

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023- 2026 (P.97/2022): TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT (P.97/2022 AMD.(21)) – SECOND AMENDMENT (P.97/2022 AMD.(21).AMD.(2)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 8th December 2022
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers very much recognise the need to take a holistic approach to the future planning and development of town. It is essential that the development activity which takes place is capable of best meeting the needs of Islanders, whilst equally improving the quality and liveability of the town environment.

One of the first actions taken by the Chief Minister upon appointment to office was to establish the Future Places Ministerial Group ('the FPMG')¹. The Connétable of St Helier is a standing member of the FPMG.

The terms of reference (see footnote) highlight that the FPMG exists to improve the governance, coordination, and delivery of improvements in Jersey's built environment, including amenities, recognising the importance of this for the quality of life of Islanders. Specifically, the purpose of the group is to respond to known challenges in connecting spatial and infrastructure planning, understanding the cumulative impact of development in a place and allocating government sites for development.

The scope of this group includes:

- considering Jersey's future needs holistically and strategically, not one site at a time, focusing on better outcomes for Islanders.
- responding to known infrastructure challenges and support value for money and affordability in developments.
- assuring delivery of major development programmes and think more systematically about the interdependencies between them and their cumulative impact on both our construction industry and our built environment.
- providing a more comprehensive perspective to the Government asset planning, such as schools.

The approach to developing and regenerating a large area like the Town of St Helier needs to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to evolving needs and priorities, whilst ensuring that development activity is cohesive and delivers overall improvements to town, as a whole.

From a planning and regulation perspective, the bridging Island Plan recognises that the sustainable development of town is integral to the success of the Island. As the Connétable highlights in his report, much work has already been undertaken – most recently in the St Helier Urban Character Appraisal - to identify what is required to protect and enhance its characteristics to ensure that it is a better place to live, and where people have strong sense of place and identity with their neighbourhood.

The bridging Island Plan sets out a new Plan for Town. This approach provides not only a comprehensive framework to guide the positive development of town, but also ensures flexibility to deal with pressing development needs, in the most appropriate way. In this case, there is compelling evidence of need for new education facilities in this part of town, and clear opportunity for it to be successfully delivered in a way that accords with the Island Plan and which contributes positively to the sustainable development of St Helier. We therefore do not support the notion that a detailed masterplan should be a prerequisite to the delivery of essential community infrastructure.

¹ [MD-CM-2022-0632](#) Future Places Ministerial Group: Establishment and [terms of reference](#)

The Minister for Children and Education's Town Primary School Review and associated Council of Minister's amendment enables the delivery of a new primary school, in the best available location and without unreasonable delay and commits to the creation of two new green spaces- at the site of Springfield primary school and Le Bas Centre The Connétable's further amendment only serves to frustrate the delivery of this essential element of community infrastructure, where its delivery would also be the catalyst for the release and re-purposing of other public sites.

It is not disputed that there is clear evidence of the need for new public open space in town. The Minister for the Environment's St Helier Open Space Audit and the adoption of benchmark space standards in the bridging Island Plan highlight this, and the Council of Ministers amendment directly responds to it.

This commitment very much includes improvements to linkages between spaces and places. Work is already underway to deliver this through the St Helier Public Realm and Movement Strategy, which sets out a clear vision as to how the management and use of road space across St Helier can be changed in favour of safe and efficient travel by walking and cycling. The strategy sets out how a better public realm can create more liveable neighbourhoods and provide an active travel network across the town.

These objectives will be used to ensure that the new development of a primary school and public open space in the town is successfully delivered in an integrated way that makes a positive contribution to the sustainable development of St Helier.

It must be recognised that the competition for space in St Helier is high. Land is not readily available. We cannot wait for all our needs, opportunities and choices to fall into alignment with a fixed masterplan for St Helier. This Council of Ministers have promised to deliver for Islanders. We are doing this by not only proposing the development of a new school, but to rebalance the north of town area with more open space than would otherwise have been possible. We appreciate that a longer-term, more strategic view of development needs and opportunities in town will be beneficial, and we are exploring how we might develop a more detailed spatial framework for St Helier. This framework will bring together future needs and opportunities in a more cohesive manner, in pursuance of the objectives established by the FPMG.

It is on this basis, the second amendment to amendment twenty-one should be rejected in favour of continuing with the plan proposed by the Council of Ministers - so we deliver much needed primary education and open space for the residents of the north of St Helier, rather than introducing yet more and extensive delay.

Comment under Standing Order 37A

This comment was submitted after the noon deadline in order that final checks and due diligence could be undertaken, given the extensive number of Amendments to which due consideration was needed. We apologise to Members for this delay.
