

STATES OF JERSEY



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

**Lodged au Greffe on 5th December 2022
by the Connétable of St. Helier
Earliest date for debate: 13th December 2022**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023-2026 (P.97/2022): TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT (P.97/2022 AMD.(21)) – SECOND AMENDMENT

PAGE 2 –

After the words “including to St. Saviour schools.” insert the words –

“Development of the new primary schools and the new open spaces will be subject to ratification in a Town masterplan, to be developed by the Council of Ministers and approved by the States Assembly.”

CONNÉTABLE OF ST HELIER

Note: After this amendment, the amendment of the Council of Ministers would read as follows –

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 “including St. Saviour Schools” 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. **Development of the new primary schools and the new open spaces will be subject to ratification in a Town masterplan, to be developed by the Council of Ministers and approved by the States Assembly.**””

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;

“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. Development of the new primary schools and the new open spaces will be subject to ratification in a Town masterplan, to be developed by the Council of Ministers and approved by the States Assembly.

REPORT

Like so much policy making in respect of Jersey's capital, a masterplan for Town* is long overdue. The absence of one has allowed successive Councils of Ministers and, in particular, the Planning Department, to support ad hoc and piecemeal developments which have led to the North of St Helier, in particular, being subjected to town cramming by Government. When the Island's main housing delivery body, Andium Homes, sounded the alarm last year, and contended that the Jersey Gas site should not be built upon but should instead be used to extend the Millennium Town Park, both the previous Council of Ministers and the present one decided that they knew better, supporting proposals in the Bridging Island Plan (which also supports the need for a plan for Town) that the site in question should be prioritised for the provision of a new primary school.

There is no argument that the primary school estate in the Island's main urban area needs improvement but the Government has been aware of this for decades, especially in relation to the deteriorating fabric of Rouge Bouillon School. This was supposed to be addressed when the new police station was completed and there was space adjacent to the school to allow for improvements to be carried out, but the Ministers of the day decided to use it for other purposes.

The absence of a masterplan for Town is one of the reasons for the recent and costly failure of the Our Hospital Project at Overdale for, had there been an 'active travel' network in place at the time of the application, which would have flowed naturally from the holistic approach to transport that is fundamental in a masterplan, addressing such matters as a sustainable transport solution for staff, patients and visitors to access the new hospital, it could have been shown that the damaging, ad hoc access proposals advanced by the project team were unnecessary and, indeed, contrary to the policies already adopted by the States Assembly in relation to the Climate Change Emergency.

Unless and until a Town masterplan is put in place, this Government will continue to pay lip service to the need to provide open space in town, and the Island will miss the unique opportunity to extend a park which, owing to its small size, already struggles to meet the needs of the people of all ages for whom it is an essential part of the quality of town life. Nearly one thousand additional units of housing in the area surrounding the Millennium Town Park are in the pipeline and it is disingenuous for Ministers to argue that the open space needs of present and future generations can be met by providing what will be a narrow corridor alongside a large new primary school beside the present park, supplemented by new parks on sites such as Springfield School and the Le Bas Centre, at some time in the future and subject, of course, to the changing priorities of a future Government.

In conclusion, a masterplan for Town is needed because of

1. the ever increasing residential development and density of Town;
2. the lack of a holistic, comprehensive and cohesive plan setting out what Town will be like to live in over the coming decades;
3. the lack of an active travel plan for cycling and walking in and around Town;
4. the lack of the long awaited strategies for public transport and parking;
5. the lack of an understanding of how all the proposed new developments by public and private parties will affect vehicular traffic, cycling and pedestrian flows in and around Town;

6. the lack of meaningful data about how well current open space provision in Town is meeting the needs of its current users;
7. the absence of data about how Town's community facilities including youth and community centres and playgrounds are meeting present needs;
8. the present piecemeal approach to the development of Town, however well intentioned, which risks creating a muddled, confusing public realm and facilities, inadequate travel options, and overall poor quality of life for our growing town community for decades to come.

The specific potential developments outlined in amendment 21 should only proceed if they fit appropriately within a masterplan for the overall development of the Town. This will enable us to properly factor in all aspects of our community's needs to develop a plan that will stand us in good stead to develop a sustainable plan for the benefit of all those that live in Town as well as those who visit for work or leisure.

Financial and manpower implications

Fortunately there are perhaps a dozen professionally researched planning studies carried out over the past decade, including the North of Town Masterplan, the EDAW report, two Urban Character Appraisals, the Village Improvement Scheme report by WSP commissioned by the Parish of St Helier, and various supporting studies carried out as part of successive Island Plans. Earlier visionary work such as led to the Environmental Protection and Improvement Areas of the mid 1990s is also relevant. There is, therefore, a huge amount of material already available and if the amendment is accepted we would not be working on a blank canvas. I am unable to quantify the exact cost of the exercise or its timescale but suggest that if it the development of the town masterplan was carried out by a Scrutiny sub-committee it could be met from existing budgets.

* The word 'Town' is used to denote not only St Helier but the urban areas in adjacent Parishes in the bowl of the Island's main urban area, as described in the Bridging Island Plan.