

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY (P.21/2024): FOURTH AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 7th May 2024
by the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
Earliest date for debate: 21st May 2024

STATES GREFFE

COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY (P.21/2024): FOURTH AMENDMENT

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After the words “report accompanying this Proposition” insert the words -

“, except that, on page 11 of the report, in the first paragraph, for the words “including schools and youth facilities” there should be substituted the following –

“including youth facilities and the modernisation of the whole of the school estate in St Helier””.

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND HOME AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL

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

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

in accordance with Article 18(2)(e) of the States of Jersey Law 2005, to approve the statement of the Common Strategic Policy of the Council of Ministers as set out in the report accompanying this Proposition, **except that, on page 11 of the report, in the first paragraph, for the words “including schools and youth facilities” there should be substituted the following –**

“ including youth facilities and the modernisation of the whole of the school estate in St Helier”

REPORT

Introduction

The statement of the Common Strategic Policy [P.21/2024](#) (hereafter ‘the CSP’) was lodged by the Council of Ministers on 9th April 2024 and is due for debate by the States Assembly on 21st May 2024. The CSP, if adopted by the States Assembly, will replace the Common Strategic Policy for 2023-2026 and approve the Government’s proposed twelve priorities for delivery in the next two years.

The CSP, as lodged by the Council of Ministers, references an “*urgent need to provide town residents with the infrastructure they require, including school and youth facilities...*”¹. This current wording acknowledges a problem, namely, that there is an urgent need for attention on school facilities and infrastructure in town. However, the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel (hereafter, ‘the Panel’) highlights that there is very little detail in the CSP about how the Government intends to address that urgent need. School infrastructure is not included in the priorities that the Government has identified for its built environment outcomes by 2026 and it is not clear how much detail or focus on schools would be made in the priority to “*deliver a plan to revitalise Town*”.

The addition of the wording in the Panel’s proposed amendment does not change the priorities proposed by Government, but it would insert a recognition that there should be a focus on the school infrastructure and education estate in town during the remainder of this electoral term.

Why is the Panel lodging this amendment?

As per its obligation to examine Government policy, the Panel considers that:

- there is a recognised need to improve and modernise the school estate, particularly that of the primary school estate in St. Helier and this is therefore an area of significant public importance; and
- the States Assembly has shown its in principle support for acquiring the land for a school situated at Gas Place and, as part of that decision, was informed about the wider impact and challenges of the primary school infrastructure in St. Helier in November 2022.

Modernisation of the whole of the school estate in St Helier

The previous Government’s CSP included a commitment to make progress with “*modernising school facilities, particularly in St Helier*”² and, in November 2022, the Council of Ministers lodged an Amendment (number 21) to its Government Plan 2023-2026 [[P.97/2022 Amd.\(21\)](#)] which proposed the addition of a new Head of Expenditure to secure sites relating to the use of Gas Place for a new primary school (following earlier support in 2021 for a change to the Island Plan 2022-25³ to safeguard the site to allow for educational use).

¹ ‘Common Strategic Policy 2024-2026’: [P.21/2024](#), page 11

² ‘[Common Strategic Policy 2023-2026](#)’, page 13

³ Island Plan 2022-25: Approval (P.36/2021) – Eighth Amendment: Jersey Gas Site, Tunnell Street, St Helier ([Amd. 8](#))

The Amendment to the Government Plan 2023-2026 was approved by the States Assembly⁴ and the report accompanying the amendment provided further details, including:

There is a very strong case for investing in our whole Primary School estate in the town area. This is based on:

- *the poor condition of many town area schools (in both parishes of St. Helier and St. Saviour), including Rouge Bouillon, Springfield and La Sente schools. Victoria College Prep. School is also in poor repair, but with an Island-wide catchment rather than a local one, and is being developed as a discreet project.*
- *the current inability of schools' building and facilities to offer wider services to children and families that are much needed, including the response to new and emerging conditions and needs.*
- *the opportunity to have a well-planned, modern and efficient school estate of fewer, bigger school in the main urban area of Jersey, to achieve a 'better and more efficient' system.*

*The challenges facing schools in town are significant; including the delivery of the curriculum for all pupils, many with additional learning needs, and within buildings that are aging and built more than half a century ago.*⁵

The Panel also highlights the [Town Primary School Review Concluding Report](#) (the 'Report'), published in October 2022, which analysed the existing town area school estate, including factors such as:

- demographic needs and understanding the needs within each catchment area, including the impact of housing developments;
- walking times to schools, including overlaps in some catchment areas;
- the vision for town schools to be spaces used by the community for various services for children and families; and
- the importance of Additional Resource Centres (ARCs).

The Report's data (see table below for details) indicated that the potential number of pupils in the catchment area for Springfield School is 410, however, the school has 182–196 pupil places. Per the projections, this is the catchment school that could be the most oversubscribed, however, it is worth noting that St Lukes, Rouge Bouillon and First Tower Schools will all also be close to, or slightly over capacity. Whilst there may be additional spaces in schools on the peripheries of St. Helier and other parts of the Island, where there is a longer walking distance to the school, there will be other impacts for people who cannot easily access other forms of transport.

⁴ Amd.21 was approved: 43 members voted pour, 1 member vote contre, 5 members were absent: see [link here](#) for further detail

⁵ Proposed Government Plan 2023-2026 (P.97/2022): Twenty First Amendment [[P.97/2022 Amd.\(21\)](#)], pp. 6

School	Form of Entry	Jersey Standard Pupil Places (26)	Jersey Standard Pupil Places (28)	Nursery Places	Existing Pupil No's in 2020	Potential Pupil No's plus 3 Years	Overall Existing Site Area	Number of pupils within a 5 minute walk	Number of pupils with a 5 – 10 minute walk	Total number of pupils within a 10 minute walk
d'Auvergne	3	546	588	45	462	458	17633	36	220	256
First Tower	2	364	392	40	338	378	6049	103	117	220
Grands Vaux	1	182	196	30	150	151	8164	40	28	68
Janvrin	2	364	392	30	340	343	14039	203	426	629
Rouge Bouillon	2	364	392	30	349	389	7785	200	504	704
Springfield	1	182	196	26	206	410	5079	152	447	599
St Lukes'	1	182	196	20	180	214	2824	205	371	576
Plat Douet	2	364	392	40	414	337	14273	138	292	430
		2548	2744	261	2439	2680				

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The Panel would also like to reference its visits to Rouge Bouillon School and Springfield School (both St. Helier) in October 2022 and the former La Sente Primary School, now merged with La Passerelle (in its previous location on St. Saviour's Hill) in January 2023. These site visits allowed the Panel to observe the challenges faced by schools, because of the physical space they each occupied.

Priorities and CSP of the Government for 2024-2026

In a quarterly hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (the 'Minister') on 2nd May 2024 the Panel asked about capital projects and was advised that the Minister considered a new school at Gas Place to be a priority and that it was a matter which he considered should be settled before the next election.⁷ The Minister advised that that he was not supportive of new school for purely demographic reasons:

It is about provision of the right amount of play space for the children in Springfield and St. Luke's that simply do not have, for a modern education with breakout spaces so that those children with additional needs can be catered for effectively. We cannot do that as effectively as we want to.⁸

In the same hearing, the Minister also highlighted that delays to a new town primary school project would have an impact on the provision at La Passerelle primary school, which caters for referral led admissions:

There is also an issue about that project [a new town primary school which... it enables La Passerelle primary school to be developed. We are currently educating some of our most needy primary school children in converted portacabins. Any delay to the project in Gas Place... the responsibility there is

⁶ Table is taken from the [Town Primary School Review Concluding Report](#), Government of Jersey ('GoJ'), October 2022, pp. 6

⁷ [Transcript](#), Public Hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 2nd May 2024, pp.38 [or [webcast video](#) time is 1:21:05]

⁸ [Transcript](#), Public Hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 2nd May 2024, pp.37 [or [webcast video](#) time is 1:19:40]

*that that will continue longer than we want it to. We have to get on with that project.*⁹

In previously shared plans for a school at Gas Place, it had been indicated that there would be an Additional Resource Centre (ARC) that would cater for students with additional needs.¹⁰ The Panel had heard in its visit to La Sente Primary School (10th January 2023) that the new Gas Place primary school was intended to include a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) ARC facility for 24 pupils, that would likely be the long-term replacement for the La Sente Primary School.¹¹

Further to this, in a hearing on 3rd May 2024, the Common Strategic Policy Review Panel heard from the Chief Minister:

*We are desperately in need of a new primary school estate in St. Helier, but we have capacity in the other primary schools around the Island. Falling birth rates and reduction in population predictions means we're going to have capacity there. So, we need to replace 2 or 3 or possibly 4 ailing schools with 2 new ones. I think that work is essential. There is a strong focus on that with the current Education team. Of course, there is a disagreement about where they are located. That is something that we are going to try and thrash out as soon as we can.*¹²

Conclusion

The Panel does not believe that the sentiment from Ministers (as referenced above) or the recognised need for change in the Island's primary school infrastructure for Town, is reflected in the content of the CSP. In order to fulfil its role of holding Ministers and the Government to account for their decisions, and reviewing this as a matter of public importance, the Panel seeks this amendment to ensure that modernisation of the school estate in St. Helier is given sufficient focus and is not adversely impacted by the political electoral cycle and changes of Ministerial direction.

Financial and staffing implications

The resulting costs of the proposed amendment to the CSP is not known at this stage.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website . The CRIA screening has identified that the amendment does impact on children and their rights, however, Article 7(4) of the [Children \(Convention Rights\) \(Jersey\) Law 2022](#) states that:

In the case of a decision falling under Article 6(2) that relates to the formulation of an amendment to a proposition, an Article 6 duty-bearer is not required to complete a full

⁹ [Transcript](#), Public Hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 2nd May 2024, pp.37 [or [webcast video](#) time is 1:20:15]

¹⁰ [Town Primary School Review Concluding Report](#), GoJ, October 2022, pp. 7

¹¹ [Minutes](#), Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 10th January 2023

¹² Public Hearing with the Chief Minister, 3rd May 2024 [link to transcript unavailable at time of amendment publication, [webcast video](#) time is 0:45:45]

assessment even if the preliminary assessment determines that the decision is likely to have a direct or indirect impact on children, but an Article 6 duty-bearer may, nevertheless, complete a full assessment should that duty-bearer wish to do so.

The Panel has not completed the full assessment due to the time available to it before lodging this amendment.