

14 October 2020

Connétable Mike Jackson
Chair
Environment Housing and Infrastructure
By email

Dear Mike,

Bridging Island Plan

Thank you for your letter dated 01 October 2020.

Ministers have held several discussions about the Island Plan Review to consider the strategic alignment of the Island Plan with issues including migration, housing and the economy.

In June 2020, the Council of Ministers agreed to move forward with a bridging Island Plan, therefore agreeing the principle of taking forward a shorter-term Island Plan that is more able to deal with the uncertainty presented to us by the impacts of COVID-19 and Brexit. This bridging Island Plan is intended to deal with the 2022-2024 period, before a subsequent longer-term Island Plan is presented to the next Assembly (covering the period 2025-2035).

This bridging Island Plan therefore presents the Assembly with a unique opportunity to agree necessary updates to the current Island Plan, without having to make long-term commitments to those things which we know are uncertain, such as our longer-term economic outlook and as a consequence, the impact on migration and labour needs and subsequent demand for housing.

The officers of the Island Plan review team continue to work closely with colleagues across the Government to ensure that the priorities within other ministerial portfolios are addressed in the Island Plan, where this is possible.

For EDTSC, this includes having both the Group Director Economy and the Chief Economic Advisor as standing members of the Island Plan Programme Board and who also serve as critical advisors to ensure that the plan being developed is representative of that considered to be economically sustainable for the Island. This also includes ongoing liaison with the team's leading key projects such as the economic recovery and future economy programmes, the retail strategy and the island sports facilities strategy.

Furthermore, the Minister for the Environment, using funds allocated in the Government Plan, has commissioned a number of studies that will further support the socio-economic considerations of the Island Plan. These studies are being developed with the support of both officers of the Government and key external stakeholders, including sector representatives and the Chamber of Commerce. Below is a brief summary of some of this work:

- An **Employment land study**, focussing on visitor accommodation, retail, office and light industrial land uses, and covering the following aspects:
 1. A review of current information and evidence on the employment baseline taking account of the position before COVID-19.
 2. An assessment of future employment requirements for the Bridging Island Plan, recognising the uncertainty regarding the recovery of the Island's economy post-COVID and, in particular, consideration of the need to further protect employment land due to shifting working patterns as a result of COVID.
 3. A review of the appropriateness of the established policies of the Revised 2011 Island Plan – particularly bearing in mind the purpose of the Plan to support post-COVID recovery.
 4. Recommended policy options to address any deficiencies highlighted by the work.

- An **Infrastructure capacity study**, which is intended to provide a baseline of the island's existing and planned infrastructure in terms of existing capacity, and to identify where further work is required in order to plan for future infrastructure investment needs. Those matters covered in this study, of which are most pertinent to economic and cultural activity, includes: transport; energy; telecoms; digital and internet; health; education, sports and community facilities and cultural facilities. The findings of this study will not only be used to inform the Island Plan, but will later be developed into a longer-term infrastructure plan for the Island.

- An **Integrated Minerals, Solid and Inert Waste and Potable Water study**, which, in understanding our future population and economic growth scenarios, takes into account the current and expected activity within the construction industry and the implications associated with the supply of minerals from on or off island sources. The study also supports our understanding of needs and consequences for other matters, such as considering future land reclamation at the same time as dealing with the island's inert waste, and how we might be able to deliver an adequate, long-term solution to the islands water reserves.

- **A review of approaches taken to develop a Marine Spatial Plan** in other, similar jurisdictions, to support the consideration of Jersey taking forward its own Marine Spatial Plan in the longer-term, and how the bridging Island Plan may be able to improve its approach to marine protection in the shorter-term.

- A review of the island's **historic environment protection regime**, to inform the development of future legislative and policy tools generally and, specifically, in relation to the Island Plan Review. This review will also have regard to obligations under convention and best practice, whilst also considering the cultural and economic value linked to the consideration of area-based heritage protection; the protection of archaeological finds, including treasure, portable antiquities and human remains; and the protection of maritime archaeology.

- A **St Helier Public Realm and Movement Strategy**, to enable the creation and delivery of a programme of prioritised and co-ordinated public realm enhancements in the town, imbedding the vision set out in the Sustainable Transport Policy (2019), actively supporting town centre movement and vitality.

The Minister for the Environment will continue to liaise with the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture and his officers to ensure that the findings of these core workstreams are both agreed, and then taken forward in the most appropriate way.

Despite the questions raised in the letter of the EHI scrutiny panel, until these studies have been concluded and policies are drafted, it is difficult to commit a certain direction for any given sector at this moment, other than to say that the Minister and his officers are aware of the challenges raised by the Panel, and will be considering how best to respond to such challenges over the coming months.

Therefore and to conclude, whilst the bridging Island Plan will have a shorter-term focus, the review process nevertheless presents us with a unique opportunity to the address our current and future needs in a way that is alive and responsive to the unchartered socioeconomic territory that we find ourselves within due to COVID-19 and Brexit; and to also do this in a way that is equally responsive to the strategic priorities of Government and ministerial portfolios therein.

Yours sincerely,



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