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Bridging Island Plan 2022-24 Scrutiny review - Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel

Introduction

The Minister for the Environment is responsible for providing a plan that, "...provides for the orderly, comprehensive and sustainable development of the land which best meets the needs of the community". Covid-19 and the implementation of Brexit in the coming months have and will continue to, disrupt many aspects of Island life.

We support the implementation of a bridging plan to allow a thorough development process of the next Island Plan (IP).

Events surrounding the pandemic and Brexit are external drivers of change that we must continue adapting to on a daily basis.

Alongside the more recognised planning strategy priorities for our community's need and aspirations for our future natural and built environment, it is essential that a sustainable economy is considered with every decision.

Scrutiny Review Terms of Reference comments from Retail & Supply Committee

1. We support the principle of a bridging plan to allow a "breathing space" to assess the impact of current events and plan our recovery. However, the committee urges government to delivery short and medium-term actions through this period so there is 'something to show' for the period of time.
- 2 - a Approving major planning interventions in the built and natural environment which might impact the economy should be placed on hold during the bridging period, unless a clear impact assessment is provided and consulted upon.
- 2- b There appear to be gaps in the evidence base research carried out so far in the current and previous IPs. The next 3 years might be considered an opportunity to review how we go about gathering information and look further forward to a long-term vision for not just the next 10 years, but decades beyond, to both nurture our economy and business confidence, and also inform business planning for major Public infrastructure investments.
- 2 -c We propose Stage 1 of IP evidence "scoping, research, options" should be subject to a peer review from partners within GoJ and other key stakeholders.
3. Agree, support, see 2.3 above.
4. A full and through consultation is required to understand the public, business community and residents' views.

5. Projects already in process should continue and priority given to key projects such as Hospital and affordable housing. Where is the economy in this bridging plan consideration, change of use for property, review of retail core and support for data in relation to the town center? We would ask that scrutiny ensure decisions made have been properly consulted on and are not a pipe dream for politicians.

6. The Retail & Supply committee is supportive of decisions made with data however these need to be transparent and accessible.

7. No reference within the Bridging Island Plan is made to the Migration Policy Report, completed in January 2020, which the Minister himself was part of panel that produced the report. Chamber would ask if it would be prudent for the new Island Plan to test the broader principles outlined in the report for relevancy, to see if and where they have changed with regard to the external driver of COVID-19. Brexit has remained present throughout this time period, so it is likely all impacts remain as were twelve months prior.

8. Throughout several Chamber Committees, the frustrations of the speed and flexibility on changes of use, within planning applications has often been cited. With new C-19 challenges and the possible impacts on office space requirements, tourism venues, particularly with regard to under-invested older hotel stock, and the likely redeveloping of unrequired empty retail space a change with greater flexibility and commercial agility will be required.

Conclusion and Proposal

The Island is experiencing an extraordinary period of challenges. The Island Plan is a powerful tool to help us manage and adapt to change. The economy must receive attention when drafting the IP. It is essential the best data possible is being fed into the IP.

The best way to authentic, endorse and potentially supplement the evidence so far available, is to subject the data so far prepared to a Peer Review.

Does the new Island Plan test the broader principles outlined in the report first, to see how they have changed with regard to the external drivers of C-19 and Brexit and the results of both on the economy.

**Jersey Chamber of Commerce
Retail & Supply Committee**