

STATES OF JERSEY



ISLAND PLAN 2022-25: APPROVAL (P.36/2021) – FORTY-FIRST AMENDMENT STATES' OWNED LAND

Lodged au Greffe on 12th July 2021
by Senator S. Y. Mézec

STATES GREFFE

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After the words “the draft Island Plan 2022-25” insert the words “except that –

- (a) within Policy H5, after the words “(0.6 hectares/3.3 vergées)” there should be inserted the following new paragraph –

“Where States of Jersey or States-owned companies’ land is brought forward for the development of new homes, all of the homes provided on it should be affordable except where the provision of only affordable homes would render the development unviable.”

and the words “on these sites, together with any other government-owned sites or sites to be developed by arms-length bodies, that are brought forward for the provision of affordable homes over the plan period” should be deleted.” and;

- (b) the draft Island Plan 2022-25 should be further amended in such respects as may be necessary consequent upon the adoption of (a).

SENATOR S. Y. MÉZEC

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

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

to approve, in accordance with Article 3(1) of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, as amended by the Covid-19 (Island Plan) (Jersey) Regulations 2021, the draft Island Plan 2022-25, “except that –

- (a) within Policy H5, after the words “(0.6 hectares/3.3 vergées)” there should be inserted the following new paragraph –

“Where States of Jersey or States-owned companies’ land is brought forward for the development of new homes, all of the homes provided on it should be affordable (except where the provision of only affordable homes would render the development unviable).”

and the words “on these sites, together with any other government-owned sites or sites to be developed by arms-length bodies, that are brought forward for the provision of affordable homes over the plan period” should be deleted.” and;

- (b) the draft Island Plan 2022-25 should be further amended in such respects as may be necessary consequent upon the adoption of (a).

REPORT

Summary

This amendment would ensure that (except in extreme circumstances) planning permission would not be granted for homes on government-owned sites, or sites that are owned by government-owned bodies, unless they meet the planning guidance definition of “affordable”.

This would ensure that we make the best use of government-owned land to address housing need at the affordable level, rather than provide open market housing (i.e. unaffordable housing) which could serve to primarily provide investment opportunities rather than homes for people who need them.

Introduction

Under current policies and those proposed in the unamended Bridging Island Plan, Jersey is set to fail to meet the evidenced need for affordable housing.

There are currently c.3,000 applications on the Affordable Housing Gateway, 2/3 of which are for first-time-buyers. Yet the Bridging Island Plan only projects meeting half of that need through new affordable homes being developed. This will be reduced even further if other amendments are accepted to remove some of the new proposals for affordable housing sites in St Helier and St Saviour.

The simple fact is that we will not provide for the needs of our community unless we actually deliver the homes that Islanders need. This can only be done by resolving to actually build these homes, rather than simply talk about building them, whilst coming up with excuse after excuse for not doing so.

Table H1 in the Bridging Island Plan shows the projections for housing supply -

Supply source		Five-year supply estimate 2021-25	
		Affordable	Open Market
Under construction (end 2020)		625	700
Planning permission (March 2021)		0	700
Town Capacity	Private sites	0	600
	Government/approved housing provider sites	425	150
Windfall (outside of Town)		0	500
Rezoning - strategic extension sites		150	0
Rezoning - suburban extension sites		150	0
Rezoning - rural extension sites		150	0
Total estimated supply		1,500	2,650
		4,150	

Table H1: Sources of housing supply

It shows that the government is planning to deliver 150 open market homes on government land and yet is requiring the private sector to deliver no affordable homes on land which is not being rezoned for that purpose.

The government should not be developing open market housing, when the private sector is able to do that.

For further information regarding the Objective Assessment of Housing Needs report, I would urge members to read the report to P.69/2021¹ which analyses the information in that report and how the States of Jersey Development Company's (SoJDC) approach to the South Hill development is flawed. This is relevant to potentially any plot of government-owned land which is developed into housing.

Exceptions

The main argument anticipated against this amendment will be that it could risk rendering some developments unviable if they are not able to produce enough of a financial return to support the development of amenities which do not generate profits.

The wording of this new policy is very clear in that it requires homes built to be affordable "*except where the provision of only affordable homes would render the development unviable*".

This means that government-owned bodies will still be able to submit planning permission to build homes which are not designated as affordable, so long as they have demonstrated that they had no other option available to them and can prove that a development which does not contain at least some open market housing to cross subsidise the rest of the development would not be viable.

Rather than allowing the SoJDC to presume they can build whatever homes will generate the largest returns to them, they will have to provide the homes which are most needed in as great a number as they can manage. There will still be leeway where necessary to enable important developments to take place. They will just not be unrestricted in what they can do.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no direct financial or manpower implications, however government-owned bodies which intend to build large swathes of open market housing now would have to reassess their position if this amendment is adopted, and alter their plans accordingly.

Child Rights Impact Assessment review

This amendment has been assessed in relation to the [Bridging Island Plan CRIA](#).

In particular, the relevant articles identified are:

Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child promotes the "right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development"

¹<https://statesassembly.gov.je/assemblypropositions/2021/p.69-2021.pdf>

Article 27(3) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child places an obligation on States Parties to assist those responsible for children to implement this right, including by providing material assistance to access support, including housing.

Jersey has significant waiting lists for social housing and first-time-buyer homes, and even in the private sector many islanders with children struggle to find appropriate accommodation.

By ensuring that the maximum benefit derived from a housing development goes to those needing access to affordable housing rather than investors, Jersey will be supporting more children to have decent and stable homes in which to live and thrive in.