
STATES OF JERSEY



ISLAND PLAN REVIEW 2021–2030: IN-COMMITTEE DEBATE – MARCH 2020

Presented to the States on 13th March 2020
by the Minister for the Environment

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this in-committee debate is to provide all States Members with an early opportunity to discuss key issues and express initial views in respect of the Island Plan Review 2021 – 2030.
- 1.2. The new Island Plan will need to find a balance between the competing pressures of maintaining a successful economy and conserving the special quality of our environment whilst providing for our community needs. The plan will need to identify a sustainable future. Important choices will be required, and I ask Members to participate in and contribute to this debate help provide an initial policy steer to help inform the plan-making process.
- 1.3. This report provides information to support the in-committee debate, as follows –
 - **Section 1** of the report reprises the legal and policy context for, approach to and progress with the Island Plan Review.
 - **Section 2** of the report summarises the outcomes of the recent consultation on strategic issues and options.
 - **Section 3** of the report sets out some key issues and questions that States Members are encouraged to consider and direct their comments to.

SECTION 1

2. Legal and policy context for the Island Plan Review

- 2.1. Jersey's long-term strategic framework ensures that decisions taken in the short and medium-term work towards creating a sustainable society, underpinned by a sustainable economy and delivered by a strong partnership between a modern government, responsible businesses, Jersey's communities and Islanders. The Island Plan is a key element of the long-term strategic framework, as set out in **Appendix A**.
 - 2.2. The [Planning and Building \(Jersey\) Law 2002](#) requires that the Minister for the Environment prepares and presents to the States for approval a draft Island Plan within 10 years of the approval of the previous Plan. The current Island Plan was adopted in June 2011, with an interim review of parts of the plan in July 2014. It is the Minister's intention, therefore, to bring a new draft Island Plan before the States Assembly in 2021.
 - 2.3. Jersey has a plan-led planning process and the Island Plan is the primary consideration in planning decisions. Given its significance, the process of developing the Island Plan is thorough, open and rigorous, exposing its content to representations from anyone and to scrutiny by independent planning inspectors, before the draft plan is lodged for consideration by the States Assembly. The process for developing, consulting upon and adopting the Island Plan is set out in law.
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3. Approach to the Island Plan Review

- 3.1. The Island Plan Review process was launched, following a range of preparatory work, in May 2019. Timescales for the work are set out in **Appendix B**.
- 3.2. The current review addresses both spatial land-use planning issues and wider long-term socio-economic issues that are key to securing a positive future for the Island. This will require the Plan to engage deeply with the question of how best to create sustainable communities in Jersey. This raises opportunities for the Island Plan Review that fall outside of traditional spatial land-use planning considerations, such as –
 - picking up from Future Jersey to explore questions about the sort of place Jersey wants to become over the next 10 years, and articulating this vision;
 - setting a framework for understanding both the social, as well as spatial, implications of housing trends and policy;
 - ensuring that the provision of social infrastructure, such as facilities for community use or points to access public services, are better considered in planning decisions, and that appropriate developer contributions can be secured;
 - considering the impact of development on the health and wellbeing of people and communities, as well as on the built and natural environment;
 - providing a means to capture public interest involvement in major infrastructure planning and decision making;
 - making explicit the interrelationship between the Island Plan and other socio-economic strategies;
 - considering the social, environmental and economic benefits of a sustainable transport system; and
 - considering the long-term impact of climate change and the likely changes consequent on achieving a carbon neutral strategy by 2030, particularly in transportation.
- 3.3. In this way, the new Island Plan will set out an integrated spatial approach to the longer-term challenges and opportunities faced by our Island, which need to be dealt with beyond a single term of government.
- 3.4. The Review is overseen by Ministers and carried out by the Place and Spatial Planning Team in the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department, working closely with colleagues in Growth, Housing and Environment, other government departments, professional consultants and stakeholders across the Island. The Planning Law requires the draft plan to be presented to the States by the Minister for the Environment.

4. Progress with the Island Plan Review

- 4.1. A Strategic Issues and Options Consultation was undertaken in the Summer of 2019, running for 12 weeks. The consultation documents and findings are

available at www.gov.je/islandplanreview and are summarised in Section 2 below.

- 4.2. Significant work has been completed to specify and contract for a range of technical studies. These studies will provide updated information that, alongside existing studies, data and strategies, will form the evidence base for the new Island Plan. This evidence will be published in the coming months and sessions will be held to help States Members and stakeholders to engage with and understand the new information.
- 4.3. States Members have had a range of different opportunities to engage in the Review to date, including meetings with each Parish Connétable in May 2019 and meetings with all members on a parochial basis in January/February 2020. Briefings for all States Members have been held at key points in the programme, and the Minister has maintained regular dialogue with, and oversight by, the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. The Scrutiny Liaison Committee have also been briefed.

Planning assumption

- 4.4. Whilst the Island Plan is the key tool in planning decisions, it also needs to make provision for the community's needs over the 10-year plan period 2021–2030. To do this, the Island Plan must be founded upon key assumptions about population and demographic changes over the next 10 years which are based on evidence, trends and the anticipated impact of future policies. Understanding population dynamics and changes to the demographic profile of our community helps us to plan for housing and infrastructure along with other community needs, such as accommodating an ageing population and meeting education and health care needs.
- 4.5. In terms of a baseline consideration, it is necessary to consider the rate of population growth which, in recent years, has very substantially exceeded the planning assumption set in the 2011 Island Plan. Many people challenged the Island Plan process during the Strategic Issues and Options consultation because of the absence of a States policy on population. The Minister for the Environment also considers the population growth experienced in recent years to be unsustainable, but has sought and received public undertakings from the Chief Minister that the States will be asked to make this decision prior to the draft plan being published for public consultation and public inquiry.
- 4.6. The resident population of Jersey at year-end 2018 was estimated as 106,800¹. During 2018 the resident population was estimated to have increased by 1,200 persons, with net inward migration accounting for 1,100 and natural change (births minus deaths) accounting for 100 of the estimated annual increase –

¹ Jersey Resident Population 2018 Estimate (Statistics Jersey) See: <https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/R%20PopulationReport2018%2020190621.pdf>

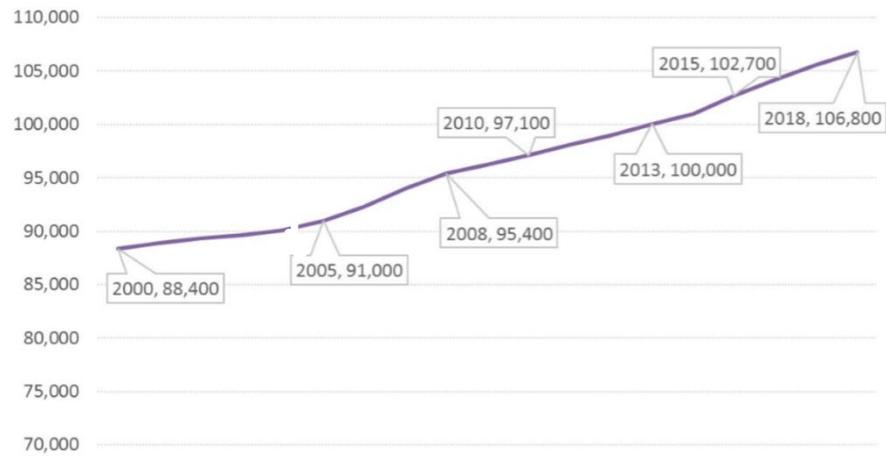


Figure 1: Estimated resident population of Jersey

4.7. The following chart, based on work undertaken in 2016², estimates the future Jersey resident population based upon different assumptions in future levels of migration –

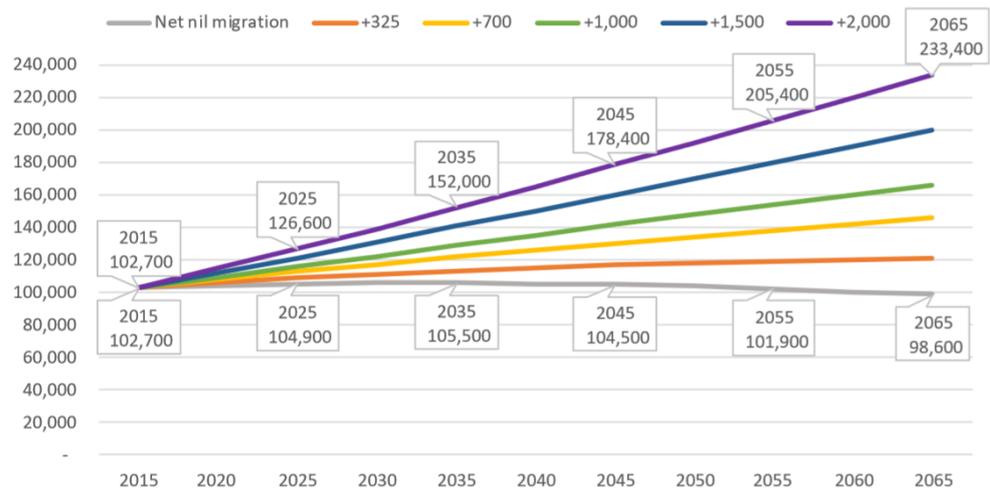


Figure 2: Projection of resident population 2015 – 2065 under various migration scenarios

4.8. The level of in-migration will therefore, determine the change in population that the new Island Plan will need to make provision for over the Plan period up to 2030.

Assumed level of migration	Net nil	+325	+700	+1,000	+1,500	+2,000
Projected resident population at 2030	105,400	110,900	117,200	122,300	130,700	139,200

Figure 3: Projection of resident population at 2030 under various migration scenarios³

² Jersey Population Projection Report 2016 (Statistics Jersey) See: <https://www.gov.je/government/pages/statesreports.aspx?reportid=2370>

³ *Op cit* ref 2 above

- 4.9. The Island Plan Review Team are working with Statistics Jersey, and with colleagues in Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance and other government departments to: ensure that the most appropriate data is used to prepare a planning assumption; to align with emerging, proposed and (in future) adopted policies in key areas including migration, housing and economic policies; and to understand associated impacts.
- 4.10. The methodologies and considerations used to form the assessment of needs across the Plan will be open to public scrutiny and later considered by way of an independent Inspection of the Plan and Examination in Public.

Summary

- 4.11. Significant work still remains but, overall, good progress has been made with the Island Plan Review to date. States Members are invited to contact the team at any point should they have any questions or wish to access any further information using the details set out in section 3 below.

SECTION 2

5. Strategic Issues and Options

- 5.1. The Island Plan Review Strategic Issues and Options consultation took place over a 3-month period from 10th July 2019 to 11th October 2019. The consultation sought views on the key issues affecting the development of the Island and different options for addressing them. It was structured around 4 areas –
- the spatial strategy,
 - a sustainable island environment,
 - a sustainable island economy, and
 - sustainable island communities.
- 5.2. A summary and a detailed technical version of the consultation paper were published and more than 45 engagement events were held throughout the consultation period, including in at least one in each Parish and with a range of youth groups.
- 5.3. A consultation findings report was published on 13 December 2019⁴. Key findings from the consultation include –
- Of the spatial strategy options, respondents showed the most support for focusing development within the town of St. Helier, with 71% of respondents supporting this option. Many expressed support for increasing the density of development in town to accommodate housing

⁴ Available online at –

<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/IP-findings%20report-digital%20111219.pdf>

need. The option of expanding the town to the south – involving the potential release of land at the harbour – was also generally supported.

- 78% of respondents expressed resistance to development in the countryside. Expanding the town of St. Helier to the north, east and west received a mixed response. Expanding other out-of-town built up areas and the option of creating a new settlement or significantly expanding an existing settlement received generally unfavourable responses.
- Around 55% of respondents showed support for land reclamation, with many considering it a means to meet development needs while protecting the countryside from development. Given the time taken to deliver development on reclaimed land, this option is unlikely to be viable within the next Island Plan period but may need to be planned for in the new Island Plan.
- Over half of respondents felt it was either important or very important that new development protects and enhances St. Helier’s townscape character.
- Around 73% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there should be an interim review of housing demand and performance targets, to ensure needs and demands are met.
- On delivering affordable housing, developing sites in public ownership was widely supported as an approach (85%), although a substantial number of respondents (69%) also favoured requiring delivery of affordable homes by private developers as part of their housing developments.
- Around 58% of respondents supported the principle of imposing a levy on development to fund community infrastructure.
- Most respondents (72%) felt that it was either very important or important that new development is focussed on locations which minimise journey times and the need to travel.
- A strong theme running through very many comments was the need to reduce inward migration and reduce the rate of population growth.

5.4. The consultation findings will inform the draft Island Plan 2021–2030 by identifying local priorities, as well as any possible points of contention.

SECTION 3

6. Key themes and questions for consideration

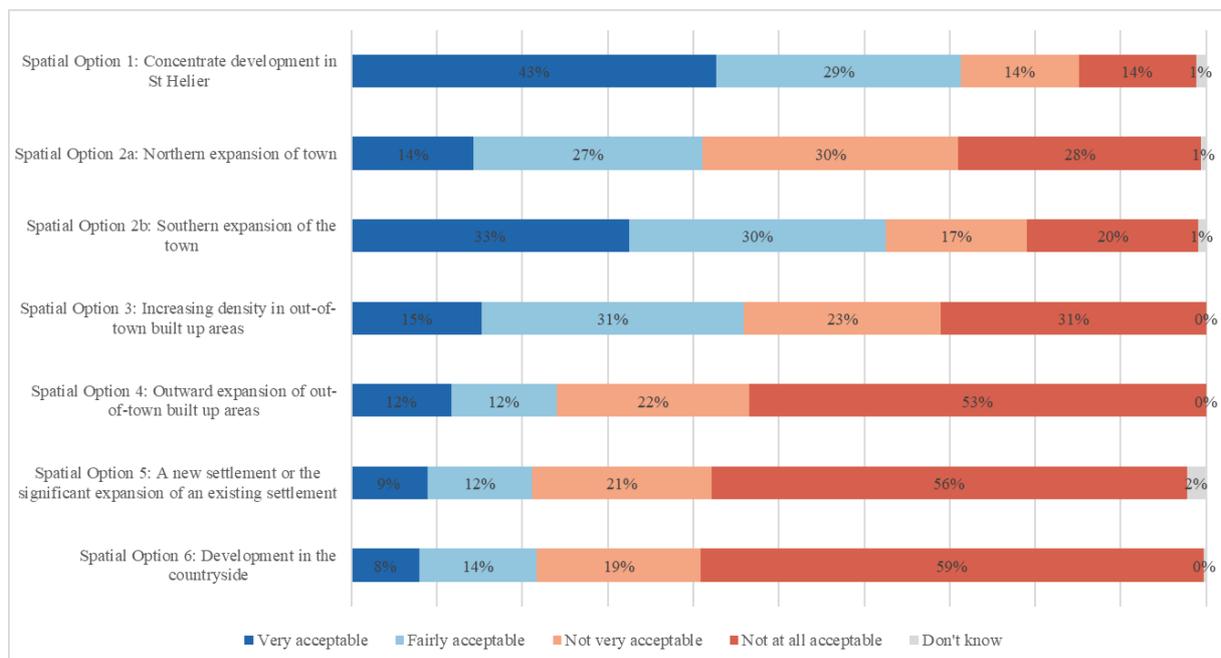
6.1. This section considers cross-cutting issues that have strategic implications for both the development of the new Island Plan and for the future development of the Island. These considerations are not exhaustive; the Strategic Issues and Options consultation addressed a much broader range of factors and those set out for discussion below are a small but significant subset.

- Spatial strategy.
- A plan for the future of town of St. Helier,
- Protecting the coast and countryside.

7. Spatial Strategy

7.1. A fundamental issue, and key part of the Island Plan Review, is setting a strategic direction as to where in the Island we choose to locate new development. This is known as the ‘spatial strategy’. It is of fundamental importance and will determine how the conflicts inherent in planning for a sustainable future can be balanced over the coming years.

7.2. The strategic issues and options consultation asked Islanders about the acceptability of different spatial options (while noting that a combination of these options will be necessary to meet Jersey’s future development needs). The diagram below sets out a summary of responses received.



7.3. Responses showed most support for those options which involve concentrating development in areas which are already built-up, be that St. Helier or other built-up areas, or expansion of development into the Port of St. Helier (this option is dependent on changes to the port). Expansion of development into the countryside was considered not at all acceptable by over 50% of respondents in all cases except where it involved the expansion of the town of St. Helier to the north, east and west: even in this case, however, over 50% considered it to be unacceptable in some way.

7.4. Considering what might be the right approach to the spatial strategy is complex. The approach recommended in the draft Plan will be informed by –

- the development needs that have been identified;
- the capacity for new development to take place in different areas; and
- the anticipated social, environmental and economic impacts that may be felt as a result – this includes supporting the future sustainability of Parish centres and other rural settlements.
- There also needs to be general public and political support for the chosen direction.

- 7.5. Members might wish to consider how the need for new development, especially housing, should be addressed across the Island, and the opportunities and challenges that this presents.

Questions for consideration

- Where should we choose to locate new development?
- Which spatial option, or combination of options, is most appropriate to promote the sustainable development of our urban core and of Jersey's Parish centres and other settlements?

8. A plan for the future of town

- 8.1. The current Island Plan provides a spatial description of the town of St. Helier – distinct from the Parish of St. Helier – that stretches from First Tower in the west, to La Pouquelaye in the north and Grève d'Azette in the east, as shown on the map below.



- 8.2. The future development of the town of St. Helier is critical to the success of the Island on many levels. In planning for town, the new Island Plan will need to set out policies that –
- meet the needs of our economy,
 - promote the sustainable wellbeing of residents and visitors, and
 - ensure that St. Helier is somewhere which offers a distinctive urban experience.
- 8.3. The following issues will be at the heart of future plans for St. Helier –
- **Use of road space** – our network of roads and streets are important to help people move around but are also an important part of our public

realm where people shop, visit for leisure or tourism, or form an important part of their local neighbourhoods.

There is competing pressure for the use of this space and opportunities to reprioritise the use of road space in St. Helier – especially in residential streets or on roads in the heart of the town centre – will be necessary in helping to improve the quality of St. Helier as a place to live, work and visit. The recent consultation found overwhelming support to giving pedestrians, cyclists and buses more priority in the use of road space in St. Helier.

- **Housing: quality, density and height of development** – Successive Island Plans have sought higher land-efficient densities and compact forms of housing in suitable locations, and ‘urban living’ by flat dwellers is now an accepted facet of island life. The predominant building heights in St. Helier are 2 to 5 storeys, but there are also tall buildings ranging in height up to 16 storeys.

Higher density compact housing developments can deliver a number of well-recognised benefits including supporting regeneration and helping to protect open countryside from development; at the same time large, often taller, high-density residential developments can be impactful on the local character of an area and can create pressure on existing community infrastructure where we fail to make further provision.

In seeking more dense forms of development, including taller buildings, the quality of urban design – both of buildings and their setting in the wider public realm – takes on great importance. Plan for the future of town should give priority to ensuring that high standards of design and materials are employed, and that they are in keeping with the prevailing townscape character.

There is general support amongst Islanders for continuing to deliver more dense forms of development generally (at 40%) or on a case-by-case basis (at 43%), which would allow account to be taken of individual character areas. There is also some support for allowing taller buildings (at 44%), although 31% consider this should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, with 25% seeking to resist tall buildings.

- **Sustainable communities** – Whilst the principle of focusing more development in an expanded greater St. Helier enjoys public support, there is concern that sites should not be ‘over-developed’. Existing and future residents of the town should enjoy access to the general amenities and community facilities that people in other parts of the Island might enjoy. This should include provision of public open space – green roofs, parks, play space and access to the countryside; and community facilities. It is particularly important that core public service provision – particularly in the areas of education and healthcare – is developed alongside the building of new homes and communities. The impact of new development on existing schools, GPs and other key services must be understood and plans put in place to ensure local communities are not unduly disadvantaged by the sequencing of developments.

Delivery of this sort of community infrastructure through the planning system is challenging and Members should consider how best this might be achieved and delivered. There was public support for the previously rejected introduction of a planning levy or charge to support the delivery of community infrastructure when raised during consultation.

Delivering sustainable communities is not just about the provision of infrastructure and facilities: whilst these are important, there is a need to consider how best to meet specific housing needs, such as the need for affordable homes. Members might wish to consider whether affordable homes should only be delivered by affordable housing providers – such as Andium Homes or housing trusts – or whether we should require developers to provide a proportion of their housing yields as affordable homes. This was considered a favourable option for the delivery of affordable housing during the recent consultation with 69% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this approach.

- **Townscape character** – Those that have studied St. Helier’s townscape character suggest it is a complex and rich urban environment. Townscape character, and sense of place and identity, can be derived from those buildings and places that have been there the longest, and St. Helier has the greatest concentration of the Island’s listed buildings and places.

Over one third (at 35%) of responses to consultation thought it important that new development should respect and enhance St. Helier’s townscape character; with one third considering that this issue depended on the nature of the proposal and its context. Where somewhere has a distinct historic and architectural character – and might be a possible Conservation Area – over 90% of respondents thought this ought to be protected and enhanced.

- **Office, retail and tourism** – St. Helier plays a pre-eminent role in the island economy. In the recent consultation, there was general support (at 46%) for maintaining office development in St. Helier; and support for a more flexible approach to hotel development (with only 18% considering that St. Helier should be protected as the primary centre for hotel development). Other policies in the Island plan, particularly those related to transport and housing development, will also have a direct impact particularly on the retail sector.

Questions for consideration

- What are the key planning issues for the town of St. Helier and how should the new Island Plan respond to them?
- What are the most important factors in ensuring further housing development – particularly in St. Helier – creates places that promote the sustainable wellbeing of residents and visitors?

9. Protecting the coast and countryside

- 9.1. Jersey's countryside and coast is a defining feature of the Island's attraction as a place to live, work and visit and plays a major part in its quality of life. Despite its size, the Island has a rich diversity of high-quality landscapes which supports a variety of habitats and a unique biodiversity.
- 9.2. Jersey has obligations, through law and convention, to protect its natural environment, and specifically its biodiversity. An overwhelming majority of Islanders are passionate about protecting the coast and the countryside for future generations to enjoy and are concerned that it, and the habitats and wildlife it sustains, are coming under increasing threat.
- 9.3. Successive Island Plans have afforded a high level of protection from all forms of development around the coast and in the countryside, with the focus for new development aimed towards existing built-up areas. Under the current Island Plan, the majority of the Island's countryside and much of its coastline – comprising about 85% of the Island – benefits from a high level of protection against new development, however this protection is increasingly subject to challenge from development, especially in built up locations along the coastline.
- 9.4. In the recent consultation 42% of respondents felt they would like to see less development on the coast and in the countryside, with 32% feeling that each development in these areas should be considered on its merits.

Questions for consideration

- What are the key planning issues for the coast and countryside and how should the new Island Plan respond to them?

10. Conclusion

- 10.1. A draft Island Plan 2021-2030 is expected to be published for consultation in 2020. The Minister for the Environment will respond to this consultation and the draft Island Plan will then be considered by an independent planning inspector before being lodged *au Greffe* in 2021.
- 10.2. This in-committee debate has been requested to provide States Members with an early opportunity to discuss key issues and set out high-level views in respect of the Island Plan Review.
- 10.3. Members are encouraged to –
- note the legal and policy context for, approach to and progress with the Island Plan Review, as set out in section 1;
 - consider and direct their comments to the key cross-cutting issues and questions set out in section 2; and
 - contact the Island Plan Review team at any point should they have any questions or wish to access any further information;

- alert the Minister with any concerns they have over the process being followed and identify the policy issues they wish to address as early as possible as the process proceeds.

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