from their effective work, and will discuss the land implications of this amendment with them in a strategic way with regard to a range of future potential development opportunities.

Balancing outcomes for the whole community

As ever, the planning challenges involved in reaching this position involve balancing a range of competing interests and opportunities that will effect Islanders in different ways.

Given the close weighting of options, it is unsurprising that the Assembly has addressed the pertinent issues on several occasions, including when considering:

- [P.114/2017](#), which established the principle that, in developing the Gas Place site for housing there should also an allocation of space for a significant extension to Millennium Town Park;
- [P.43/2021 \(as amended\)](#), which established, amongst other things, that no site in Government ownership which is suitable for a modern primary school in St. Helier should be allocated for another purpose until the action to identify and fund a suitable site has been completed;
- [P.36/2021 amd.\(6\)](#), which established specific policy requirements in the Bridging Island Plan to prioritise the delivery of primary education facilities in St. Helier; and
- [P.36/2021 amd.\(8\)](#), which established that the Jersey Gas site shall be safeguarded for education use, unless it can be demonstrated that the site is not required for education use.

This amendment to the Government Plan finally puts us in a position where true progress can be made, aligned to the will of the Assembly as recently expressed. It is recognised that the proposed way forward will divide opinions amongst some people. However, it represents a pragmatic response to the real need to improve town schools now, and to expand open space and green infrastructure with St. Helier on an on-going basis.

Financial and manpower implications

The Land Acquisition Head of Expenditure will be used to acquire the Gas Place site, recognising that any purchase is planned to be funded through the application of receipts of one-off income, asset disposal proceeds and land swaps.

⁴ [Town Primary School Review \(gov.je\)](#)

Necessary investment to transform the current Springfield School and Le Bas centre sites into new community open spaces, helping to create green access corridors to the new school, and benefitting for new active travel access routes and improved public realm, will be set out in future Government Plans.