

29 October 2020

Economic and International  
Affairs Scrutiny Panel  
c/o Kellie Boydens  
Principal Committee and Panel Officer  
States Greffe  
Morier House  
St Helier JE1 1DD

Dear Kellie

### **Review of Government Plan 2021 – 2024**

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the allocation for CAH in the Government Plan.

Jersey Heritage hugely welcomes funding in the Plan to meet the 1% ambition supported by the Assembly in P40/2019. However, we note that on the face of it a huge amount of money has come out of the allocation if the previous and current Plans are compared in the periods in which they overlap. The main loser here seems to be heritage in general but plans for Elizabeth Castle in particular.

We understand the pressure the Plan is under, but the role heritage has and can continue to play in the government's objectives around welfare, particularly for children, and well-being has been demonstrated by the huge increase in local visits to heritage sites. We have seen membership increase to over 15,000. Furthermore over 95% of investment in Jersey Heritage is spent within Jersey and our international reputation attracts leading experts from around the world to come here to work, bringing inbound investment. All this is without mentioning the importance of heritage to the brand of Jersey and the success of tourism and the hospitality sector. A great example would have been the investment in Elizabeth Castle, which would have also created a retreat centre bringing visitors to the Island out of season.

We would submit the following specific points in respect of the Castle project:

- 2023 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the British Government relinquishing Elizabeth Castle to the States of Jersey for operation as a museum and historic site. Save for the years of German Occupation the Castle has played an important role as a visitor attraction as part of the public heritage portfolio and in recent years has become Jersey Heritage's most visited site;
- States' ambitions for the restoration of key heritage assets at Elizabeth Castle, many damaged during the Occupation, have an embarrassingly long history of inaction which long pre-dates the formation of Jersey Heritage;
- In 1980 the Public Works Committee invited AC Saunders, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments at the UK Department of the Environment, to make proposals for the future development of Elizabeth Castle, which were presented to the States in **p130/1980** *Elizabeth Castle Development*;

- The proposals included 'the rehabilitation of the Hospital' and that 'the Officers' Quarters be rehabilitated'. The Committee anticipated that the work would be undertaken within seven years and noted that although, in those days of booming tourism, the Castle received 150,000 visitors a year 'the income generated from admissions is to be used to defray the operating costs of the Castle and the surplus utilised to maintain the fabric of the Castle. It would therefore not be possible for the Committee to generate from admissions the whole of the finance needed to undertake the developments proposed'. The States adopted the Proposition 'to approve the general development of Elizabeth Castle on the basis of the proposals contained in the report by the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments';
- These priorities were again presented to the States in **P153/1984 Jersey Heritage Trust Development of Museum and Arts Services**, which reported that 'the cost of museum works to the Castles will have to be met from funds provided by the States for the Trust' but noted that notwithstanding the approval of P130 a cautionary approach by the Finance and Economic Committee meant that 'it must be admitted that only a limited amount of work has been possible with the funds allocated. Several major buildings are in a state of dilapidation and one, the Hospital, was itemized by Saunders as being in need of major rehabilitation. Nothing has yet been done, nor funds provided for the undertaking of this important element in the actual development of the Castles';
- In June 1995, the Bailiff informed the States that, following a request from the insular authorities, Her Majesty The Queen had been graciously pleased to agree to abandon the Crown's reversionary ownership of Mont Orgueil and Elizabeth Castles to the public of Jersey by deed of gift. The States duly adopted a proposition of the Policy and Resources Committee **P.93/1995 Transfer of ownership**. The Report stated 'Under the present agreements with the Crown the States has the enjoyment in perpetuity of Mont Orgueil and Elizabeth Castles, subject to certain conditions regarding responsibilities for maintenance, conservation, interpretation ... For many years the States has complied with the conditions of the agreements and has invested resources to restore, maintain and enhance the Castles. The Home Office engineers have been consulted when any development has been proposed but in latter years the Home Office has been content to allow the States to maintain and enhance the Castles with very little direct involvement.' In 1996 the States assembled in extraordinary session in the Middle Ward of Mont Orgueil Castle to receive His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and to acknowledge formally their acceptance of the most gracious gift by Her Majesty The Queen in conveying by deed of gift to the public of the Island the reversionary ownership of Mont Orgueil Castle and Elizabeth Castle. His Excellency handed to the Bailiff the keys;
- These issues of responsibility were ultimately recognised and reflected in the *Cession of Usufruct* approved by the States in **P175/1996**. The usufruct imposed an obligation on Jersey Heritage Trust to 'restore the Castles, develop public facilities and ensure the preservation of the Castles' and to 'preserve the historical and archaeological integrity of the site'. The usufruct gave the States a duty to 'assess the state and condition of the Castles' and set out that 'in the event of repairs whether urgent or otherwise being required to the Castles or to either of them which shall exceed in cost the whole of the [Ancient Monuments] Fund the Trust may apply to the Finance and Economics Committee for additional funding'.

So, it is against that background that Jersey Heritage Trust announced in 2006, with the successful completion of the refurbishment of Mont Orgueil, ambitions to address the long outstanding plans for Elizabeth Castle highlighted in the reports to the States in the 1980s.

A number of applications as part of States' annual planning were made. None were received favourably although no specific feedback on the reasons for failure were communicated to us. In 2016 Jersey Heritage Trust submitted a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Castle and options to address vulnerabilities. In discussion with the Economic Development Department, the Hospital and Officers' Quarters, as highlighted by Saunders, were identified as priorities in terms of both conservation and opportunity. In 2017, at the invitation of then Assistant Minister with responsibility for Culture, Deputy Murray Norton, we presented plans to States Members which were well received (the text of the presentation is attached) and subsequently funding was identified in the *Government Plan 2020-2024* approved in **P.71/2019**.

On that basis, and with the support of the Department, Jersey Heritage Trust committed effort and resources to develop the plans upstream of implementation including:

- A public engagement plan, *Love Your Castle*, which saw thousands of Islanders visiting the Castle to explore the plans on open days as well as corporate engagement and fundraising including team conservation projects and events like *The Castle Chase*
- Archaeological projects led by University of York Archaeology Department, with volunteers from the Société Jersiaise and Young Archaeologist Club, to inform the detailed conservation challenges of the developments
- Architectural work on the proposals to bring the scheme towards a planning application, currently in submission
- Partnership development to secure business options to operate the attraction, events and accommodation offers to be made possible by the investment

So we were surprised and disappointed, if not embarrassed, when we were alerted to the possibility that the proposals, first identified for progress in 1980, were yet again to be a casualty of changes to the Plan because, we were informed, they had been included in error in both revenue and capital allocations: Elizabeth Castle seems to have gone from being included twice to being excluded altogether.

The position of Jersey Heritage Trust remains that, as the Assembly has accepted on a number of occasions:

- The need for conservation work on these very significant historic buildings, first identified and accepted by the States in 1980, is pressing, ultimately unavoidable and inevitably getting more expensive with the passing of time
- There is a real opportunity here to bring this important heritage site, at the heart of St Helier and of our Island story, but currently culturally and economically redundant for six months of the year, to life year round for attraction, events, accommodation and community use
- Jersey Heritage Trust, operating in respect of its responsibilities under the terms of the usufruct, generates significant funds for the ongoing maintenance of the Castle heritage and its operation as an important visitor attraction in the tourism economy
- Responsibility under the usufruct for the significant investment necessary to meet the objectives of the usufruct to preserve the Castle, falls to the Government in the way recognised over the last four decades.

We understand the challenges facing the Island but the Island's responsibilities towards this significant heritage asset, sought from the Crown, set out in the usufruct and on several occasions over 40 years approved by the States, cannot be avoided by Treasury forever.

To repeat, we understand the pressure on the current Plan. But Government investment in built assets is still very significant in that Plan. Whilst it appears that it has not been possible to fund the Castle in this Plan, our concern remains that consequently, 40 years after the need was recognised by the Assembly, there is no plan or, to put it another way, in effect a plan **never** to invest in this building, the most significant public heritage asset in St Helier and one of the Island's most important visitor attractions, in support of the obligations placed on Jersey Heritage by the Assembly in the usufruct. Our request therefore is at the earliest possible opportunity to identify not if, but when, investment can be identified to allow us to plan accordingly.

The current proposals remain those presented to States Members in 2017 and include:

1. Restoration of the Hospital Block for presentation as part of the heritage attraction during the summer months and for meeting and events rooms during the winter period
2. Restoration of the outbuildings of the Hospital for hospitality facilities in support of expanded events use on the Green
3. Restoration of the Officers' Quarters to support self-catering holiday accommodation during the summer and community residential retreat use in partnership with local charities in the winter period.

The best way to understand both the challenges and huge opportunities from investing in Elizabeth Castle is to visit it and see it at first-hand. I would therefore be delighted for you to visit the Castle and see buildings closed to the public that could form part of a great facility for locals and would attract visitors from across the UK and Europe.

In the meantime, I cannot stress enough the importance that investment in our heritage can be to well-being and recovery of this Island and its people. As they say, 15,000 members can't all be wrong.

If you require more information or would like to discuss this response, please feel free to ask. Indeed, if you want to take up the invite to visit the Castle please contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Tim Brown**  
**Chair, Jersey Heritage**