



REDISCOVERING FORT REGENT

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AIM

“ THE AIM OF THE FORT REGENT STEERING GROUP IS TO PRODUCE A COMPREHENSIVE “BUSINESS CASE”, BY THE END OF 2014, IN ORDER TO SEEK FUNDING IN THE 2016–2019 MTFP, FOR THE REGENERATION OF FORT REGENT. ”





FOREWORD

Each Fort Regent steering group faces the same challenges, namely ‘how can we revive the centre to meet the fondly remembered, prominent position it held in the eyes of Jersey’s Islanders?’

A new generation that didn’t see the leisure centre in the busier days of Jersey’s burgeoning tourist industry often cannot imagine what that was like and wonder what Fort Regent now has to offer.

What the younger generation may not realise is that the centre is one of the States of Jersey’s biggest sports facilities and, as illustrated later in this document, is home to 46 different community activities. Despite having lost some of its allure, it has continued to function at a level that serves the people of this Island.

Far from just being a reminder of a bygone era, Fort Regent remains a crucial part of the Island’s infrastructure, but in recognition of the change in times, we must not merely oversee its slow decline but give it the opportunity to regain its status as a focal point for future regeneration.

It became apparent through the steering group meetings that something was missing...a set of eyes, ones that could see things differently. The Architectural week, with its focus on the centre, offered that opportunity. Both Carlos Riva, who nominated the building as his favourite piece of Jersey architecture, and fellow architect Mike Waddington joined the group. They have elevated the discussion, providing inspiration and a new narrative for Fort Regent.

In this document we have focused, on three areas:

- ▶ What has been done?
- ▶ What is being done?
- ▶ Our vision for Fort Regent’s future prospects

For the latter, we are looking for your help and collaboration. The centre is so close to many people’s hearts that we feel it would be wrong to advance further without public scrutiny and support.

In terms of what has been done so far, you will be able to read this in more detail later in the document, but as an example of the ‘new thinking’ sweeping through the Island, Fort Regent’s staff have been actively engaging in creative ideas for repositioning the centre’s current offerings including the History Tour that was developed earlier in the year by the team.

Rediscovering ‘lost parts’ of Fort Regent’s environment has become a key area of focus for the steering group. The area that once housed the aviary at the back of the centre is now being stripped back, using “Back to Work’ volunteers, and we are working to create access so that possible regeneration can take place for the area.

Deputy Eddie Noel

Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources
Chairman of Fort Regent Steering Group
21st November 2013

BACKGROUND

Originally built as a Napoleonic fortress, Fort Regent has been transformed over the years from a defunct military parade ground and coal storage depot into a wet weather venue for tourists and local visitors to become the largest sports and leisure centre in the Island.

Over the years, Fort Regent has provided valuable facilities to the whole community, but elements of the centre have now become dated and underused. The number of attractions and facilities has significantly reduced along with visitor numbers. The reasons behind this decline are varied and the challenges to be faced to reinvigorate Fort Regent are not straightforward.

A number of attempts have been made to find the right answers and a number of reports have been produced over the years, for example:

1 The Future of Fort Regent, The Jersey Sports Village, Community Sports Centre into the Millennium with 20:20 Vision (April 1997)

2 Fort Regent Conference + Events Venue (November 2004)

3 Jersey Conference Centre Study (May 2003)

4 Development Brief for Fort Regent, St Helier (January 2007)

In 1999, the States did approve, in principle, the redevelopment of Fort Regent, but despite subsequent reports, funding has not been available and no major development has taken place.

In 2009, the States tasked the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to establish and lead a political steering with the aim of producing a cohesive and realistic plan for the development of Fort Regent.

In November 2011, the resulting Political Steering Group produced its Interim Report (R.134/2011). Key issues identified were access and funding. It was made clear that further detailed work would be required and that this would take time.



The new Fort Regent Steering Group has been working from mid-2012 to establish a way forward for the development of Fort Regent. Working in partnership with key stakeholders from industry, government and the community, a few key areas of agreement have now been reached, namely:

1

RETAIN STATES OWNERSHIP

Fort Regent should remain in States ownership and the States should retain responsibility for the fabric and infrastructure.

2

PROVIDE IMPROVED ACCESS

The journey to and from Fort Regent needs to be effective and appealing to encourage locals and visitors alike. The means of access must be safe, interesting and capable of moving large numbers of people to and from major events, whilst remaining affordable.

3

RECOMMITMENT TO SPORT

Sport and fitness should remain at the heart of Fort Regent, along with the clubs and associations that use it. More widely, the Education, Sport and Culture strategy 'Fit for the Future' should be supported.

4

NEW COMMITMENT TO CULTURE AND THE COMMUNITY

The opportunity to use Fort Regent more widely for cultural and other community focused activities should be part of its future plans.

5

PLANNING FOR FLEXIBILITY

Any changes must also allow for future flexibility - as the needs of the community change - to ensure that what is offered is vibrant and relevant.

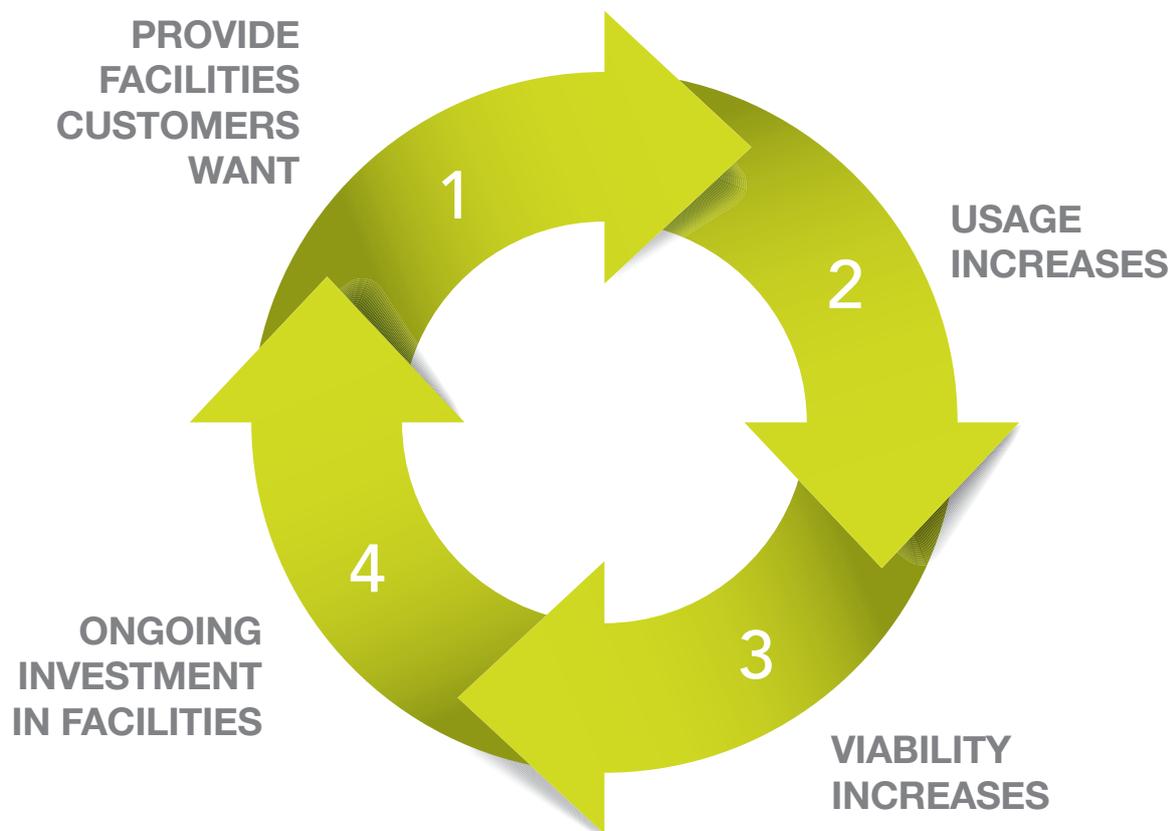
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CREATING MORE DIVERSITY

To be more successful, Fort Regent needs to increase the number of people using it on a regular, ongoing basis. Developing the range and number of activities provided at Fort Regent is therefore essential to maximise usage and create a 'critical mass'.

TO ACHIEVE THE ABOVE, APPROPRIATE FUNDING MUST BE JUSTIFIED AND SECURED - this will include private sector funding.

The overarching aim is for Fort Regent to become a successful, multifunctional sporting, leisure, entertainment, arts and cultural centre for the Island community and visitors alike by maximising its potential catchment numbers to create a 'virtuous circle'.



It is clear that there is no one single solution to reinvigorating Fort Regent. It will need a series of combined activities and actions to create the critical mass of visitors needed to ensure ongoing viability. This is essential, because it will allow reinvestment in Fort Regent so that the current situation is not repeated. The next steps are challenging and difficult, but the current Steering Group is determined to take this challenge on.

It intends to produce a clear vision for Fort Regent and a comprehensive 'Business Case' to deliver it by the end of 2014 in order to seek funding in the 2016–2019 Medium–Term Financial Plan.

As a critical element of developing the vision and Business Case, the Steering Group will undertake a wide–ranging and focused consultation process. This is aimed at better–understanding what the public would increasingly make use of Fort Regent for, but also what would lead potential investors to provide facilities and activities. A balance between aspiration and deliverable reality will need to be achieved.

The following sections set out the key areas that the Steering Group will focus its attention on.



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

On 8 November 2011, the Fort Regent Political Steering Group: Interim Report R.134/2011 was presented to the States. This identified a set of guiding principles to use in determining the future of the facility relating to sport, leisure and club facilities, history, architecture, and private finance.

The new Steering Group was tasked with moving this report forward. In doing so, it has used these guiding principles as the basis for its ongoing work.

Work has also been continuing to ensure that the existing Fort Regent facilities are maintained, including:

1 REFURBISHMENT OF THREE LIFTS

2 ROCKFACE REPAIRS

3 REPAIRS TO ESCALATOR HOUSINGS

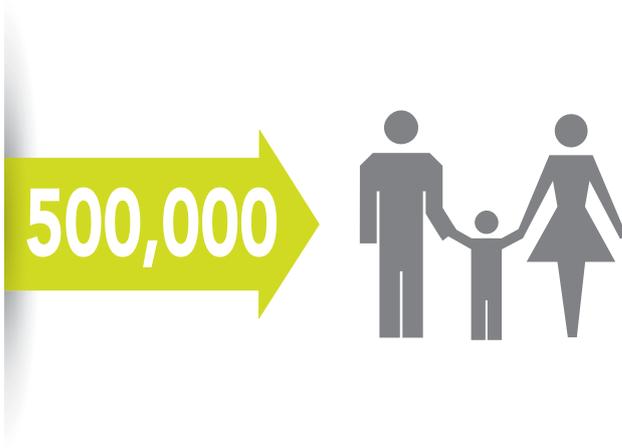
4 EXTERNAL WATERPROOFING

46 DIFFERENT

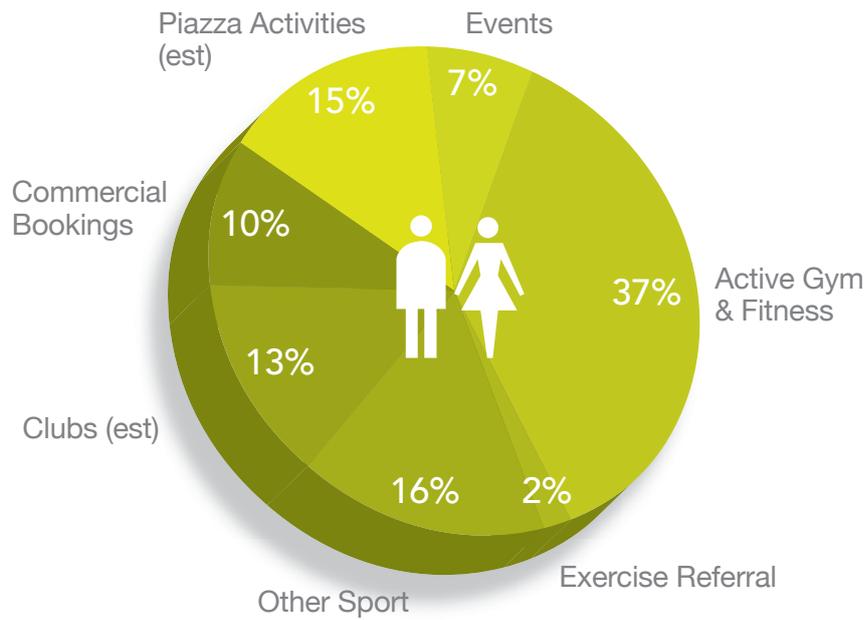
- ACTIVE GYM
- ARCHERY
- ARENA CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA
- ART GALLERY
- BADMINTON
- BASKETBALL
- BOWLING (INDOOR)
- BOXING
- CAFÉ
- CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTIES
- CHILDREN'S DRAMA CLASSES
- CHILDREN'S HAIR SALON
- CRÈCHE
- CONCERTS
- CRICKET (INDOOR)
- EVENTS
- EXERCISE REFERRAL
- FAMILY FUN CENTRE (ARCADE)
- FITNESS CLASSES
- FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL
- GYMNASTICS
- JERSEY MUSEUM

Importantly, the centre has also continued to provide its valuable services to the community.

In 2012, Fort Regent received approximately half a million visitors to the centre, using a diverse range of facilities and services.



THE WAY THAT PEOPLE USE FORT REGENT CURRENTLY BREAKS DOWN AS FOLLOWS:



- # ACTIVITIES
- MUSIC SERVICE
 - JUMPING FITNESS
 - LA PETITE ECOLE NURSERY
 - LED LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY
 - MARTIAL ARTS
 - MASSAGE
 - MUSIC STUDIO
 - NETBALL
 - PERSONAL TRAINING
 - RACQUETBALL
 - SAUNA AND STEAM ROOMS
 - SHOOTING CLUBS
 - SHORT TENNIS
 - SLACKLINING
 - SNOOKER AND POOL
 - SPINNING STUDIO
 - SQUASH
 - TABLE TENNIS
 - THE SUPPLEMENT STORE
 - TRADE SHOWS
 - TRAMPOLINES
 - VOLLEYBALL
 - WEIGHT TRAINING

PLANS FOR 2014

During 2014, key activities will include:

1

LAUNCH OF A CONSULTATION

We need to clearly establish what existing Fort users, and the wider community, would like to see for Fort Regent in terms of: **Access, Interior, Exterior.**

We will also need to consult with potential suppliers of facilities to ensure that our aspirations are balanced and deliverable. This will be particularly important if we are looking for private sector investment. An early aim will be to identify the estimated costs of addressing the “Access” issue.

2

SCOPE OF FUNDING

We also need to establish what different ideas and proposals might cost. Work has already begun to assess this, however, we need the public to tell us what they want before we can fully establish the cost and decide what a reasonable budget would be when weighed against other priorities for Jersey.

3

DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING POOL SITE

A key aim for 2014 is to begin the removal of the old pool structure. Planning permission for a replacement sports and community facility will be submitted as the first stage of this process. This will give a much-needed boost to the centre and creates an opportunity for change.

4

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACTIVITIES

In 2014, Fort Regent will look to introduce some new activities. An example of what might be possible is a “Dome Walk” that allows people to walk securely over the dome. This will help to raise awareness of Fort Regent, both in the local community and with visitors, and show that there are new and different things that can be done with the facility.

5

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

The existing activities provided at Fort Regent will continue, including new innovations such as the Fort Regent History Trail developed by the Fort Regent Team.

6

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

It is important that while we consider how to develop Fort Regent in the future, we maintain the facilities that are there for existing users and also protect the building. There are some significant projects planned for 2014, including: **signals mast replacement, repairs to the main roof, replacement of two external staircases, works to leaking glazing, repairs to escalator housings, new roof covering to sea cadets and parade ground, new fire alarm installation.**

NEXT STEPS

Many people already use and value Fort Regent. A revitalised Fort Regent must continue to provide services for these valuable customers, but also provide new offerings that new people both want and will use regularly.

To ensure the best chance of success, there will be an engagement process with all key stakeholders to determine what facilities the public would like to see and use at Fort Regent. During this process, we will ask people for their views on:

ACCESS

How can we make it easier for people to get to Fort Regent?



EXTERIOR

What should happen within the external grounds of Fort Regent?



INTERIOR

What should happen within Fort Regent in the future?



FUNDING

It is also essential to understand what the potential costs of improving Fort Regent will be, both in terms of funding from the States of Jersey and for potential commercial investors. Commercial investment is seen as critical to the success of any future development and expenditure.

To create the 'virtuous circle', we need to keep Fort Regent running and make it better, and we need the right offering to increase the number of customers and improve Fort Regent's financial viability. Supporting reinvestment in the business and keeping it fresh and vibrant is what will keep people coming back.

Fort Regent faces a particular problem in creating this 'virtuous circle': the potential size of the market. Jersey has a relatively small population compared to the UK or other European towns/cities that could support a similar facility. They would have a sizeable surrounding catchment area to supplement the local population, however, in Jersey's case, this additional catchment has been provided by its tourism industry, which has declined since Fort Regent first opened as a leisure centre. There are also other facilities now competing with some of Fort Regent's core offerings, e.g. gym facilities.

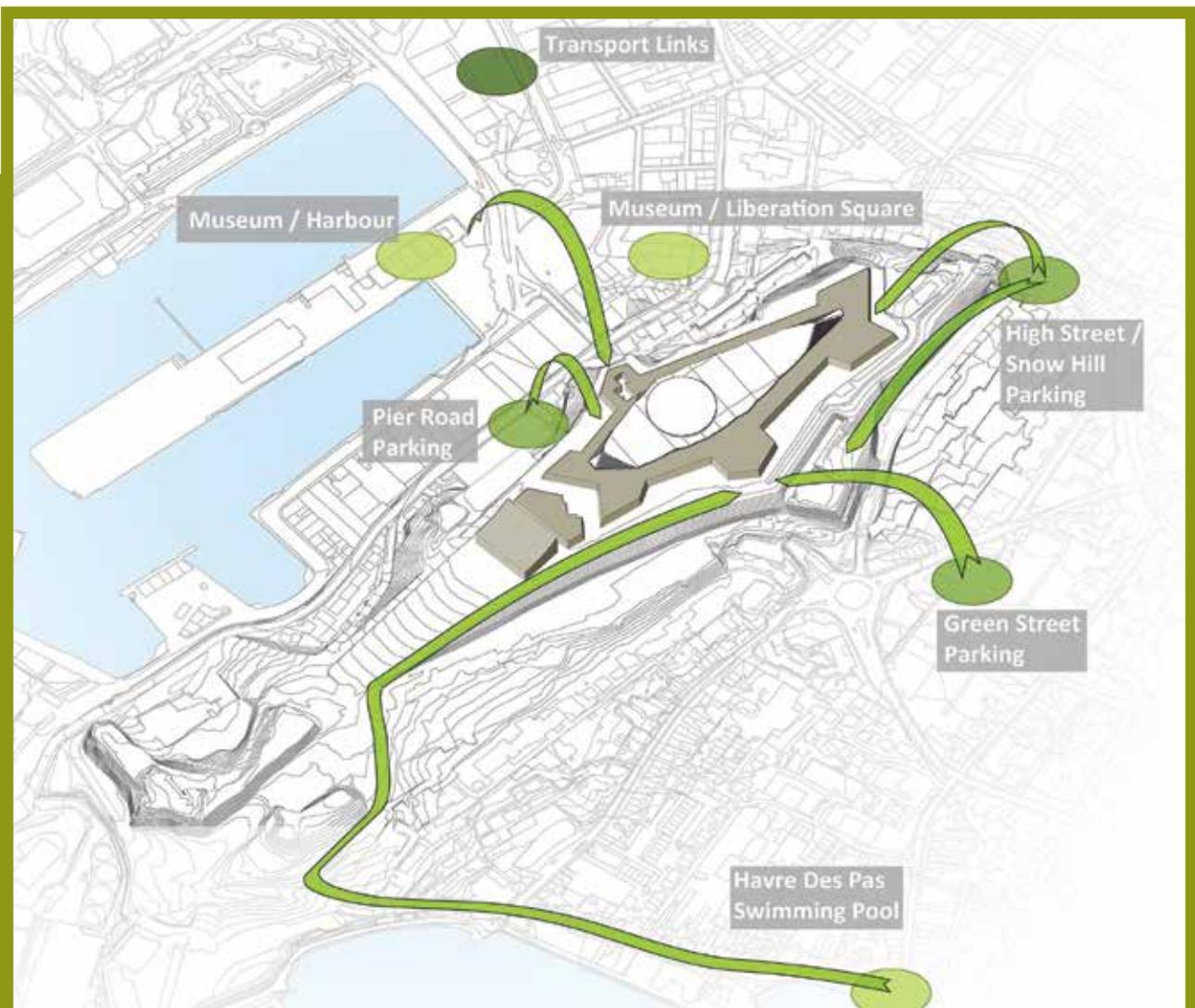
A FULL BUSINESS PLAN will be required by early 2015 in order to seek support in the 2016–2019 Medium-Term Financial Plan, where there will be an opportunity to bid for funding.

PHASE 1

THE LOST LINKS

Improved access to Fort Regent is an essential first requirement to drive and support increased usage. Historically, a cable car provided access, but over time the options for getting to and from Fort Regent have reduced.

By its very nature, Fort Regent (as it was first built as a fort!) was intended to keep people out. The challenge now is to find the right way to make access easy for all. This includes pedestrian access, disabled access, car parking and 'drop off' and 'pick up' facilities, each of which have their own needs and challenges.



We now need to consider how to appropriately improve access to Fort Regent, including:

1

The most appropriate method of access, e.g. high speed lifts, escalators, funicular, or cable car? Consideration needs to be given to the ease, speed and volume of these methods as well as the positive experience they could create, and the cost.

2

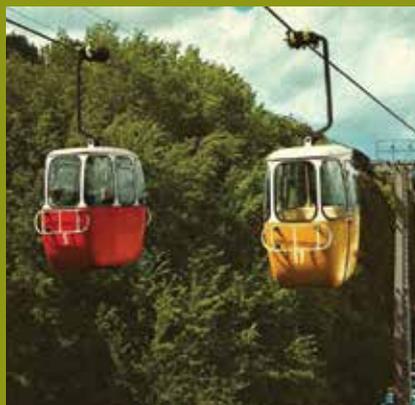
The right point of access. It is a generally held view that Snow Hill is a good access point in town. However, this brings customers to the opposite end of the Fort to the main entrance. It is not a straightforward issue. Consideration also needs to be given to how the development of the Waterfront, the Esplanade Business District and the Bus Station have and will affect volumes of pedestrian traffic. For example, are the Weighbridge or Albert Pier areas better options as direct access points to Fort Regent?

3

- ▶ Improving vehicular access in terms of 'drop off' and 'pick up' at the entrance level
- ▶ Improve the experience of moving from Pier Road car park to the entrance of Fort Regent
- ▶ Considering improvements for pedestrian access and bicycle storage

4

We could also consider if a 'Hopper Bus' may be something people would utilise?



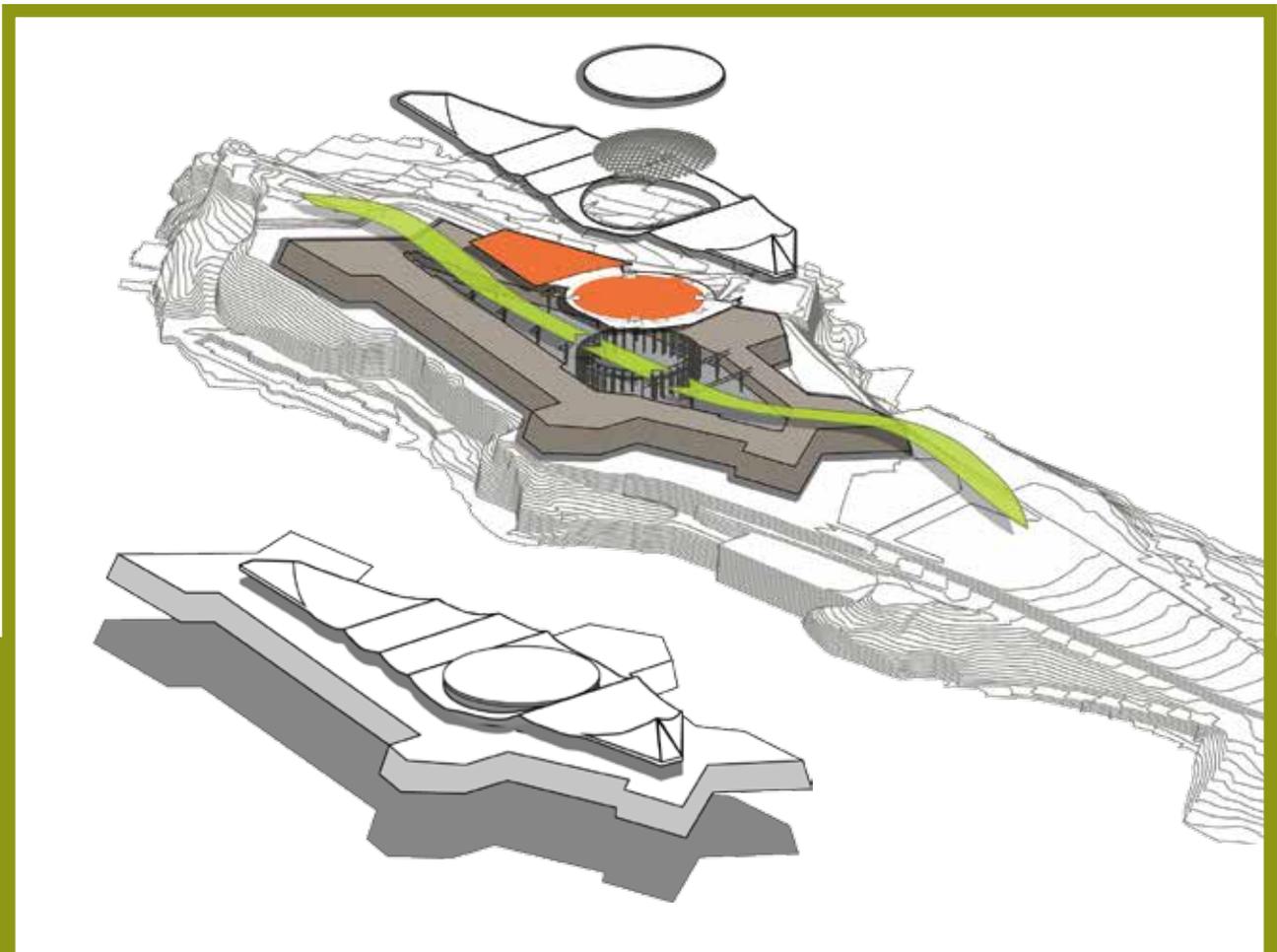
PHASE 2

THE HIDDEN FORT

Fort Regent houses a large number of activities that are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. However, there are large areas of Fort Regent that are underused or unused. This 'Hidden Fort' presents opportunities for development, allowing other activities to be brought to Fort Regent.

The creation of additional space would provide an opportunity for new facilities to be included alongside current activities. The expectation is that the new space would be let to provide additional activities to support Fort Regent.

It is widely accepted that a general overhaul, reconfiguration and refurbishment of the internal spaces of Fort Regent is needed in order to create the right environment to provide enhanced and additional activities.



We now need to consider what those additional activities might be, including:

1

Creating new multipurpose space for events such as conferences, sports and concerts, alongside an altered Queens Hall to provide connectivity to it for large-scale events/exhibitions.

2

The aim could be that Fort Regent becomes the Island's premier events venue. This is supportive of the aim to increase 'event-led tourism' as well as offering enhanced entertainment opportunities for local people along the lines of the Dance World Cup.

3

Creating mezzanine level(s) over Gloucester Hall, altered Rotunda and Piazza area. This could create up to 35,000 square feet of new space for new uses or to relocate existing activities to more suitable areas. This is equivalent to the size of The Royal Square. There is also the possibility to create another mezzanine under the dome roof.

4

Consider reintroducing aquatic activity back to Fort Regent, e.g. fun pool/flumes/lazy river. This could also include the feasibility of a competition swimming pool. Any plans of this nature would need to be considered in the context of agreements with existing suppliers.

5

Introducing new leisure, play and entertainment activities at Fort Regent (particularly for 10–17-year-olds), utilising spare and additional capacity. Flexibility will be the key to providing these activities – they must be what visitors want and will support while recognising that this can change within a relatively short timescale. The activities and the infrastructure in which they are provided must allow change to happen quickly and cost effectively. A good, current example of this is ice skating.

6

There is an opportunity to consider whether cultural and arts activities can be successfully accommodated at Fort Regent (e.g. sculpture park, arts and crafts workshops). The possibility for synergies with other arts and cultural organisations should be considered and researched, particularly where such organisations are looking for new or increased facilities. Potential synergy with the Schools Music Service, which is already based at the centre, is a good example.

7

There is a strong demand for enhanced community facilities on the Island, particularly with regard to activities for younger visitors. There are opportunities for unused areas of Fort Regent, e.g. the skateboard park, to be adapted to provide such facilities instead of taking up space at the harbour.

8

If this increased activity, and the associated increase in footfall that follows, can be achieved, then the range, number and quality of cafes, bars and restaurants that can viably operate from the centre will increase, which in turn creates its own attraction.



PHASE 3

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS

The gardens at Fort Regent have fallen into disuse. If Fort Regent is going to be developed, the outdoor space surrounding the centre also needs to be considered.

The external garden areas of Fort Regent are already being reinvigorated through a 'Back to Work' initiative. However, going forward, more ambitious improvements could be made.

We now need to think about how we could make the gardens around Fort Regent an extension of the facility by including suggestions such as:

1

THEMED 'POCKET' GARDENS

For example, a wellness, rose or winter garden.

2

CLIMBING WALL

Areas for climbing or abseiling.

3

WALKWAYS

Places to walk and enjoy the spectacular views.

4

LINEAR PARK

A linear park linking Snow Hill to Havre des Pas.

5

OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATRE

There could also be scope for a natural, outdoor amphitheatre to be created to support outdoor events.

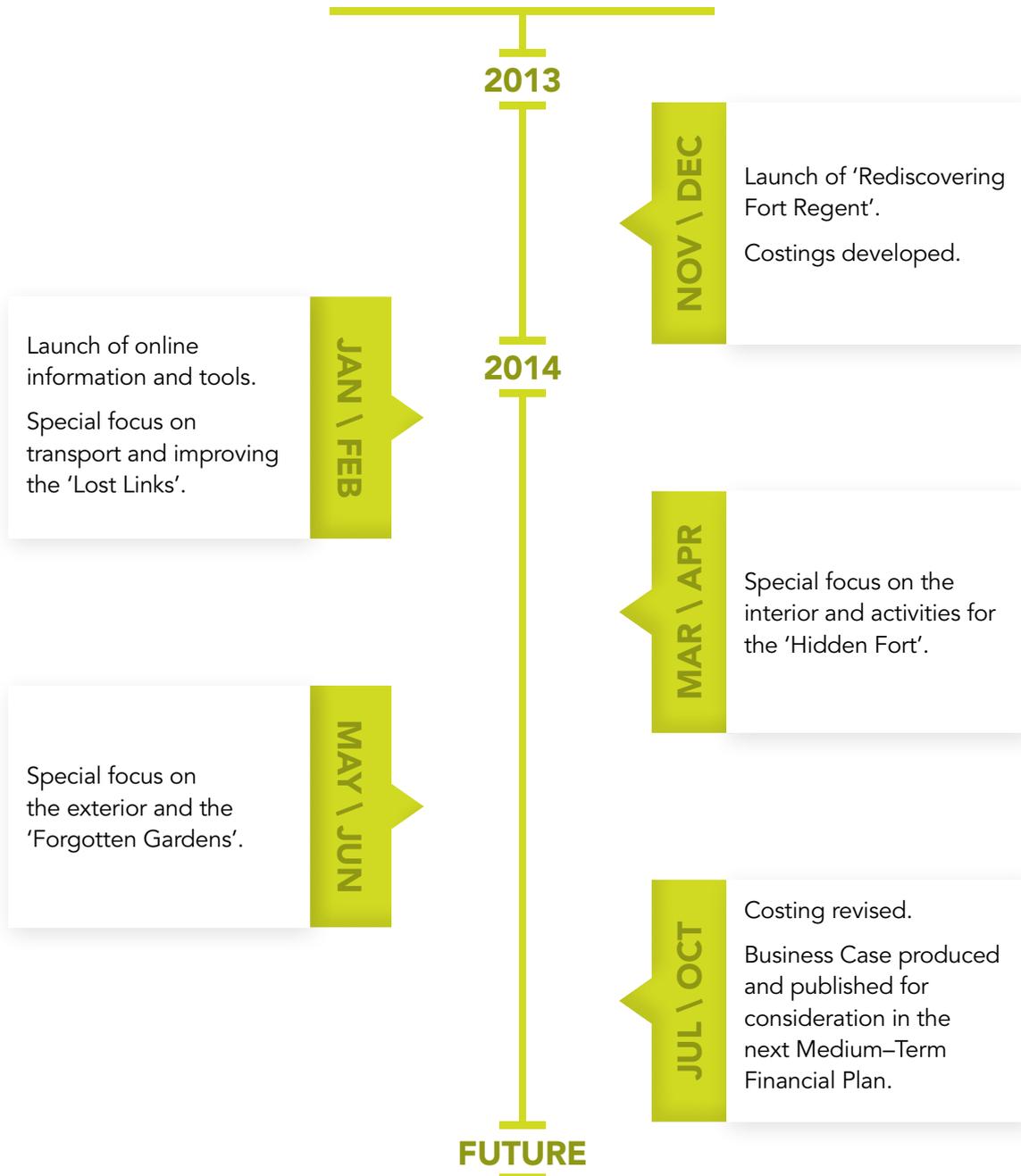




HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you have ideas and thoughts about the future of Fort Regent, please email us at: thefort@gov.je

THE TIMETABLE OF THIS CONSULTATION WILL RUN AS FOLLOWS





STEERING GROUP MEMBERS

Deputy Eddie Noel

Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources

e.noel@gov.je

Deputy Rod Bryans

Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

r.bryans@gov.je

Deputy Roy Le Hérissier

Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

r.leherissier@gov.je