

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY D.J. WARR OF ST. HELIER SOUTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON TUESDAY 6th MAY 2025
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON WEDNESDAY 14th MAY 2025**

Question

“Will the Minister advise –

- (a) what impact assessment, if any, was carried out before the closure of the Millenium Town Park playground ahead of the early May bank holiday;
- (b) if no such assessment was carried out, how the closure aligns with the Government’s policy of putting children first, and
- (c) what processes are in place to ensure children are put first when decisions like this are taken?”

Answer

- a) The impact of closing the Millenium Town Park (“MTP”) playground was assessed and, as part of that work, the project team communicated with the Parish of St Helier to understand when the new Parade Gardens playgrounds would be open. A decision was made to keep the MTP playground open until the new Parade Gardens facility was completed and the Easter holidays had passed. It should be noted that any delay beyond the scheduled 28th April start date would have risked the delivery of a new Town Park playground in time for the school summer holidays.

Advance notice signs were put in place, communication took place with the immediate neighbours, and a public notice was issued on social media prior to the closure, which all clearly communicated other alternative play facilities in St Helier.

The site has now been set up safely, with all playground materials delivered, and works are progressing on site, as programmed, to achieve a July completion.

- b) Children have been put at the heart of the development of this playground. The proposed playground redevelopment is designed to enhance the accessibility, inclusivity, community seating, shading and safety of the community facility. Creating a space that is accessible to all children’s age groups and abilities will promote recreation and creativity while supporting community interaction that aligns with the Children, Young People and Families Plan.

The recommendations and justifications for these improvements have been assessed based on comprehensive feedback from a Public Consultation (which was open from 22nd May 2024 to 7th July 2024), with young people during a roadside engagement, key audiences (Plan inclusive Play Areas, local schools, Friends of Millennium Town Park, Best Start Partnership, Family Nursing and Home Care, and numerous toddler groups) as well as the Jersey School Council Network. The key focus areas include enhancing play equipment, creating accessible and inclusive features, creating a safe and happy environment and expanding the park’s amenity improvements, beyond traditional playgrounds (accessibility, inclusion, improved seating and shading).

The final design was approved and ratified by the Jersey School Council Network after two visits by the Project Team and the 'Child-led' design approach that has been followed supports all 'Big Picture Outcomes' of the Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2024-2027.

Replacing the existing equipment with new equipment is essential to achieving these outcomes.

The current Common Strategic Policy 2024-26 (R.115/2024), adopted by the States on 21st May 2024, sets out a clear objective to enhance public spaces and revitalise town, with which this work aligns.

- c) Consultation is a key part of ensuring that the community, including children, are appropriately engaged in decisions which impact them. The Government Engagement Framework supports effective public engagement. The engagement explained in response to part (b) clearly shows that the development of the new Millenium Town Park playground has taken place in partnership with children and the community.