

JERSEY
FARMERS
UNION



11th November 2022

Deputy Steve Luce
Chair
Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
JE1 1DD

Dear Chairman

Government Plan Review 2023 - 2026

Thank you for allowing us to comment on the proposed Government Plan 2023-2026.

In your letter you highlighted areas that you felt we could have some useful input so I will deal with those first and then give our view on the theme of affordable housing.

The industry is pleased that VED on commercial vehicles and agricultural tractors has been frozen (p90 GP23-26). I trust the Panel realise that this is fair and reasonable as, other than small vans, there are no electric options available. It would seem that tractor manufacturers are not sure if electric or hydrogen will be the best power source for vehicles that work long hours at slow speeds but with a large power requirement.

We are pleased that in I-IHE-GP23-001 there is a confirmed recognition for the value of our countryside which we as an industry are the custodians. We have worked closely with Government to improve water quality, mostly by our own initiatives. We have played a full part in the new Wildlife Law and welcome its introduction as most of it is already covered by our LEAF management system. On a related issue on page 81 of the Plan there is a sum of £425,000 earmarked for biodiversity crisis initiatives which we have not been consulted on at all. Perhaps your Panel can get more detail on this?

One other issue that is concerning in the Plan is funding for agriculture. In the budget for example £900,000 is allocated for RIS in 2023 then it drops by £200,000 in year one and a further £100,000 in years two and three. This seems at odds with annex page 71 which clearly states we should be on an equal footing with the UK and EU. The Minister for the Economy has publicly stated that he will be fighting to get the extra money so that the budget

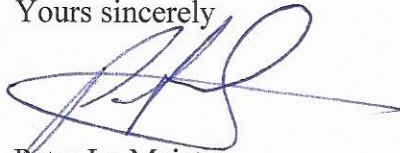
will remain at £900,000 for subsequent years. We trust that your Panel will hold him to account for this amount.

As the majority of our members live in the countryside where mains drains are not always available, we are pleased to note that there is an increase in funding for mains sewers (p59 GP23-26).

Hydrocarbons and Fuel (p56 GP23-26 Annex) – It is perfectly understandable that Government are proposing extra funding in this area as we all know that the price of fuel in the Island has more than doubled in the last 12 months.

One final point on affordable housing which is a central theme for much of the plan (p 66) - *“Land is made available through the planning process to ensure that more affordable homes can be built whether on rezoned sites or in developments on public land”*. The JFU took an active part in the 3 year Bridging Island Plan and gave the inspectors a detailed view of those land sites being proposed. On morning one of the hearings, I made the point that I believed that it was a failure of the strategy before us that no value had been agreed for land being put forward. The number of fields being suggested far outweighed the total requirement for this 3year period. I am certainly not advocating general land price control but in this scenario it would have made sense. I see that one of the sites agreed has now been sold for around £500,000 a vergee so I think this makes the point.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Peter Le Maistre', written over a horizontal line.

Peter Le Maistre
President