

STATES OF JERSEY



NORTH ST. HELIER MASTERPLAN (P.73/2011): AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 8th June 2011
by Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “an agreed development framework” insert the words –

“subject to the condition that, in relation to the Ann Court and the Jersey Gas sites, the draft Masterplan shall be amended to permit the redevelopment of these sites for mixed-use (to include housing and office development) in addition to the uses currently proposed in the draft Masterplan and in accordance with any final agreement between the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Treasury and Resources, and/or the Council of Ministers.”.

2 PAGE 2 –

After the words “an agreed development framework” insert the words –

“subject to the condition that references in the draft Masterplan to the provision of affordable housing being fixed initially at a proportion of 12½% shall be amended to provide that the proportion shall be fixed in accordance with any agreed Policy in the Island Plan.”.

DEPUTY J.A.N. LE FONDRÉ OF ST. LAWRENCE

REPORT

Part 1

We are all aware of the demand for more housing, whether it be social rented, affordable or private sector. Additionally, and more recently, we have heard of the possibility that we may need to make provision for a new hospital.

As members will be aware, there has also been a review of the States property portfolio to identify opportunities for achieving financial savings.

By the application of modern space standards (as has been demonstrated locally by certain private sector entities), there is significant scope to achieve savings by operating from more efficient buildings. Our property can thus be used as an enabler of cultural and operational change to deliver far greater financial benefits by encouraging flexible working practices and greater collaborative working between departments. The additional benefits here would be to free up key sites (presently occupied by States offices) to release capital for reinvestment and to provide vital opportunities for new housing to be constructed.

Unfortunately, within the States property portfolio there are a limited number of sites that can provide the required footprints for the various requirements that are facing us.

The aim of this amendment is therefore to allow a degree of flexibility over 2 specific sites identified in the North of Town, these being the Jersey Gas and the Ann Court sites.

These are presently earmarked for either solely residential, or residential and community and commercial use (Gas Place). I would like the declared uses of these sites to be sufficiently flexible to allow each site to be developed for residential and/or 'mixed use' (e.g. office accommodation), dependent upon any agreement between the relevant Ministers as to what is most appropriate, taking account of the States' strategic needs. The suggested block layouts, etc., need not change as a result, purely the potential use, which would also be dependent upon the final design, approval by Planning, etc. For the avoidance of doubt, this amendment is also not about changing the provision of parking from what has already been identified in the Masterplan.

To further elaborate, one significant concern with respect to this part of St. Helier is the general shift from Town to the Esplanade, and the consequent change in footfall on retailers and other businesses in what used to be quite key, and indeed vibrant, parts of St. Helier, including Bath Street, Beresford Street, and Queen Street, and of which, for example the Central Markets play a very key role.

Ann Court could represent an opportunity to locate States offices in the north part of Town. Such a consolidation would allow a number of properties currently used for States offices around St. Helier to be released for redevelopment for essential housing (thereby satisfying some of the demand for housing). It would also have the potential to, at the very least, maintain existing footfall, if not generate increased numbers, due to the interaction of the public visiting the new centralised offices, as well as the States employees relocated to this part of Town.

With the location of the Jersey Arts Centre directly adjacent, there would also appear to be the opportunity for an exciting interaction in the public realm on Ann Court with the local arts scene for which the Jersey Arts Centre forms a significant focal point, thus all combining in a significant regeneration impact upon this area of St. Helier.

This amendment is therefore intended as a precautionary measure to ensure that the States retain the flexibility over the designation of sites either within its direct ownership or its influence until such time as final strategic decisions have been made.

Part 2

This separate amendment seeks to ensure some consistency between the North of Town Masterplan and the Island Plan in terms of whatever decision is made in respect of affordable housing.

I have structured these amendments so that separate votes can be taken, and I hope Members will consider these favourably.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no manpower implications arising from this proposition.

There are no direct financial implications. However, should centralised States offices be enabled, the estimates from last year indicate a reduction in annual property and facilities maintenance costs in the order of £1.6 million per annum, and avoided capital investment costs (over approximately 10 years) of approximately £13 million.

Whilst I am unaware as to how these may have changed since last year, it should also be noted that these figures do not include any benefits from resultant operational efficiencies which are significantly higher.

There are approximately 28 offices which could be consolidated, which would free up a number of sites for additional housing provision.