

STATES OF JERSEY



SPRINGFIELD – PROTECTION OF AMENITY SPACE AND FACILITIES

Lodged au Greffe on 14th June 2021
by the Connétable of St. Helier
Earliest date for debate: 20th July 2021

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister of Infrastructure, and the Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture –

(a) in respect of Springfield Park –

- (i) to maintain the same amount of open amenity green space and tree planting in the grounds of Springfield Stadium in the course of upgrading the pitch;
- (ii) to leave the children’s playground in its present position; and
- (iii) to facilitate regular meetings with the local residents’ association and elected representatives of the area in order that the needs of the local community can be taken into consideration both for the current use of the Park and in any future plans;

(b) in respect of Springfield Stadium –

- (i) to maintain the current lease arrangements with the day nursery on the site (Leeward Child Care), with only cost of living increases implemented until such time as the nursery’s management is satisfied with the terms of any new lease Jersey Property Holdings wishes to negotiate;
- (ii) to review the use of the car park within the Robin Hood gyratory and to report back to the States on the options for increasing the benefits of the site for the operation of Springfield;
- (iii) to include Springfield Park and Stadium on the route for the proposed new Town ‘Hopper’ bus service; and
- (iv) to facilitate regular meetings with the tenants of the stadium, the local residents’ association and elected representatives of the area in order that the needs of the local community can be taken into consideration both for the current use of the Stadium, and in any future plans.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

In February this year I sought assurances from the Minister of EDTSC that there will be no net loss of public amenity space, including publicly accessible grassed areas, nor any loss of trees, arising from a latest planning application P.2020/1263) for Springfield park. In his capacity as rapporteur, the Assistant Minister, the Deputy of Trinity, gave the guarantees that I was seeking in respect of the protection of the park's amenity space but he was unclear about whether the trees could be protected. He also agreed to meet with the elected representatives of the area and to keep them apprised of developments at Springfield but to date no such engagement has been undertaken. Both I, the Senators and the Deputies for St Helier No. 2 District are therefore still in the dark about the future of this important community facility. I am also concerned that a further attempt may be made to relocate the popular playground in order to allow for the expansion of the car park, something which I have resisted in the past, as the current arrangement works well.

I have recently been contacted by the operators of the Day Nursery at Springfield who have been informed by the Minister for Infrastructure that the terms of their lease are to be drastically changed. While it is to be understood that the Property Holdings Department needs to pursue a policy of market rentals, especially given the history of the Government's woeful handling of its property portfolio, I believe that the Department is being unreasonable in expecting an invaluable day care facility to take on board swingeing increases in rental (initially the increase was 62%, now reduced to 45% in the first year, rising to 62% in year 4) which will inevitably impact adversely the 120 families who depend on these facilities, and potentially the 30 staff who are employed there. If the proposed rental hike and other new costs which the nursery will be expected to bear are not reconsidered each family with a child using a full time place will have to find an extra £400-£500 a year for each child to continue using the nursery. The day nursery, which has operated successfully on this site for 23 years, is also being advised that their new lease will include a 3 year break clause, which is also unreasonable if the operators are to run the nursery in a way that offers security to both staff and parents. I am, therefore, requesting that the States Assembly agree that existing arrangements are maintained for the lease, with Cost of Living increases only, until such time as a new lease has been negotiated.

The proposition also requests the Government to take meaningful steps to tackle the transport and access challenges of Springfield park and stadium which can only increase in future; these include a review of the operation of the car park within the Robin Hood gyratory and the inclusion of the site on the route of the proposed new Hopper bus. I am further asking the States to agree that the Government should facilitate community engagement with stakeholders.

Financial and manpower implications

If this proposition is approved the Government will continue to receive income from the rental of the day nursery in Springfield stadium with Cost of Living increases until such a time as any increased income has been negotiated with the nursery operators.