

# STATES OF JERSEY



## MEANWHILE USE OF THE FORMER GAS PLACE SITE

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Lodged au Greffe on 16th June 2025  
by Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South  
Earliest date for debate: 8th July 2025

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STATES GREFFE

## **PROPOSITION**

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

that upon its vacation by the current users, and until such time as long-term development commences, ‘meanwhile’ use shall be made of the former Gas Place site (including the former Gas Place showroom site), with the development of that use to be informed by engagement with relevant local stakeholders, and to request the Minister for Treasury and Resources (in her capacity as shareholder representative) to request Andium Homes to work with such stakeholders to develop and implement ‘meanwhile’ use of the site that will be beneficial to the community.

DEPUTY D.J. WARR OF ST. HELIER SOUTH

## REPORT

The purpose of my proposition is not to stop the building of a new primary school at gas place. The need is already recognised under Policy CI1 of the [Bridging Island Plan](#).

Policy CI1 states –

*“Proposals for the development of additional educational facilities or for the extension and/or alteration of existing educational premises will be supported provided that the proposal is:*

- *within the grounds of existing education facilities;*
- *on a safeguarded site; or,*
- *within the built-up area*

*To address specific deficiencies in the provision of education facilities, the following sites are safeguarded for educational use. The alternative development of these sites will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer required for educational purposes:*

- *[...]*
- *Jersey Gas Site: Tunnell Street, St. Helier”*

I am also not trying to stop the on-going work taking place at the old Ann-street brewery site to develop a new St. Helier youth facility. What my proposition reflects is that the delivery of a new youth facility is still a minimum of 3 years away, whilst the delivery of a new school is even further down the track.

That means that the Gas place site and the old Gas showrooms will continue to remain vacant despite the need **now** for an in-door youth facility and more play space in the heart of St. Helier. What I am proposing is for various “meanwhile” uses to be created **now** so as to combat the dire lack of provision for our teenage population and the consequences that has on our society.

Meanwhile use is also recognised in the Bridging Island plan under policy ER5 –

*“Policy ER5 – Meanwhile retail and town centre uses:*

*Proposals for meanwhile retail and town centre uses, excluding residential use, will be supported where the proposal:*

- a. is within St Helier core retail area; St Helier town centre or the defined centre at Les Quennevais;*
- b. contributes positively to the character and early activation of the local area, and reinforces longer-term use aspirations for the area;*
- c. does not adversely impact the deliverability of a permanent use for the site or premises;*
- d. does not have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residents and uses; and*
- e. utilises materials and designs appropriate for its intended lifespan and setting.”*

By the end of 2025 the biggest free in-door space on the Island, Fort Regent will close for 3 years. We have already seen the loss of Tamba park in St. Lawrence, and this year will see the closure of Amaizin Maze. We've seen the closure of the town skate park some 18 months ago with not even a meanwhile pop up alternative - just another plan for an expensive and inconveniently located skate park at south hill, albeit rather sooner than a refurbished Fort or Ann street youth centre.

By the end of 2025 there will be absolutely no free in-door provision in St. Helier for 5,000 children, it's quite extraordinary and it angers me to think that this is being allowed to happen. The health and wellbeing of our teenage population which is already problematic post COVID is being compromised. That doesn't just affect them, it affects all of us.

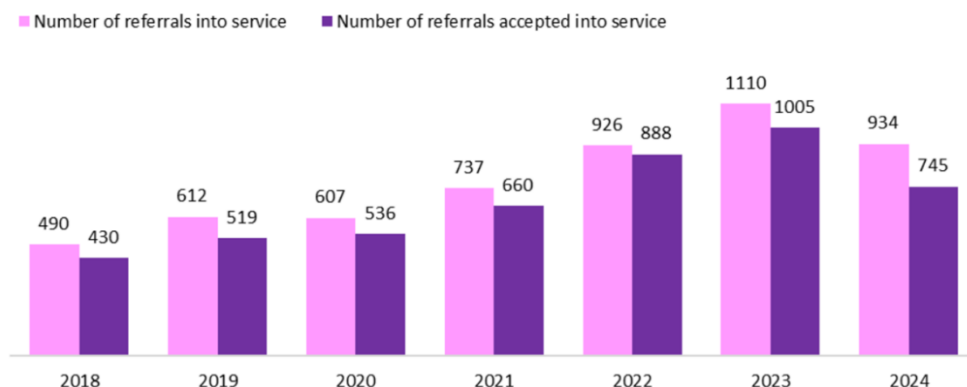
The Physical cost of obesity and inactivity particularly affects those in low-income families. The World Health organisation [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\)](#) study, highlights unhealthy eating habits, rising rates of overweight and obesity, and low levels of physical activity among young people, all of which are significant risk factors for a range of noncommunicable diseases including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer. The [report](#) suggests that factors such as access to safe spaces for physical activity and participation in organized sports may be influenced by family income.

I turn to the latest [CAHMS Annual report 2024](#), in which the Minister states “*We are aware of the high numbers of referrals for neurodevelopmental assessments in recent years, which has proved a real challenge to address. We have added an extra £400,000 of Government Plan investment to support this pressured area and I know the service is working hard to increase capacity of assessments, and to keep waiting times for assessment to a minimum*”.

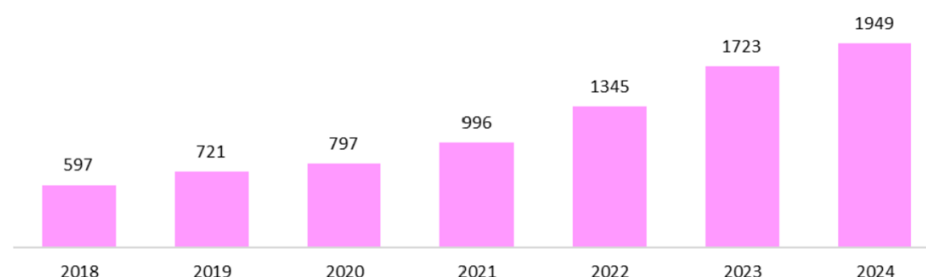
We need to be in the business of prevention **now** not in 3-years' time. The evidence that we have a major mental health issue amongst our young people is laid bare in the following graphs –

## 2024 Key Service Data

### Referrals



Number of young people open to CAMHS (end of year)



In line with the increase in referrals, the caseload figures increased significantly between 2022 and 2024. Of this, a significant number of children and young people are open to the service because the service is dispensing ADHD medication and/or treatment.

Source: [Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS\) Annual Report](#)

The issue in St. Helier begins with the lack of open space as highlighted in the [St Helier Open Space Audit](#), published in 2018, which acknowledges the deficit of green space.

Based on current population estimates and the existing provisions across town, the 2008 study space standard is currently met. Whilst it is positive that the amount of park space currently meets the standards, the travel distance standard of 500m cannot be met across the whole of town. The Fields in Trust benchmark guidelines are also not met by existing provisions, although their more modest travel distance of 710m achieves a greater coverage than the 500m standard and may be considered more practical.

Aspirational standards			Existing provisions performance against standards (area per 1000 population)	Existing supply - total space deficiency
2008 study	Area per 1000 population	0.5ha	Met	0ha
	Travel distance	500m	Not met (North and East deficient)	
Fields in Trust	Area per 1000 population	0.8ha	-0.3ha	-10.5ha
	Travel distance	710m	Not met (North deficient)	

This is at a time when the new developments in the north of St. Helier will add another 810 homes to the area which equates to a minimum of 1,000 new residents. The need to do something is **now**. That was reflected in the [Andium Homes Masterplan](#), published in 2021, which suggested a green throughfare to an extended Millennium park from the major building developments.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis is having a major impact on families in St. Helier. The cost of housing is such that both parents have to work in order to pay the rent on their accommodation. This is exacerbated by the lack of free after-school provision for those 13 years of age and older. Hence, we end up with the phenomenon of the “latchkey” kid. If we don’t as a society provide any form of free indoor provision such

as after-school homework clubs no wonder some of our young people end up self-harming, suffer anxiety, depression, eating-disorders, addictions (behavioural and substance, including tech/gaming addictions). This re-iterates my point the need is **now**.

The health statistics in the [Children and Young People's Survey 2024](#) also make for sobering reading. 40% of year 6 children in urban areas are overweight or obese. Whilst 82% of teens don't meet physical activity criteria of one hour a day. A play provision in the centre of town **now** is surely so obvious that in reality we shouldn't be having to debate the issue.

In the "[Life on the rock](#)" publication, a project that captured the experiences of young people growing up in Jersey, the demand for more spaces for play, leisure and socialising was highlighted. In the survey, 42% of young people selected "better places for young people to spend time and play in their local area" as one of the top five things that would improve life on the Island. So why when it's clear that the need is now are we not making any provisions for 3 years? Is it because these people are "not in the room" when such decisions are made?

We also need to remind ourselves that in October 2023 the [Commencement Act for the Children \(Convention Rights\) \(Jersey\) Law 2022](#) was enacted. The law requires named duty-bearers (initially the Chief Minister, Ministers, Elected Members, and States Assembly bodies) to have due regard for children's rights when decisions are being made. A meanwhile use surely fits that commitment.

Dr. Andrew McLaughlin, the Government's Chief Executive Officer stated in a [quarterly hearing](#) with the Public Accounts Committee on May 21st that what Jersey "decides to do in Health will be seen as its 6th historic policy choice. It is as big as its choice on tax and spend".

Not using this brown field site now whilst further plans are developed is an incredible waste of resources. We must do all we can to prevent poor health and wellbeing outcomes rather than waiting 3-years for them to surface? Surely that is a major policy choice.

In the same hearing, the CEO was also quoted as saying that the Fiscal Policy Panel, the body that advises the Government on economic matters, advice was "sobering" from the panel and said Ministers have been advised to take "a more prudent approach to public spending".

It therefore makes sense to use the resources we have in the right places to ensure that today's need is satisfied.

An in-door skate facility combined with other activities such as a climbing wall, a tarmac pump track on Gas Place wasteland could be used by skaters, bikers and wheelchairs plus it's on the doorstep of most of the Island's secondary schools.

I am not looking for any Government funding to deliver a meanwhile use. I believe that it will be possible to raise sufficient funds through a combination of charitable donations, sponsorship and goodwill. Government has nothing to fear in this respect.

In the current economic climate, we need to sweat the assets we've got to meet today's needs and let the needs of the future take care of themselves. This must include the

community as co-producers of the space to ensure we get this right for our community. We need to promote the needs of people today over long-term policies.

I urge members to support my proposition.

### **Financial and staffing implications**

No funding is being required from Government. There will be limited staff time required in liaising with Andium Homes.

### **Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.