

STATES OF JERSEY



ANN COURT HOUSING SITE, ST. HELIER: TEMPORARY USE (P.108/2009) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 8th July 2009
by the Minister for Housing

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The demolition of Ann Court is underway and works should be complete by the end of October 2009. The contract which was let, following a competitive tender process, includes £17,500 of costs for the creation of the temporary car park surface, as approved by the Planning Department following the submission of a detailed planning application. Local residents and the public at large were able to comment on that application and the temporary car park proposal prior to its determination. If, as the proposition suggests, the creation of the car park is delayed for 3 months or more then it is likely that the majority, if not all, of the £17,500 contract provision would still be payable to the contractor. This would represent an abortive cost providing no value whatsoever for the public.

The Ann Court site has been progressively decanted over a period of just over a year. The Housing Department has incurred a significant loss of rental income which for 2009 alone is estimated at £490,000. There has been no consequential adjustment to the Department's cash-limit.

Under current proposals the Salisbury Crescent site is to be developed to partially replace the homes lost at Ann Court. Development of that site has been delayed whilst the 'North of Town Master Plan' has been undertaken, and it is therefore unlikely that any new homes will be available at Salisbury Crescent within the next 2 years, assuming construction can start this autumn. Additional units have also been proposed for development on the Ann Court site itself to replace the balance of the units. However, these units and the resultant rental income that they will eventually generate are likely to be at least 3 years away. In the interim, the only income which has been identified to replace the £500,000 per annum lost from the Housing Department budget is the income from the temporary car park approved for Ann Court, which it has been estimated is capable of generating up to £100,000 gross per annum.

Any decision not to create the car park would have significant implications for the Housing Department budget, and consequently planned maintenance works for 2010 onwards.

In addition, running the proposed consultation would have implications in respect of manpower to carry out that work, operational costs associated with advertising, consultants' fees, etc., and delays in the generation of revenue.

Further, the creation of any green space or play facility on the Ann Court site is likely to be very expensive. Whilst the clearance of the site is already catered for in the demolition contract, preparing the ground for landscaping would be an extra cost and would most likely require additional excavations. Meeting the appropriate health and safety requirements to make the site fit for play facilities would be another additional cost, as would the revenue costs of maintaining and running such a facility. There are no identified budgets for any of this activity.

Of perhaps greatest significance is the fact that the proposition suggests a use for the Ann Court site which duplicates existing facilities available to residents in the immediate area. There is a facility already in place across the road at de Quetteville Court. A safe enclosed children's playground is already situated there, as well as a reasonably sized 'green' area.