

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY J.H. YOUNG OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 8th OCTOBER 2013**

Question

Will the Minister—

- (a) confirm whether the Policies of the Island Plan requires the States of Jersey Development Company to ensure that their proposed development of the Esplanade for the Jersey International Finance Centre fully complies with the Hopkins Masterplan of April 2008 and the Supplementary Guidance of April 2006;
- (b) inform the Assembly of any agreed changes which have been made to the 2008 Masterplan;
- (c) provide details of the extant consents for the Esplanade development, including the conditions of consent and Planning obligation agreements in force, to ensure the sinking of La Route de la Liberation is fully achieved before the Island Plan reaches its expiry date in 2020; and
- (d) ensure this policy requirement is rigorously enforced?

Answer

It is assumed the question relates to "the Esplanade Quarter" project and not the neighbouring road "the Esplanade".

- (a) Policy BE2: Delivery of the St Helier Waterfront of the 2011 Island Plan provides the principal element of the planning policy framework for the assessment of any planning applications relating to the St Helier Waterfront, including the Esplanade Quarter.

The policy states that the supplementary planning guidance for the St Helier Waterfront, represented by *The Jersey Waterfront - Supplementary Planning Guidance, April 2006* and the *Esplanade Quarter Masterplan - Supplementary Planning Guidance, April 2008* will be the principal material considerations in the determination of planning applications for the St Helier Waterfront and that applications which accord with the planning framework will be permitted.

- (b) The Minister for Planning and Environment made and published an amendment to the *Esplanade Quarter Masterplan - Supplementary Planning Guidance* in March 2011.

The amendment sought to respond to the emerging demand for commercial office floor space and resulted in some changes to the proposed layout, size, scale and location of the open spaces and buildings in the eastern section of the Esplanade Quarter.

The broad concept of the master plan to provide a new waterfront with streets and squares with a firm emphasis on design quality and place making did not change with this Amendment. The Amendment however made it clear that the sinking of La Route de Liberation would not take place at the start of work on Esplanade Quarter but would now be part of a later phase.

(c) The extant consents for the Esplanade Quarter are:

- Planning application PP/2008/1680 was approved in July 2010 and granted outline planning permission for a mixed use development of 620,000 sq ft of offices, 388 residential apartments, 65 self-catering units, winter gardens, boutique hotel, 54,000 sq ft restaurant / retail, public open spaces, 1425 car parking spaces (900 private car parking spaces and 525 public ones) with a new underground road tunnel and other associated road works and landscaping.
- Planning application P/2009/1462 was approved in February 2010 and granted permission for a scheme known as Zephyrus, comprising 59 residential apartments in five buildings with ground floor commercial space and associated basement parking and storage.
- Planning application P/2012/1141 was approved in August 2013 and granted permission for "Building 4" as an office block of 67,000 sq ft (net) with associated basement and landscaping, plus the temporary relocation of existing car park.

The application PP/2008/1680 and P/2012/1141 as noted above were approved with conditions and both also were the subject of Planning Obligation Agreements, which are available to view on the States of Jersey website. The planning application PP/2008/1680 which was granted consent on July 2010 was the subject of extensive public consultation and was also the subject of a full Public Inquiry. It was a complex scheme which was supported by the independent Inspector whose report in favour of the scheme was endorsed by the former Minister Senator Cohen

Approval of application P/2012/1141 was informed by the SPG of March 2011. The scheme was acknowledged to be compliant with the terms of the SPG and the broad objectives of the Masterplan. The approval also required the submission of a phasing plan prior to the commencement of development, to include the timetable for the sinking of La Route de la Liberation and the balance of the wider Masterplan works.

None of the approved schemes have been implemented and, as yet, the wider 'phasing plan' information has not been submitted to my department. Whilst the Masterplan sets a general vision for the area, it is not the Planning Department which is responsible for bringing forward developments or ensuring their delivery.

The Masterplan sets out the sinking of the road as a later phase of work, after the delivery of new modern office space. There is no requirement for the works to be complete before 2020. The 2008 Master plan is embedded in the 2011 Island Plan and it may also be carried forward into future Island Plan reviews. It is a strategic long-term project.

Although the Deputy only asked for details of extant consents in his question, it should also be noted that other applications have been submitted for the Esplanade Quarter site, and are yet to be determined, specifically:

- Planning application P/2008/1681 was submitted in August 2008, and seeks detailed planning permission for excavation and enabling works to form basement car park, new underground road tunnel and other associated road works and general infrastructural works. This application has not been determined. A financial bond was deemed to be essential to ensure the completion of those works and this key element was never successfully negotiated.
 - Planning application P/2013/0993 was submitted on 18 July 2013, and seeks permission for "Building 1" as an office block with associated basement and landscaping, plus temporary relocation of existing public car park. This application is pending a determination.
 - Planning application P/2013/1209 was submitted on 28 September 2013 and seeks permission to construct a 520 space underground public car park on three and a half levels with a new public park on the surface. This is pending a determination.
- (d) As required under law, the Minister shall grant planning permission for development which accords with the Island Plan. The law also provides the Minister with discretion to grant planning permission that is inconsistent with the Island Plan where the Minister is satisfied that there is sufficient justification for doing so.

In assessing all applications, it is incumbent upon the Minister to have regard to and to weigh the individual considerations that apply to each case and to determine each application accordingly, having set out his justification for doing so.

In this respect, and as the Planning and Environment Minister, I can confirm that I will ensure that the policies of the 2011 Island Plan, and the guidance associated with them, will remain my primary consideration, to be weighed and considered against other matters raised by any proposed development.