

STATES OF JERSEY



ACCOMMODATION FOR TEMPORARY WORKERS (P.62/2022): AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 14th April 2022
by the Deputy of St. Peter
Earliest date for debate: 25th April 2022

STATES GREFFE

ACCOMMODATION FOR TEMPORARY WORKERS (P.62/2022):
AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (d) –

For “Minister for Housing and Communities” substitute “Council of Ministers” and for “September 2022” substitute “December 2022”.

DEPUTY OF ST. PETER

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

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

- (a) that appropriate sites in the Island should be identified and made available for the provision of temporary accommodation to house between 200 and 500 temporary workers;
- (b) to request the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture and the Minister for Treasury and Resources to initiate discussions with Jersey businesses in order that potential sources of private funding for the provision of such accommodation may be identified;
- (c) to request the Minister for the Environment to issue the necessary instructions, including any law-drafting instructions required, to ensure that planning permission may be granted to an application for the construction of such accommodation, provided that any such permission would be granted on the basis that the accommodation would be used for a maximum of 3 years; and
- (d) to request the **Council of Ministers** to establish a departmental investigation into longer-term solutions for the housing of temporary workers (beyond the use of temporary accommodation), with a view to a report on the options available being presented to the next States Assembly in **December 2022**.

REPORT

I have lodged this amendment to my proposition, [P.62/2022](#), following consultation with the Council of Ministers. Its effect would be two-fold: it would direct the request for an investigation into longer-term solutions for housing temporary workers at the Council of Ministers (rather than solely at the Minister for Housing and Communities); and it would change the timeframe for a report arising from this investigation from September 2022 to December 2022.

In preparing my amendment, and following initial comments on my proposition, it is apparent that the report accompanying my proposition has led to a misunderstanding of my intentions. It was never my intention to promote the use of green fields, but to demonstrate that there was support from the community for my proposition, given that there had been offers of land for use. This has become the focus in the response to my proposition, and a distraction from the key issues I am seeking to solve. I have therefore replicated below the report from my original proposition with those references to green fields removed. I have also taken the opportunity to update the report in a couple of other areas.

Objective

It is clear to us all that we have a real issue with accommodation in the Island. This proposition is aimed to release the pressure on accommodation for temporary / seasonal / migrant workers, call them what you wish, but I will refer to them as ‘temporary’ during this report. They provide an invaluable contribution to the operations, wellbeing, and enjoyment of the Island we all cherish. We need them to come to Jersey and those who are prepared to travel here have many other places they can choose to work in around the world. As a result, we need to deliver reasonably-priced accommodation to make Jersey attractive for these workers. My research suggests that reasonable means c. £800 per calendar month (pcm).

Timescale

This proposition is a temporary solution. I totally accept that it will be unacceptable in the medium to long term. The Island deserves better aesthetics and workers deserve better quality accommodation, but this is about a short-term solution, delivered quickly, to help solve a major problem addressing us today. I see no reason that decisions as to supplier and land cannot be delivered within 60 days of States agreement.

Benefits

1. The provision of reasonably priced accommodation to temporary workers.
2. It will make it more attractive for temporary workers to come to Jersey and fill the shortfall in key industry sectors.
3. It will help towards full-service provision for:
 - (a) Tourism;
 - (b) Hospitality;
 - (c) Transportation (delivery drivers);
 - (d) Healthcare (e.g., at the Hospital);
 - (e) Care workers;

- (f) Retail; and
- (g) Construction.

4. An improvement in the quality of life of all Islanders by assisting businesses and service providers to deliver the services we wish to enjoy.

Issues

The shortage of accommodation stock is driving an unfavorable pattern of behaviour. Members will all have seen the number of hotels closing and the number of guest houses, lodging houses and small units of flats that are changing hands. Each one has multiple bidders, which is driving up prices; and, more importantly, reducing housing stock for the local market. We are now seeing a trend in the purchase of 3- and 4-bedroom houses for staff accommodation, which is taking away supplies of the most popular properties for families in the Island. These sales are being made to large business with deep pockets. However, as we know, 94% of businesses in Jersey have fewer than 20 people and these businesses do not have the resources to buy property, and so cannot compete. They therefore rely on finding licensed property in the open market to accommodate staff. This often means that these employers have added costs in order to accommodate their staff. This, I've heard anecdotally, can be as much as £600 pcm. This either erodes business profits, forces price rises, or indeed could result in unnecessary closures.

Solution

To bring temporary accommodation to Jersey. This will be rented and then decommissioned and returned after 3 years.

These companies, which have possible solutions, have been approached:

[Portable workforce - Portable Living Group \(theportablelivinggroup.com\)](http://theportablelivinggroup.com)
[Portable Cabins & Portable Units for hire - Bunkabin](http://Bunkabin.com)
<https://www.selectplanthire.com/#product-services> (this is a subsidiary of Laing O'Rourke. They have recently started delivering residential accommodation which is not reflected on their website)

These businesses offer a spread of solutions at each end of the price and quality spectrum. Affordability is a decision criterion that needs to be made.

General opinion is that, by using 7500 square metres at D'Hautrée as an example, 250 homes could be accommodated. However, 200 units with additional amenities (communal space, TV lounge etc.) would be preferable.

I have recently been approached by the owner of a significant office block which could easily be converted into temporary accommodation of an acceptable standard. In order to make it viable, so the monthly rent is attractive, it would require shared shower rooms etc. It would have amenity spaces including T.V., cooking facilities, potentially outdoor space in a central location. Management and full cleaning services would be included. It would be better than much of the accommodation that our migrant workers are being offered today.

How will this be delivered?

Lee Madden, MD of GR8 Recruitment, has volunteered to chair a board to deliver this project. He will coordinate investors, ensure it is project managed, and deliver value. He will be fully supported by Jersey Business (<https://www.jerseybusiness.je/>).

Members will see that GR8 (<https://gr8jersey.com/>) is fully versed in the recruitment challenges faced in Jersey, of which accommodation is a vital part.

How will this be funded?

This will be funded by private investment, to deliver a service to benefit all sectors involved, but not to realise unreasonable profit.

Jersey Business are coordinating, and in active dialogue, with potential local investors who are expressing a high level of interest in supporting this either for the Island, or because they would like to take some of the accommodation for their own use. It is envisaged that at least 50% of the units will be available for small businesses who desperately need the service but cannot afford to invest individually.

Where?

D'Hautrée school site has 7500 square metres of potentially available space located near utilities.

Other sites put forward by Government, individuals or benefactors are most welcome.

Collaboration

The Our Hospital project has similar challenges and the construction consortium is exploring similar avenues. It is important, should the Assembly adopt this proposition, that both projects liaise in order for the project to benefit from economies of scale in buying power, logistics and shipping.

The main challenges

These are twofold. Firstly, finding the land, but secondly and more importantly, achieving planning permission. Hence part three of the proposition to treat this as a critical situation that is within our gift to solve.

Long-term Goal

There is no point having a temporary solution unless work goes on to find a permanent alternative, hence part 4 of the proposition.

I envisage developing very smart modern worker accommodation similar to some very successful developments by, for example <https://vitagroup.com/>. This is an example of modern urban living that we should consider, that will encourage our workers to come to support our Island on short term contracts. It must be stressed that this is part of the solution, and not suitable for everyone, especially those with families who will most likely need a different offer.

Financial and manpower implications

The report accompanying the main proposition stated that it is an enabler for private business to deliver a solution that meeting with Government policy to deliver much needed homes.

There are no additional financial and manpower implications arising from adoption of the amendment.