

STATES OF JERSEY



DEVELOPMENT OF TOWN MASTERPLAN (P.9/2023): SECOND AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 14th March 2023
by Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement
Earliest date for debate: 21st March 2023

STATES GREFFE

DEVELOPMENT OF TOWN MASTERPLAN (P.9/2023): SECOND
AMENDMENT

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Insert a new paragraph (d) as follows –

“(d) that any Town Masterplan or proposed major redevelopment of public land in the Greater St. Helier area can demonstrate that consideration has been given as to how new commercial space could contribute positively to a vibrant and viable economy in St Helier, with regards to the form, diversity of use, and end user costs including purchase, lease, fit out, maintenance and service fees; and”

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Insert a new paragraph (e) as follows –

“(e) that the Public of the Island should be consulted on any proposed major redevelopment of public land in the Town Masterplan or greater St. Helier area, and that any such public consultations shall be impartial, objective, run independently of the developer and not be framed in such a way as to lead to specific outcomes.”

DEPUTY A.F. CURTIS OF ST. CLEMENT

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

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

to request –

- (a) the Minister for Treasury and Resources to instruct the Jersey Development Company to pause work on the redevelopment of the Waterfront, until a Masterplan for the future development of Town has been approved by the States Assembly;
- (b) the Minister for Infrastructure to finalise, as soon as possible, work on the walking, cycling, bus and parking strategies that were agreed to be developed as part of the Sustainable Transport Plan in order that the strategies can inform a Town Masterplan; and
- (c) the Minister for the Environment to establish a working group of States Members and appropriate local officials, and to request such working group to collate and review the relevant plans and studies which have been commissioned by the Government in recent years, to consult further with stakeholders and the general public, only

utilising off-Island expertise where absolutely necessary, and to bring forward a Town Masterplan for debate by the States Assembly before the summer recess in 2024.

- (d) that any Town Masterplan or proposed major redevelopment of public land in the Greater St. Helier area can demonstrate that consideration has been given as to how new commercial space could contribute positively to a vibrant and viable economy in St Helier, with regards to the form, diversity of use, and end user costs including purchase, lease, fit out, maintenance and service fees; and
- (e) that the Public of the Island should be consulted on any proposed major redevelopment of public land in the Town Masterplan or greater St. Helier area, and that any such public consultations shall be impartial, objective, run independently of the developer and not be framed in such a way as to lead to specific outcomes.

REPORT

This amendment seeks to ensure that Islanders' views and aspirations are listened to when major developments of public land are proposed. 'Public Land' is taken to be land that is owned either directly by the States of Jersey, or through States-owned enterprises such as the 'States of Jersey Development Company'.

It also seeks to ensure that developments which propose new 'commercial spaces' such as retail or hospitality contribute positively to St. Helier's economy.

Ensuring investment into commercial spaces is viable and creates a vibrant community

Previous developments of public land have often included the creation of new commercial space, but these have not led to the take up by a diverse range of businesses and the vibrant environment that the public hoped for and was sometimes forecast by the developers.

Commercial space that was intended for a range of hospitality and leisure use has often remained vacant for long periods of time and in many cases has been taken up for office use.

As of March 2023, the Horizon development still shows nine vacant commercial units on the marketing agent's website out of a total of eleven within the development.

I believe that the take up has been significantly impacted by acquisition, setup costs and restrictive leases. My amendment aims to ensure that the viability of occupancy is considered and addressed during the proposal phases of developments in a way that allows local businesses to take up these spaces.

Ensuring Islanders views are listened to and respected

Development of public land in the Greater St. Helier area over the last thirty years has transformed the look and feel of the 'Town'. Many islanders feel that their views have not been taken in to account when major developments are proposed and undertaken.

When islanders are consulted, they often feel that the consultations aim to show public support for an already formed vision or set of ideas. Questions about redevelopment are often leading or focus on trivial elements of schemes and make it hard for islanders to provide alternative opinions.

The results of consultations are also often reported in such ways that erode public trust. An example of this is a recent consultation response summary where public responses were grouped as "Neutral, Agree or Strongly Agree" without a specific breakdown of each type of response. This form of reporting makes it impossible to determine whether there is true public sentiment for or against each question.

Islanders deserve a say as to the future use of their land, especially given the long-term implications of future ownership and the impact on public realm and Island Identity.

For example, would Islanders prefer Fort Regent to be gradually invested in and be retained in public ownership, or developed heavily but lose public ownership to private

interests? The South West St. Helier development by the Jersey Development Company proposes to ‘reinvest’ development profits into ‘public realm improvements’. Would Islanders prefer what is proposed over what is currently on the site? Would Islanders feel different if the development proposed to return a dividend to the Treasury to support other projects such as the Hospital?

Members may have their own experiences of feedback from constituents and the frustration they feel.

Conclusion

My amendment seeks to ensure that;

- Development of public land in Town includes practical options for commercial space that result in a vibrant community.
- Islanders’ views are taken into account for major developments that will have long lasting impacts for the island and the generations to come.

Financial and manpower implications

I do not foresee any significant financial and manpower implications from this amendment. Major projects are normally consulted on, and this amendment seeks to set parameters around the running of consultations. Such consultations could be delivered within Government departments including SPPP.

