

## Field 622 Public Inquiry

### **Alistair Coates; Senior Planner - Opening Statement**

The Islands Spatial Strategy (Policy SP1) asserts that outside of the Built up Area, planning permission will only be given for development appropriate to the coast or countryside – for the development of brownfield land that meets an identified need – and, exceptionally, for the development of greenfield land where it clearly would support a parish community or the rural economy – in both instances where also a need has been identified for that development.

The Department accepts that the proposals would meet an identified need and would serve to support the parish community and village economy. For this reason, but notwithstanding the Green Zone allocation, the proposals are considered to be in accord with the spatial strategy of the island plan.

Nevertheless, The site is entirely within the Green Zone wherein there is a strong presumption against all forms of development. New dwellings and other buildings within the Green Zone can only be justified where there is a strong justification related to the essential requirement for a countryside location and where alternative provision cannot be made or found within the Built-up Area.

The Department will be conducting a full review of housing sites – formally commencing this summer – and, notwithstanding the outcome of this Inquiry - it is entirely logical that Field 622 will be considered within that review.

However, Until the Department has conducted a thorough review of sites in and around the village of St Ouen, it is not in a position to state categorically that there is no other suitable alternative to Field 622. The ‘live’ application before the Inquiry relates to a single site with a specific development proposal. It doesn’t form part of a wider proposition to seek the revision of the Island Plan.

Moving on..., Policy H5 recognises the need to protect the viability and vitality of Jersey’s smaller main rural settlements, such as the village of St Ouen, through the provision of relatively small scale affordable housing developments. The policy states that such housing should be contained within the Built-up Area and encourages the preparation of Village Plans by the parochial authority. Such Plans should be subject to a full and comprehensive assessment and engagement with the local community and relevant stakeholders, prior to formal review, approval and adoption by the Minister as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

This route hasn’t been followed by the Parish - No Village Plan has been prepared for this Green Zone site and, accordingly, the proposal is a clear and substantial departure from the Island Plan.

Hence, the Minister has called for this public inquiry to be held -without any prejudice to his ultimate determination of the application - in order to secure a

rigorous testing of the proposals. As I say, the proposals are not, necessarily, out of kilter with the Spatial Strategy and -- if a well thought Village Plan had been prepared and submitted for the Department's scrutiny, we may -- hypothetically -- have adopted it as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

As it is, and in terms of the Department's forthcoming review of housing sites, the application is considered to be a little premature -- but we are where we are.

The Department has no serious misgivings over the form, layout, density or design of the proposed development and if this was within the Built-up Area we'd be offering our full support to the Parish. But, given the zoning conflict and the fact that we haven't yet commenced a formal review of the housing sites, I'd like to adopt a neutral stance throughout the Inquiry.

Thank you sir...

Alistair Coates  
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States of Jersey  
2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

The Inquiry was called (Article 12/1/B of the 2002 Law).