

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2022– 2025 (P.90/2021): TWENTY- THIRD AMENDMENT

FIRST TOWER PLAYING FIELD

Lodged au Greffe on 30th November 2021
by Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2022–2025 (P.90/2021): TWENTY-THIRD
AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (f) –

After the words “Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) to the Report” insert the words –

“, except that, in Summary Table 5(ii), a new Project Head of Expenditure should be included entitled ‘First Tower playing field’ and £150,000 allocated to it, such expenditure to be funded from existing Infrastructure, Housing and Environment budget”

DEPUTY I. GARDINER 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 2022 – 2025 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 2022 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 Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2022, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 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 2022 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary table 2 to the Report, noting that the transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Technology Fund is subject to the Assembly’s approval of a proposition to create such a Fund in 2022, in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law;
- (d) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2022 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 endorse the efficiencies and other re-balancing measures for 2022 contained in the Government Plan as set out in Appendix 2 Summary

Table 6 and reflected within each gross head of expenditure in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 5(i);

- (f) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2022, 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, except that, in Summary Table 5(ii), a new Project Head of Expenditure should be included entitled ‘First Tower playing field’ and £150,000 allocated to it, such expenditure to be funded from existing Infrastructure, Housing and Environment budget;
- (g) to approve up to £480 million to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for the Past Service Pension Liabilities Refinancing head of expenditure, subject to the availability of funding, which may include, in full or in part, use of the borrowing/financing referred in paragraph (b);
- (h) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2022 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report;
- (i) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2022 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report;
- (j) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2022 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 9 to the Report;
- (k) to approve an amendment to the policy of the Strategic Reserve Fund to enable that Fund to be used as a holding Fund for any or all monies related to the repayment of debt raised through external financing, with the monies used to offset the repayment of debt, as and when required; and
- (l) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2022-2025, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report.

REPORT

This amendment requests the addition to the capital project list of a project to purchase field H153, undertake a feasibility study and prepare a business case into the conversion of the field for redevelopment into a playing field and forest school for the use of First Tower school and wider community.

Field H1533 was safeguarded for a school extension for First Tower school in the Island plan 2011. By allocating funds for a business case, purchase of the field (and all attendant legal fees and costs), and full feasibility study, we will finally take this project forward.

This development will meet our inspiration to provide much needed open play space for the St Helier children and families.

Please see Appendix 1: initial sketch for the possible development.

Background

First Tower School (the “School”) is a two-form entry school for pupils aged 3-11, with a 40 place Nursery and it is set in a residential area on the outskirts of St Helier town, drawing children from a wide range of socio-economic and multicultural backgrounds.

The pupils attending are predominantly from the local First Tower area, however there are pupils attending from Island-wide parishes. The catchment is changing to become more vulnerable and challenging in its needs. This is indicated through Jersey Premium numbers, 45% 2021 increasing by 9% from 2019 in comparison to the 29 average across all maintained Government schools.

Pupils who are multilingual learners are a large proportion of the school community with 42% of children having English as an additional language - of which 47% are Portuguese and 29% are Polish. A large proportion of pupils live in flats with no gardens – this has been observed through the Nursery home visits completed by the Early Years leader.

10% of the pupil population have an identified Special Educational Need, within this group one of the most prevalent needs is Social Emotional and Mental Health: 32% which has increased from 26% in 2019.

First Tower is an inclusive community school – their vision statement is as follows;

At First Tower school

Together

We Respect

We Learn

We Persevere

Despite difficulties, the School is driven by an enthusiasm and desire to achieve. They aim to bring learning alive; making it exciting and stimulating. They want to give their children a thirst for learning that continues with them throughout their future school experiences and lives; they want to prepare them well for what the future may bring.

The School fund-raises for charity and endeavours to be a supportive facility in the community.

It's a vibrant, inclusive school. However, the School has no playing field, small playgrounds and very limited green areas.

Field H1533 was safeguarded for educational use in the Island plan 2011 and remains safeguarded in the draft Bridging Island Plan 2022-2025.

Policy C11 – Education facilities

Proposals for the development of additional educational facilities or for the extension and/or alteration of existing educational premises will be supported provided that the proposal is:

- within the grounds of existing education facilities;
- on a safeguarded site; or,
- within the built-up area.

To address specific deficiencies in the provision of education facilities, the following sites are safeguarded for educational use. The alternative development of these sites will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer required for educational purposes:

- **Grainville School:** Field S367, St Saviour - conditional on agricultural access being maintained to the surrounding fields;
- **Jersey College for Girls and Jersey College Prep. School:** Field S800 and S801, St Saviour – for outdoor amenity space to serve both schools;
- **Mont à L'Abbé School:** Part of field H1256, St Helier;
- **Haute Vallée School:** Part of field H1219, St Helier;
- **First Tower School:** Field H1533, St Helier;
- **St John's School:** Part of field J525, St John;
- **Les Landes School:** Part of field 782, St Ouen

Source: [Draft Bridging Island Plan: Page 225](#)

Catchment Area for the School

The catchment area for the School is exceedingly densely populated with limited parking and limited green space in the immediate area of the school. Furthermore, during the [2018 St. Helier Open Space audit](#), it was identified that St. Helier required a 61% increase in additional play space to meet the applied standards.

Summary of performance against St Helier benchmark standards (recorded 2018)				
Typology	benchmark standard (Ha/1,000 population)	Total space "expectation"	Actual availability of space	Status against benchmark at the time of audit (2018)
Parks	0.5	17.5ha	17.6ha	100%
Play space	0.1	3.5ha	1.38ha	39%
Outdoor sports facility	0.8	28ha	27ha	96%
Amenity greenspace	0.25	8.75ha	6.93ha	79%
Natural greenspace	1.0	35ha	24.62ha	70%

Table C12: Town performance against benchmark standards (as at 2018)

Source: [Draft Bridging Island Plan: Page 238](#)

This proposition would be one step forward in trying to improve this substantial deficit.

Taking into account the results of the [2018 St. Helier Open Space audit](#), it is also important to note that, as detailed in the response to Written Question [215/2021](#), there is no statutory framework for the provision of outdoor space per pupil in schools.

Commitments by the States Assembly/Government of Jersey

The [Children and Young People's Plan 2019-23](#) (R39/2019) p.11 states that –

“We want to make not just step-by-step improvements, but to start to address some of the more difficult challenges that can limit children’s life chances - whether it be the school they go to, the community they grow up in, or the earnings of their parents”.

In June 2014 Jersey became a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (“UNCRC”) when the UK was asked to extend its ratification to the Island. A number of the UNCRC Rights are relevant to this proposition, notably –

- Article 3 - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children The Assembly have vowed to Put Children First. How can we be putting Children first when we are not prioritising their health, their education and their futures?
- Article 24 - Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy

Green spaces are of great importance to improving the health of growing children.

“There is significant and growing evidence on the health benefits of access to good quality green spaces. The benefits include better self-rated health; lower body mass index, overweight and obesity levels; improved mental health and wellbeing; increased longevity.¹”

The lack of a playing field and green space further impacts Article 31 of the UNCRC, which states that every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. Such activities are limited at the School due the lack of play areas, inhibiting the development of environmental interests, and restricting activities such as forest school and outdoor learning.

Conclusion

This development will create multiple opportunities for the pupils to learn outdoors, to exercise, to be sociable and to play.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355792/Briefing8_Green_spaces_health_inequalities.pdf

There is equally an opportunity for the School field to become a “community field” allowing additional extracurricular activities for pupils but also the community at large. The School can share resources with the community which would be a major benefit in this area of St. Helier where there are currently limited options for pupils, staff and families.

Jersey Property Holdings have confirmed that there is no record of any options for the development having been considered. During questions without notice on 23rd November I asked the Education Minister if he had considered plans for the field development and I understood that it has not been brought to his attention.

Whatever the reasons have been for lack of progress on this site to date, we need to look forward. I would ask Members to support this amendment which would allocate funds to purchase the field, fund the feasibility study and allow the preparation of a business case which will fully explore the options for this much needed development.

Financial and Manpower implications

The funding for this project is to be taken from unallocated existing budget of the Infrastructure, Housing and Environment department, therefore there are no direct financial impacts.

The amount requested would allow for a business case to be developed and, pursuant to its approval, purchase of the field, legal costs, and a full feasibility study to be undertaken. Feasibility work would then indicate the level of capital required to deliver the development in 2023.

Appendix 1

