

ST. HELIER WATERFRONT: CONFERENCE HOTEL - RESCINDMENT (P.112/99): COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 12th October 1999
by the Policy and Resources Committee**



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Comments

The Policy & Resources Committee would ask States members to reject the proposition that the States should rescind their decision that a conference hotel should be sited overlooking the yacht marina west of the Albert Pier reclamation site on the following grounds. In putting forward its reasons for recommending the rejection of the proposition the Committee would emphasise that it is concerned with the general principle of whether a hotel should be constructed on this site, not with the particular hotel presented earlier this year by the potential developers.

- 1) the States have agreed on a number of occasions that the waterfront development should incorporate a quality hotel, and that a conference hotel should be sited overlooking the yacht marina west of the Albert Pier reclamation site as part of a comprehensive development proposal for the waterfront area. The propositions adopted by the States have included agreement on the zoning of the waterfront land for incorporation into a revised Town Map. The propositions brought before the States were in themselves based on comprehensive reviews of the waterfront area undertaken both by a Review Group involving non States members and by independent consultants;
- 2) a new conference hotel is considered an essential investment in the future of the tourism industry if that industry's valued contribution to a diversified economy is to be maintained;
- 3) a new conference hotel will attract visitors with a high level of expenditure. This is a market development consistent with the overall policy of sustainability which the States have adopted;
- 4) the continued success of the tourism industry, which a new conference hotel will support, is a key to the continued provision to the Island's current air and shipping services;
- 5) investment in a conference hotel would be a substantial statement of confidence in the Island as a tourist destination and as a conference/business centre. The failure of the Island to accommodate such investment would give an extremely negative view to the outside world of tourism and business investment opportunities in the Island, and of the Island's own confidence in the tourism industry;
- 6) investment in a conference hotel will provide for high quality replacement of some of the beds lost to the tourism industry in recent years;
- 7) the expenditure of tourist and business visitors attracted to the Island by the provision of quality accommodation will benefit greatly shopkeepers in St Helier. It is for this reason, and others, that the development of a conference hotel on the waterfront has received strong support from the Chamber of Commerce;
- 8) there has been considerable investment in the infrastructure required for the development of a hotel on the waterfront land, which investment would be wasted if such a development was not to take place;
- 9) the Planning & Environment Committee, in its comment on the rescindment proposition, has given its full support for the construction of a hotel on the site. There is also no indication from that Committee that there is a satisfactory alternative site available for this essential investment in quality tourist, business and visitor accommodation;
- 10) experience elsewhere (eg. Cape Town, Cardiff, etc.) has shown that the construction of a quality hotel as part of a waterfront development has been a key factor in the success of that development, not least in helping to support many restaurant and other service activities that give life to any waterfront area;
- 11) the decisions by the States to support the inclusion of a quality hotel in the development plans for the waterfront have been based on considerable information. It cannot be good government for the States now to be asked to make such an important decision to remove a key part of the agreed overall development plan for the waterfront on the basis of the limited amount of information which is provided in the report accompanying the proposition.