

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
BY DEPUTY S.Y. MÉZEC OF ST. HELIER SOUTH  
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2022  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

**Question**

Will the Minister indicate what plans, if any, he has to strengthen planning protections on Jersey's coastline to prevent inappropriate developments taking place which take land which is currently developed for a public use (such as hotels or hospitality venues) into a site for private use (such as private residences)?

**Answer**

As Minister I recognise that there is considerable public concern about the way in which hotels and hospitality venues located in prime coastal locations have been – and may in the future be – developed for private residential development.

Decisions about the management of development around Jersey's coastline are guided by the Island Plan. The bridging Island Plan, which was only approved by the States Assembly in March 2022, provides a strengthened planning policy regime to protect the island's coastline.

The robustness and effectiveness of this policy regime will be monitored and assessed over the bridging Island Plan period. I intend to take a proactive role in canvassing views from all stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that the Island Plan (and other relevant policy tools) work to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the greatest possible "public good" in relation to our coastline. However, it will ultimately be a matter for the Assembly to determine whether the policy requires strengthening as part of the next Island Plan Review.

It is important to recognise that the planning system represents a qualified interference in the enjoyment of private property to safeguard public interests. Most hotels and hospitality venues represent private interests.

The need to apply for planning permission to change the use of a hotel or hospitality venue to other forms of development is prescribed by planning legislation, and the acceptability of any such proposal is assessed against the planning policy regime set by the Island Plan. This seeks to ensure that wider public interests – such as, for example, the character of the coast, biodiversity and heritage – are protected so that the public can continue to enjoy them.

With specific regard to public access to any private land, the bridging Island Plan contains a policy provision which seeks to ensure that development which would result in the loss, or prevent the use, of any part of the existing footpath network or other rights of way will not be supported unless alternative routes are provided that are similar or better in quality.

In the case of hospitality venues – described as daytime and evening economy uses in the bridging Island Plan – a proposed change of use is subject to an additional policy test in the Island Plan and will only be supported where there is no market demand for the site's continued use; or where the proposed alternative use is of overriding community benefit.

However, I recognise that the situation regarding the conversion of hotels is not as restrictive as it is with hospitality venues. There are good reasons for this policy distinction, but it is nevertheless something that I intend to investigate further to ensure that we are striking the right balance between the rights of hotel owners and the strong public desire to be able to continue to access and enjoy the island's coastline.

