STATES OF JERSEY

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): TWENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT

ST. HELIER'S NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT AREA PROGRAMMES

Lodged au Greffe on 12th November 2024
by Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North
Earliest date for debate: 26th November 2024

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): TWENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 4, PARAGRAPH (o) –

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

“, except that, on Page 59, after the words “in subsequent Budgets subject to affordability.” there should be inserted the following new paragraph –

“The Treasury Minister will request additional funding for the period 2025-2028 from the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC) of up to £500,000, to support St. Helier’s Neighbourhood Improvement Area programmes, recognising that a matching funding allocation will also be made by the ratepayers of the Parish of St. Helier.””.

DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH

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 2025 – 2028 (entitled “Budget 2025-2028”) 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 2025 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 2025, 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 approval amounts.

(c) to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2025 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 a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Stabilisation Fund in 2025 of up to £25 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on the availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2024 in excess of the estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2025.

(e) to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Agricultural Loans Fund in 2025 of up to £2 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2024 in excess of estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2025;

(f) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2025 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.

(g) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2025, 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.

(h) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2025 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report.

(i) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation's trading fund for 2025 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.

(j) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2025 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report.

(k) to approve an updated and consolidated policy of the Strategic Reserve Fund as follows:

"The Strategic Reserve Fund, established in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2005, is a permanent reserve only to be used:

i. in exceptional circumstances to insulate the Island's economy from severe structural decline such as the sudden collapse of a major Island industry or from major natural disaster.

ii. if necessary, for the purposes of providing funding (up to £100 million) for the Bank Depositors Compensation Scheme established under the Banking Business (Depositors Compensation) (Jersey) Regulations 2009, including to meet the States contribution to the Scheme and/or to meet any temporary cash flow funding requirements of the Scheme.

iii. to support the development of future healthcare facilities and the borrowing costs for such work, in line with a financing strategy agreed by the Assembly;

iv. as a holding fund for any or all monies raised through external financing until required, and for any monies related to the repayment of debt raised through external financing used to offset the repayment of debt, as and when required; and

v. in accordance with Article 24 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019, where the Minister for Treasury and Resources is satisfied that there exists an immediate threat to the health or safety of any of the inhabitants of Jersey, to the stability of the economy in Jersey or to the environment, for which no other suitable funding is available."

(l) to approve the transfer to the Strategic Reserve of the amounts due as a result of the move from prior-year basis taxation after 31st December 2025, as and when these payments are received (estimated at £280 million).

(m) in relation to the new Government Headquarters (office), to approve;

i. the exercising of the option to acquire the new Government Headquarters (estimated at £91 million), by the Public of the Island, in line with the pre-agreed terms; and

ii. the acquisition of the new Government Headquarters as an investment of the Social Security (Reserve) Fund (including authorising the meeting of expenses incurred in connection with the acquisition); and

iii. the subsequent leasing of the new Government Headquarters by the Public of the Island from the Social Security (Reserve) Fund, with commercial terms to be agreed between the Minister for Infrastructure (on behalf of the Public) and Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Treasury and Resources (both on behalf of the Fund); and

(n) in relation to the new Government Headquarters, to authorise H.M. Attorney General, the Greffier of the States, the Ministers for Infrastructure, Social Security and Treasury and Resources, and the Public of the Island, to enter into such arrangements, including financing, and pass any contracts as are necessary to put into effect paragraph (m).

(o) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2025-2028, as set out in the Appendix to the accompanying Report, except that, on Page 59, after the words "in subsequent Budgets subject to affordability." there should be inserted the following new paragraph –

"The Treasury Minister will request additional funding for the period 2025-2028 from the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC) of up to £500,000, to support St. Helier's Neighbourhood Improvement Area programmes, recognising that a matching funding allocation will also be made by the ratepayers of the Parish of St. Helier."".

REPORT

The revitalisation of St Helier is one of the Council of Ministers' Common Strategic Policy Priorities[1]

Over recent decades many promises and commitments have been made by the States Assembly concerning much needed investment in St Helier.

Whilst the significant majority of these promises and commitments have fallen by the wayside, the most notable success was the Environmental Protection and Improvement Areas (EPIA) that were introduced in the mid-1990s and were phased out at the turn of the Century due to budget cuts of the day.

Their aim was to safeguard the quality of life for town residents in light of increasing road traffic, and they delivered a comprehensive programme of neighbourhood environmental and safety improvements.

Regeneration of St Helier has been, and remains, a priority for the Island. In 2009 the approval of P.79/2009 (as amended) set out a Property and Infrastructure Regeneration process and approved the change of purpose – and indeed name – of the Waterfront Enterprise Board Limited, to the States of Jersey Development Company Limited, with the revised remit including undertaking regeneration projects within designated Regeneration Zones.

Of the £5m set aside by the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC) in 2019 for further infrastructure projects, £3m remains unspent and the Government's Regeneration Steering Group (RSG) has now earmarked these remaining funds for feasibility and preliminary works relating to Fort Regent improvements which, co-incidentally, are now being progressed by the SOJDC.

To date, the RSG has not allocated any of the SOJDC's £5m budget to improve the lives of town residents.

The residents of St Helier continue to live with enduring pollution, increased traffic and unsafe roads as a consequence of the Assembly's successive decisions to prioritise residential development in town, without recognising the impact to existing town residents or the need for a corresponding investment into town's infrastructure, facilities and amenities; be that new schools, dedicated green spaces, or cycling and pedestrian networks.

For the past two decades, many Islanders have witnessed an uncoordinated approach to the development of St Helier, believing there is an underlying assumption by the Government that St Helier ratepayers will indefinitely continue to subsidise policies that seek to increase the number of housing units in town, and that they must be prepared to accept the consequential financial and non-financial impact of these policies.

The Assembly's perceived lack of empathy and understanding of the current pressures of town living, combined with a lack of effective engagement with urban residents, is likely to create further disparities and divisions in our community between those who

[1] https://statesassembly.gov.je/assemblypropositions/2024/p.51-2024%20(re-issue).pdf

live in town and those who live in the country. We are in danger of creating a community where 'townies' are expected to tolerate relentless development and its deleterious impacts on their quality of life, without proper and effective consideration of amenities and green spaces for town living, and without having a voice.

More recently following a proposition brought by Connétable Crowcroft requesting a town masterplan (withdrawn before debate), the Council of Ministers agreed to ringfence SoJDC receipts to fund regeneration in St. Helier. These receipts were to be ringfenced for 5 years delivering a total investment of £15m to St Helier, and it's residential areas, but it transpires this funding has been earmarked for public realm improvements to areas as Broad Street and New Street, and not parish specific regeneration.

The Government's Common Strategic Priorities identify the need to revitalise town and afford specific priority to developing safe pedestrian and cycling routes. In response, the Parish of St Helier has developed plans to regenerate areas of town that have been affected by the Government's urban development and planning policies.

Under the banner of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs), the Parish is initially proposing improvements to Poonah and Pomona Roads as part of a larger plan to reinvest in areas that have been most affected by high-density housing. These plans not only serve to modernise and rejuvenate run down areas of town, but they will also start to improve pedestrian access and could also provide opportunities for a safer cycling network in town and are subsequently aligned with Common Strategic Priorities. This NIA has a provisional price tag of £1m.

St Helier parishioners have not forgotten the previous promises of investment that have been made in the States Chamber over the years. At this year's Rates Assembly, Parishioners sent a clear message that it is time for the Government to make good on its historic promises and to fund these NIAs.

Equally, there is a significant opportunity for the Assembly to accelerate the delivery of its commitment to rejuvenate St Helier through further joint funding initiatives with the Parish of St Helier.

Using the same approach and principles as the recent Halkett Street refurbishment, the model of joint funded projects between the Government and Parish has already been successfully tested, simultaneously accelerating the delivery of important regeneration projects in St. Helier, in line with the Common Strategic Policy. This success should be seen as a model for similar projects in St. Helier and how parish land can be regenerated using a combined model of funding between parish and SoJDC.

Furthermore, the funding that would be made available through this amendment would enhance the individual characteristics of the Parish and of the neighbourhoods within them, which was one of the aims of the SoJDC following its establishment in 2009.

In this regard it makes sense to align Government and Parish priorities and resources towards a common purpose. Equally, the regeneration of Poonah and Pomona Roads will improve not only the quality of life for town residents but could also start to provide much needed improvements to pedestrian and cycle networks in town.

There are several projects that have been on hold for years across all areas of St. Helier, and this amendment proposes a funding model which can help to regenerate parish land in St. Helier. Bringing the potential scope to extend into other parishes if it is a success, and for such a scheme to become standard practice for SoJDC when working in co-ordination with the Parishes and Government.

The ratepayers of the Parish of St Helier already provide a £500,000 per year contribution to NIA projects within their parish, this amendment seeks to ensure that SoJDC matches this contribution to provide further support for NIA projects. It must be ensured that this £1,000,000 is only used for parish led projects.

If this funding were to become available in 2025's budget, it is possible that two NIAs could be completed during the current election cycle; this would provide a practical demonstration to the residents of St. Helier that the States Assembly recognises its responsibility to address the direct and indirect consequences of policies that concentrate housing growth in St Helier.

The aims of St. Helier and the Council of Ministers align, so it is to be hoped that they will be supportive of this amendment, designed to push forward the regeneration of St Helier.

Finally, a reminder that one of the 13 Common Strategic Priorities for the current Council of Ministers –

Deliver a plan to revitalise Town	Environmental Wellbeing	Built environment

Financial and staffing implications

This amendment would require the resource of officer time to draft the policy documents required for such a funding model. SoJDC is 100% Government owned so no costs would be incurred direct to Government for requesting this new funding model. Officer cost would be covered by the Department for Infrastructures annual budget.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.