

STATES OF JERSEY



JOINED-UP PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

Lodged au Greffe on 17th June 2025
by Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North
Earliest date for debate: 8th July 2025

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to request the Chief Minister, in consultation with the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Infrastructure, to develop and introduce an Age-Friendly Infrastructure Framework (the “Framework”) by 31st January 2026, to be delivered in conjunction with the existing “Delivering Investment into the Public Realm”, the Framework to include, but not be limited to –
 - (i) additional planning guidance to ensure that all planning applications, including those for development and refurbishment of public spaces, meet the requirements of age-friendly planning guidance;
 - (ii) inclusive design standards, including mandatory age-friendly design guidelines incorporating, but not limited to step-free access, anti-slip pavement materials, high-contrast signage and tactile surfaces and adequate lighting on walkways;
 - (iii) accessible public transport networks, following liaison with the bus provider, that include an increase in the number of bus shelters and, as replacements are due, upgrades to shelters with real-time audio and visual updates, benches with armrests, shelter from weather, and the introduction of audio and visual real-time updates of upcoming bus stops on buses, enforcement of priority seating, and training for staff on senior accessibility needs;
 - (iv) “10-Minute Neighbourhoods” for older adults, with an encouragement of development where all essential services (GP, pharmacy, grocery, park or green space, community space) are within 10 minutes’ walk, and partnering with local businesses to provide age-friendly store layouts and customer-service training; and
 - (v) public toilets and rest facilities, where all future developments and refurbishment projects should ensure that accessible public toilets and shaded seating are provided every 300 to 500 meters in Town, Parish centres and in parks; and
- (b) that political oversight and responsibility for the Framework should be allocated to a single Minister (or Assistant Minister), to ensure co-ordination between all Departments and provide continuity of approach and oversight.

DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH

REPORT

Why we need an Age - Friendly framework

Jersey is facing a profound demographic shift. The importance of addressing the needs of an ageing population without delay cannot be understated.

The Population Projections 2023 to 2080 published by Statistics Jersey (20 December 2023) state that "Regardless of the level of net migration experienced, in all scenarios the older aged population is expected to increase rapidly over the next 20-30 years. This is particularly the case for the older (over 75 and over 85) age groups which are expected to increase by around 50% over the next 20-30 years."

This change is not a distant challenge — it is already under way. As our population ages, the infrastructure, planning policies, and public realm of our Island must adapt in ways that are inclusive, enabling, and future-ready.

A Predictable Trend Requires a Proactive Response

This gives Jersey a rare opportunity to plan ahead — to adapt our public spaces, transport networks, and services before they become inadequate. Failure to do so will increase long-term dependency, health and care costs, and social isolation among older Islanders.

Existing Policies Need a Delivery Mechanism

In the [Common Strategic Policy 2024 to 2026](#), the Council of Ministers stated that – *"We will make preparations for our projected demographic changes, including our ageing population, falling birth rate and rising levels of disability, to ensure the sustainability of our health provisions and to protect economic prosperity into the future."*

The Common Population Policy ([P.116/2021](#)) was debated and adopted on 8 February 2022 with reports to be published annually. One of the three focus areas for the [Annual Report 2024](#) (R.184/2024) was **"Ageing Well"** and the report on page 25 set out an Ageing Well Roadmap which is based on the New Zealand "Better Later Life" Strategy.

The Roadmap covers a number of topics including Participation and Social Inclusion. This refers to the need to find new ways to support each other to ensure that everyone can feel part of a community with an increasing number of old and very old people in Jersey. In particular, seeking to alleviate loneliness amongst older people, many of whom live alone.

Excerpt from p.32 of the Roadmap under **Long term - Planning for accessibility**

"The 2024 CSP includes a commitment to revitalise St Helier, including making the town more accessible. The design of urban areas and the location of shops, leisure activities and other services can make a real difference in creating accessible environments. Future planning will take full account of the needs of older islanders to be able to move safely around the Island and have easy access to the services that they need."

The Chief Minister has acknowledged that ageing is one of the Island’s most serious future challenges. While there are multiple streams of work under way, including the Ageing Well Roadmap and investment in the public realm, there is no unified mechanism to ensure these are delivered in a joined-up, timely, and measurable way.

The [Common Strategic Policy 2024–2026](#) and the Ageing Well Roadmap both reference Jersey’s ageing population.

However, they do not currently translate into consistent planning standards or mandatory design guidance.

Whilst the Government’s [Delivering Investment into the Public Realm](#) programme is welcome, it is focused primarily on St. Helier and lacks a structured approach to age-friendly design across the Island. As a result, critical improvements — such as safe pavements, accessible bus stops, public toilets, and rest facilities — are delivered sporadically and without consistency.

This proposition seeks to establish a clear and coordinated Age-Friendly Framework and to designate a Minister or Assistant Minister with political responsibility to ensure its delivery (this is not intended to create a new Ministerial role, rather an addition to existing responsibilities) Without such a framework and oversight, existing efforts risk being fragmented, inconsistent, or reactive.

The Proposition

This proposition draws from evidence, international best practice, and lived experience to propose an Age-Friendly Framework, supported by political leadership, to make Jersey a place for everyone, at every age.

What the Framework Will Do?

The Age-Friendly Framework will:

- Introduce age-inclusive planning guidance for all development and refurbishment of public spaces
- Mandate Inclusive Design Standards, including step-free access, high-contrast signage, tactile surfaces, and better lighting
- Improve public transport accessibility, including real-time audio/visual updates, shelter, benches with armrests, and driver training
- Promote 10-minute neighbourhoods for older adults, ensuring GPs, pharmacies, groceries, parks and community spaces are within walking distance
- Require accessible toilets and shaded rest areas every 300–500 metres in town centres, parks and parish hubs

This is not a radical redesign — it is a consolidation and coordination of best practices going from now into the future projects, based on both local needs and global examples (e.g. WHO Age-Friendly Cities, New Zealand’s “Better Later Life” strategy, and Paris’s “15-minute city” model)

The proposition is divided into two specific parts with Part (a) further subdivided into (i) to (v) as a minimum for inclusion in any planning guidance.

Turning now to the parts of the proposition –

Part (a): Age-Friendly Framework

The Chief Minister made it clear in response to questions in the States that he was not intending to develop an older person strategy and was content to continue with the work already in train. Where work is cross-departmental there is a danger that aspects “slip through the cracks” as there is no definitive overall framework. A framework can identify the priorities for each Department and place them under one umbrella with associated timeframes for completion ensuring the actions “dovetail” between departments and/or departments and other bodies.

An example of the importance of, and need for, such liaisons is illustrated in respect of bus shelters are in the ownership of various bodies i.e. the Government, the Ports of Jersey and the Parishes.

Additional Planning Guidance (Part (a)(i))

Introducing new planning guidance now (with minimum delay) will enable age-friendly development/properties, public spaces/ facilities to be built in advance of the anticipated increase in an older aged population thus negating the need for the adaptation of properties/developments in years to come. It is an opportunity to “future proof” housing stock and public space for this sector of the community. Aspects of the challenges faced by the older aged population can be highlighted/determined which could be reduced/negated at the point of a planning application leading to an enhanced quality of life. Without adaptations/considerations there is a possibility that the older aged population might struggle to remain independent – mobility may become an issue and, with that, dwindling opportunities to socialise.

Inclusive Design Centres (Part (a)(ii))

In considering “Centres”, the [Places](#) chapter of the [Bridging Island Plan 2022 to 2025](#) refers to St. Helier as the primary urban centre, Les Quennevais as the Island’s secondary centre and then Local Centres e.g. St. Ouen’s Village [List of theses in this document] as smaller urban centres (p.70 - Policy PL3 – Local Centres). It is important that all of these “centres” are included in any planning guidance to enable those in the smaller parish communities to benefit from age-friendly planning.

Accessible Public Transport Networks (Part (a)(iii))

Although the [Sustainable Transport Policy Next Steps](#) (December 2023) references bus shelters - “We will create more accessible, safer, covered waiting areas for bus users to encourage people to take the bus instead of driving.”, the Framework seeks to go further in relation new or refurbished shelters.

Feedback from my visit to the Age Concern included comments that current bus shelters with half-moon rails do not support passengers who are waiting – and that benches with armrests would make travel on public transport easier.

I recognise, that areas for bus shelters can be limited in Jersey, but it’s about design. For example, in Southampton bus shelters are not wider but do have siting facilities with armrests.



Further upgrading and improvements are necessary for any new planning applications as suggested in part (a)(i) and (ii).

Safety around bus shelters was raised in discussions further to [OQ.88/2019](#) when the then Minister for Infrastructure explained that not all bus shelters are administered by the Department of Infrastructure – in fact only 77 were. Other bodies such as the Ports of Jersey and many Parishes have their own and the total number of bus stops in use, at that time of the OQ, was 811.

Audio –visual information

To support an age-friendly and inclusive transport network, it is essential to upgrade bus shelters and onboard systems to incorporate real-time audio-visual (AV) information technology. At the shelter level, this includes the installation of electronic display panels providing live arrival times, service alerts, and route information in high-contrast, large-font formats. These displays should be paired with audible announcements triggered either by sensor or user-activated buttons to serve those with visual impairments.

Onboard buses, audio-visual stop announcements should be implemented as standard. These systems announce the next stop both visually on an interior screen and audibly via a clear, pre-recorded voice. This ensures that passengers with sensory impairments are consistently informed throughout their journey, reducing anxiety and improving confidence.

It would also align with best practice accessibility standards, demonstrating Jersey's commitment to inclusive public infrastructure.

"10-Minute Neighbourhoods" (Part (a)(iv))

These neighbourhoods would not only allow older people to have local access to essential services but would reduce the need for cars as the close proximity for example of shops would encourage walking and/or cycling with both these activities being beneficial to the older population from a health perspective.

The use of public space was mentioned in a Political Statement of the WHO (World Health Organisation) European Healthy Cities Network - [Healthy Cities for Building Back Better](#) at p.7

“[We] note the importance of cities developing dedicated strategies for the use of public space, which are focussed on creating economic, ecological, and social value for society. These strategies should include responses to challenges, such as the reduction, privatization, over management and non-management of public spaces, as well as how they are positioned within the city’s public health infrastructure. They could include a focus on the “15-minute city” – where everything needed by an individual is within a 15-minute walking distance, as well as access to green, blue, and open spaces.”

An illustration of how a neighbourhood might be enhanced can be found in [Delivering Investment into the Public Realm](#) (R.158/2024) published in October 2024 by the Department of Infrastructure and Environment. Changes were carried out in Trinity Village (see p.18) where there were no good walking route connections although there was a church, shop and community centre as well as other amenities. This resulted in a village centre that lacked definition. Gateways were created to the new 20mph village zone and a raised table established crossing to the parish homes for the elderly provided better connectivity to the parish field path.

Public Toilets and Rest Facilities (Part (a)(v))

Access to safe, clean, and well-distributed public toilets is fundamental to building an age-friendly, inclusive, and accessible public realm. International best practice, including guidance from the British Toilet Association and WHO Age-Friendly Cities framework, recommends public toilet availability every 300–500 metres in high-footfall areas. This spacing enables older adults, people with medical conditions, parents with young children, and those with disabilities to move about their communities with dignity and confidence.

Information regarding the location of public toilets across Jersey was provided in a Freedom of Information request dated 27th June 2024 and details can be found in the [Public Toilet Location Table](#).

Currently, the lack of consistent, well-signed and universally accessible public toilets acts as a barrier to active ageing and community participation.

The table provides various other details e.g. ownership, date of build, whether there are baby changing facilities etc. This data provides a basis for the work that would be required to ensure that, going forward, these facilities are factored into workstreams and improved/additional facilities provided, where required.

Part (b)

A political oversight and responsibility for the new Framework should be allocated to a Minister or Assistant Minister

Why Ministerial Oversight Is Essential

The Chief Minister as part of his response to [OQ.92/2024](#) said he felt that “one of the biggest challenges coming our way is the demographic challenges which are well understood, that is the certainty that we are going to see a growing ageing population. It is estimated that by 2040 there will be twice as many of us living into our 80s.”

It is apparent that certain actions are being undertaken to address the anticipated increase in our aged population but, as the Chief Minister has alluded to in the response to questions in the States Assembly, this work is “cross-departmental”.

Given the enormity of the challenge, it is surely vital that there is oversight and co-ordination by one person of all the work to prepare the Island for the projected increase in our aged population. It seems unconscionable that no single individual has political oversight for this area to effectively “join the dots” between all departments.

The Council of Ministers will be able to decide which Minister (or Assistant Minister) will have specific oversight for this Framework and will be able to ensure accountability and strategic integration of age-friendly principles across all departments. It will also provide effective resolution of cross-departmental actions (for example bus shelter ownership), and could also provide visible political leadership to champion the cause of older Islanders.

Conclusion

An age-friendly approach is not just a social imperative — it is also a financially sound investment in Jersey’s future.

Supporting older Islanders to remain independent, active, and connected would deliver measurable savings to our health and care systems. As people age, the design of their environment becomes a critical determinant of their physical and mental wellbeing. Simple interventions in the built environment can prevent expensive and often avoidable consequences, such as hospital admissions or early entry into long-term care.

Reducing Health and Care Costs:

- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalisation among older adults.
- The average knee replacement in 2021 cost £8,536, and hip replacements cost £9,542 and not including the long-term burden on care services ([WQ.288/2023](#)).
- Preventing injuries through better design—pavements, lighting, handrails—reduces hospitalisations, operations, and recovery costs.
- Age-friendly transport options reduce missed medical appointments and promote earlier intervention in health issues, which is more cost-effective than delayed treatment.

Delaying or Avoiding Residential care

- Ensuring older Islanders can access shops, GPs, and community spaces by foot or bus prolongs independent living.
- Inclusion through design and transport defers or eliminates the need for expensive residential or supported living placements, one of the most significant costs in adult social care.

- Studies from other jurisdictions show that even modest investment in age-friendly housing and neighbourhoods leads to significant long-term savings across government budgets.

Broader Economic and Social Value

- Older Islanders who remain mobile and connected contribute to the local economy through shopping, volunteering, caregiving, and community participation.
- Age-inclusive design also benefits other Islanders: parents with pushchairs, people with disabilities, and tourists all benefit from step-free access, resting places, and safer crossings.
- Investing now prevents retrofitting later, which is typically more expensive, disruptive, and less efficient than incorporating inclusive features from the start.

In summary, age-friendly design is not an added cost, it is an investment in prevention, dignity, and financial sustainability. It protects public finances by supporting people to stay well, stay home, and stay engaged in Island life.

Financial and staffing implications

There will be a short-term cost to develop the Framework, however the timing of this proposition is intended to leverage off the work already being undertaken in relation to Island Infrastructure. In the long time this may have an impact on government capital projects as the Framework would need to be factored into all ongoing projects as part of the business case.

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.