

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): SEVENTEENTH AMENDMENT (P.51/2024 AMD.(17)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 22nd November 2024
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers appreciates the Deputy's desire to accelerate the provision of new youth and community facilities at Le Squez. However, contrary to assertions in the report accompanying the amendment, this project is not "ready to go" as claimed – it is currently at feasibility stage, detailed design works are still to take place, and planning approval has neither been sought nor gained.

The three-year fixed financial allocation provided by the Amendment does not match the cashflow profile that would be required for the project. For example, significant preparatory works would be required before construction could commence, so the £2.5 million allocated to 2025 would not be spent in full.

Government does not yet have a finalised and agreed project scope and design. The £7.5 million identified reflects the estimated cost in the supporting business case for Government Plan 2024-27, but it may be necessary to agree a different level of funding as planning for the project matures. For example, some initial detailed planning work has provided higher cost estimates to realise the Government's full ambition for the site. Further work is needed to refine the proposition for Le Squez and to take into account the forthcoming flagship youth project proposed for Ann Street. While that site in no way negates the need for a development at Le Squez, its relative proximity, and the fact that it is partly intended to act as a destination for young people from across the Island, means it has implications for the facilities that are required at Le Squez. To maximise the impact of the two projects, we need to ensure that they complement each other and the youth service is able to provide as diverse a range of services as possible to young people in the area.

The Council of Ministers has to consider the overall affordability and deliverability of the capital programme and inevitably not everything can be done at once. CYPES have prioritised additional provision in the Town area as being desperately needed, and there are existing facilities at Le Squez, although it is accepted that these are in need of improvement. As such and given the constraints on the overall level of capital being recommended for inclusion in the Budget, it has been necessary to sequence these major investments in the youth service by reprofiling the Le Squez project to the later years of the plan.

At present the project is scheduled to recommence in 2028.

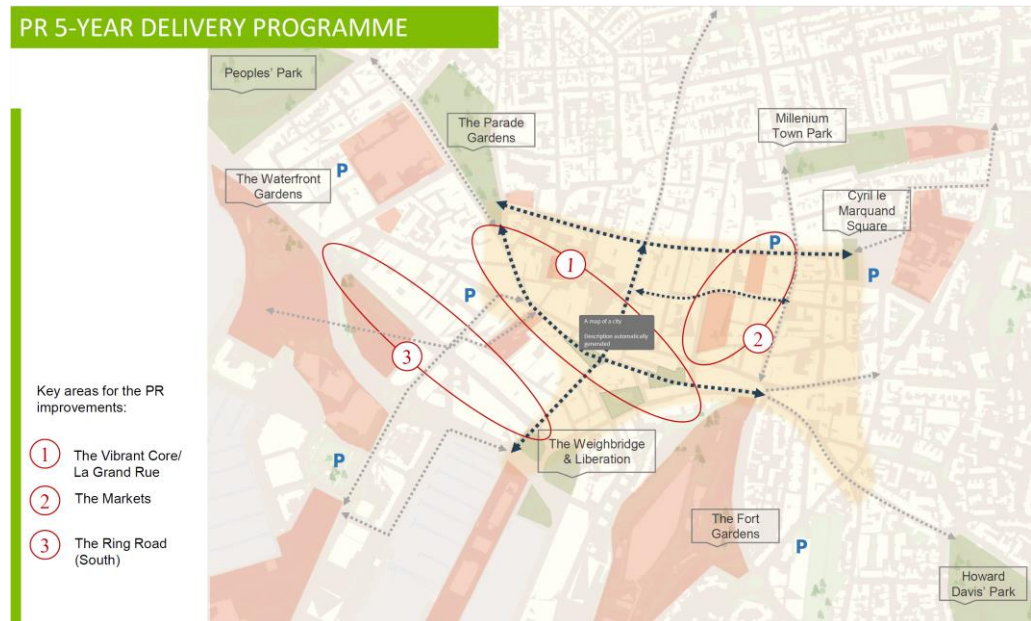
The Council of Ministers urges Members to reject the amendment, as it seeks to withdraw funding from the Infrastructure Rolling Vote (Public Realm) for 3 years to fund the Le Squez project.

Public Realm

As part of the plan to deliver the 11th Common Strategic Policy (Deliver a Plan to Revitalise Town) the public realm programme provides a holistic approach to creating a vibrant and healthy Town core to live, work, and visit. The programme has the potential to create cultural and economic vibrancy and in turn to promote wellbeing. Attractive streets and places attract more tourism, greater footfall increases the spend in local shops and businesses, as well as space for siting and outdoor dining.

The objective is to create more healthy streets by reducing car dependency and enhancing active and sustainable travel opportunities such as cycling and walking and making streets more inclusive and increase opportunities for tree planting to green St Helier.

The programme focuses on improving key shopping and cultural sites around the town centre, such as Broad St and the Markets. An important part of the programme is also 'Bridging the Ring Road' which will seek to address existing constraints caused by vehicular dominance by improving crossings, increasing safety and permeability, linking St Helier's community to the town centre and important amenities.



Included within the current projected financial envelope of Public Realm funding, are works to “the Vibrant Core” (New Cut, Broad Street, New Street, York Street/Parade and Library Place) which span 5 years of the programme. 2026 and 2027 sees works around the public markets crossings and Minden Place, with the Western Bus Gateway scheme scheduled for delivery in 2025/26, part funded by Planning Obligation Agreements.



The Public Realm programme has already been scaled back as the budget reductions in 2024 and the Budget 2025-28 have reduced the sums available to £2.5 million.

Scheme designs for the Western Bus Gateway, and the first stages of the Vibrant Core works (New Cut crossover / Broad Street “gateway”) have been prepared and whilst these projects are in delivery in 2025, detailed design for the next phase schemes will be finalised for delivery in 2026. Removing funding at this stage will halt or significantly further extend the programme, losing momentum and deliverability of the remaining schemes.



New Cut Crossing (2025)



La Motte Street (2023/4)

Projects delivered over previous years under the banner of Public Realm include various Village enhancement schemes (St John, Trinity, St Mary, St Ouen,), projects in St Helier such as La Motte Street, Charing Cross and part funding support for Parish Projects such as Halkett Street, where they contribute or “tie in” to other schemes in the vicinity.

Infrastructure Rolling Vote

Funding for Public Realm projects is contained within an overall head of expenditure for Infrastructure projects (the Infrastructure Rolling Vote or IRV) that represents the most significant programme of infrastructure investment in the Budget.

The IRV is a programme of continual improvements to maintain key infrastructure such as the Island’s roads, drains and sea defences, which need continual maintenance and replacement over time. This is vital ongoing activity that is integral to the continued functioning of critical infrastructure that Islanders depend on.

If approved, removal of £2.5 million of funding within this head of expenditure effectively stops the entire Public Realm programme of works for at least 3 years and puts other elements of Infrastructure renewal activity at risk. This will have a major impact on the CSP priority to revitalise the town and potentially incur avoidable maintenance costs where streets due for improvement works fall below the minimum safety standards and require immediate repair.

Changing priorities, lack of surety of funding and stopping / restarting projects and programmes of work leads to inefficiency and duplication of effort, as well as fostering uncertainty in the local supply chain. Projects for 2025 are ready to go, with designs for 2026 schemes already in preparation.