

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023- 2026 (P.97/2022): FIFTH AMENDMENT

ST. HELIER COUNTRY PARK

Lodged au Greffe on 23rd November 2022
by the Connétable of St. Helier
Earliest date for debate: 12th December 2022

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023-2026 (P.97/2022): FIFTH
AMENDMENT

PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (i) –

After the words “Appendix 3 to the Report” insert the words –

“, except that in Table 21 on page 54 -

- (a) there should be inserted a new line for an additional feasibility project entitled “St. Helier Country Park” and the figure of £100,000 inserted in the column for the 2023 estimate in the line; and
- (b) in the line for “Emerging Projects” the figure in the column for 2023 should be reduced by £100,000”

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

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

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

to receive the Government Plan 2023–2026 specified in Article 9(1) of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (“the Law”) and specifically –

- (a) to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2023 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law;
- (b) to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2023, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approvals;
- (c) to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2023 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law;
- (d) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2023 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 - Summary Table 4 to the Report;
- (e) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2023, for each Head of Expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with

Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report;

- (f) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2023 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report;
- (g) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2023 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report;
- (h) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2023 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report; and
- (i) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2023-2026, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report, except that in Table 21 on page 54 -
 - (a) there should be inserted a new line for an additional feasibility project entitled “St. Helier Country Park” and the figure of £100,000 inserted in the column for the 2023 estimate in the line; and
 - (b) in the line for “Emerging Projects” the figure in the column for 2023 should be reduced by £100,000.

REPORT

The States Assembly approved the Bridging Island Plan (P.36/2021)¹ on 25th March 2022. In doing so, it maintained its decade-old decision to develop Warwick Farm as a St Helier Country Park, to provide access to high quality outside green space for islanders, particularly St Helier's residents, who often have limited access to outside space. The States Assembly also already recognised the need to establish a project board to progress the delivery of the Country Park. This amendment provides a specific feasibility budget, of £100,000, providing resources for a project board to undertake the feasibility work to progress this project and to allow the Government to 'walk the talk.'

The increasing development of sites within the town to meet the housing needs of islanders, and the very nature of these developments, often with limited outdoor space, makes the provision of a Country Park to serve the urban area even more important than it was when I first proposed it as part of the 2011 Island Plan (P.48/2011, 38th amendment, part 7). As often befalls backbenchers' propositions, however, the proposal to create such a facility, even though successfully adopted by the States Assembly, went nowhere until the next Island Plan when the Minister for the Environment included it in his proposals. My amendment to the 2022 – 25 Island Plan (P.36/2021, 31st amendment) includes as an Appendix the background for the proposal which catalogues my efforts over the decade to bring the project to fruition. While acknowledging the Minister's support for the concept, the Amendment successfully sought to:

- ensure the existing leaseholder would have time to find an alternative site on expiry of their lease
- remind the States Assembly of the concept for the Country Park and the kind of uses that might be carried out there
- establish a project board to develop proposals for the country park, to be included in the next Government Plan, for delivery of the project by 2025
- include an investigation into the opportunities to expand the area of the country park in line with the original proposal adopted by the States Assembly on 21 June 2011

The Bridging Island Plan recognised and adopted an existing policy to continue to focus development in the town area. It equally recognised the importance of balancing this increasing development with an increase in access to open space:

“The Spatial Strategy (set out in Policy SP2 – Spatial strategy, strategic policies chapter) retains the policy of recent Island Plans to focus and encourage the majority of development in Town. The plan, however, recognises that this strategy, over time, has the potential to create additional challenges for Town residents if it is not also possible to continually improve the experience of town living by, for example, increasing access to open space, reducing the impact of vehicles on the townscape, protecting the character of Town, and improving the public realm and access to community facilities including good schools. This challenge is reflected in the findings of the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2018, which found that just 36% of St Helier residents were satisfied with their local neighbourhood, compared to 81% of residents of rural parishes and 63% of largely suburban parishes.”²

Proposal 28 in the same Bridging Island Plan outlines the intention to create a St Helier Country Park:

“To enhance the level of provision of and access to natural greenspace and the countryside, it is proposed that Warwick Farm is to be brought forward for redevelopment as a country park. The Council of Ministers will establish a project board to develop proposals to be included in the next Government Plan in order that the St. Helier Country Park can be delivered during the period covered by the Bridging Island Plan. The development of the country park will reflect an investigation and report by the Council of Ministers on opportunities to incorporate adjacent areas of countryside into the park in the future, in line with the map attached to, and supporting, Paragraph 7 of Amendment 38 (as adopted by the States Assembly on 21st June 2011) to the previous Island Plan. To support and enable this, the Minister for the Environment will produce supplementary planning guidance to guide the form of recreational amenity to be provided.”³

The Bridging Island Plan continued to acknowledge the Government’s intention to progress the Country Park project:

“The States Assembly has resolved that a project board is established to progress the delivery of the country park, and that further work be undertaken to explore its further expansion.”⁴

The Bridging Island Plan covers the period 2022-2025. Proposal 28 above clearly sets out an expectation to deliver the Country Park during the period covered by the plan, i.e., by 2025. It also sets an expectation that proposals would be included in the “next Government Plan”.

The 2023 Government Plan does not allocate a budget (i.e., it does not make any specific resource available) to develop or deliver the Country Park^{5 6}. Even with appropriate funding it will be challenging to deliver a Country Park in this timescale. If feasibility and planning work does not commence in 2023 it will certainly not be possible to deliver on this commitment.

The Government Plan sets out a project gateway framework⁷, detailing how projects should be progressed; this framework requires business cases and feasibility studies to be completed before significant funds and resources are committed to deliver projects. Having specific resources allocated for the feasibility work now will enable the Assembly to make an informed decision about allocating funds to deliver the Country Park as part of a future Government Plan.

This amendment proposes the creation of a specific feasibility budget for the Country Park project to enable the government to undertake the appropriate feasibility work and prepare necessary business cases to ensure that the Country Park can be delivered in line with the timescale already accepted by the States Assembly.

Financial and manpower implications

The proposed sum of £100,000 is an estimate of the resources required to bring the project to fruition.

¹ [P.36/2021 Bridging Island Plan](#)

² [Bridging Island Plan](#) page 11: Making improvements for Town residents and placemaking

³ [Bridging Island Plan](#) page 251: proposal 28 – St Helier Country Park

⁴ [Bridging Island Plan](#) page 251: Planning for open space

⁵ [P.97/2022](#): page 19, table 5(ii) – Capital and Other Projects Heads of Expenditure

⁶ [Proposed Government Plan 2023-26](#): page 54, Table 21 - Feasibility – Breakdown of Grouped Head of Expenditure

⁷ [Proposed Government Plan 2023-26](#): page 50 - Capital and Other Projects, project gateways