

Submission by Gary Le Brocq

Island Plan Interim Review – proposal to rezone Field 622

1. There is little left to say about the unsuitability of this Field that has not already been said. The planning history makes it quite clear that it has been determined that it will be developed, under one guise or another, regardless of the numerous presumptions against that contained in the Island Plan. The simple fact that only the land in this Field within the direct ownership and control of the Parish of St. Ouen is proposed for re-zoning speaks volumes; the proposal is based not on planning grounds or “need” but on pure economics, the Parish having £3 million burning a hole in its pocket to be used only for “lifelong” homes.
2. The most recent Land Use study presented to the States by the Planning Department in January 2013 makes it quite clear that there is more than sufficient land zoned for the residential requirements of the Island within the life of the Island Plan. If land is to be built on the basis of some identifiable “need” (as opposed to “want”) then it must be the case that sites in the Built-Up zone are exhausted first before turning to agricultural land. At no point has the Parish attempted to use the Village Plan provision contained in the Island Plan, seeming to prefer the path of least resistance by trying to have some of its own land re-zoned instead. If this is to be allowed and/or encouraged, what is to stop any Parish or indeed our Government from buying up agricultural land “on the cheap” and, after a decent interval, arranging for it to be re-zoned via a similar Interim Review process? To act in such a way would of course be a cynical manipulation of the Planning process and should be resisted at all costs.
3. The proposal is for “affordable” homes, an untested concept invented by the current Planning Minister and based on some consideration of what people earn, by definition any buyers would be under 40 (in order to obtain mortgage finance). The Parish does not want “affordable” homes but “sheltered” or “over-55’s” housing, the two proposals appear to be mutually exclusive.
4. In the event that the re-zoning is approved for affordable housing (which the Parish does not wish and cannot use its windfall legacy to build) what is then to prevent it reaching some later “accommodation” with the Planning Minister to undertake a mixed development, containing elements of both requirements? By then, the precedent of re-zoning of part of the land will have been conceded and the remainder of Field 622, no longer viable for agricultural use due to a lack of access and installation of drainage for the new residential development, will inevitably fall to further development.
5. The conduct of both Parish officials and Planning Ministers since at least 2007 has lead to a long term and continuing planning blight affecting a great many residents in the locality. It has been an exhausting process and both those arguing for the development and those, like me, who object, deserve some finality around the zoning of this land. It had been thought that the approval of the 2011 Island Plan by the States Assembly had at long last provided that certainty for at least the lifetime of the Plan but the Interim Review has dashed any hope of respite.
6. The need for rezoning this land not being made out on any planning or other grounds I respectfully request that your recommendation be in favour of its retention as Green Zone.