

Submission of Graham Bisson in connection with Field 1404, Trinity.

I am a retired farmer who understands the practical side of farming, and whose family owns this small piece of land which could be developed to provide up to sixteen affordable dwellings in Trinity, next to Sion village.

I am fully aware of the value of this very small field, not in monetary terms, but in agricultural terms, and because of its size, it is of little or no value to the agricultural industry. It is a fact that this Island government has become obsessed with the notion that land must have a priority agricultural use above all others.

If there was some demand to develop this site for agricultural purposes or for dwellings for agricultural workers, then it is probable that such developments would be approved. On the other hand, more beneficial developments but for non-agricultural purposes or workers will be automatically refused. I do not consider that such prejudiced decision-making is justified or fair in a democratic society and I am asking that this site should be re-zoned or re-assessed upon its individual merits for development purposes.

Throughout my life, Jersey has had a "housing shortage" which was the very basis of the extraordinary and discriminatory 1949 Housing Law and Regulations. If there was no housing shortage, there could be no justification for the Control of Work and Housing Laws or the discriminatory and prejudiced policies that have been enshrined in so many States' Departmental decisions, guidance notes, plans or policies.

The 2011 Island Plan does not accurately determine the extent of the housing shortage nor does it offer any prospect that it might ever be addressed. It is just the latest illusory document which seeks to perpetuate the housing shortage on the basis of incomplete data and projections. All this was discussed – albeit superficially - at the previous public inquiry. Not only is there no clear plan to address the current shortfall or to adequately house the entire population, but the Island Plan and related policies also fail to address the basic rights of all the population to enjoy adequate housing.

The long promised States' debate on population and immigration has just been postponed yet again by the Chief Minister. There is to be only an interim discussion before the 2014 elections and no public consultation is anticipated. The call for such a debate to take place has been kicked around for years yet the existing Plan and future policies are for ever based upon false, misleading and incomplete information.

The 2011 Plan was agreed on the basis of a 92,000 population without waiting for the results of the Census which, when published, revealed a dramatic population increase to nearly 100,000. No accurate projections for future population trends – either within the lifetime of the 2011 Plan or beyond - have been produced.

The current inquiry cannot effectively look at re-zoning a few dozen "Green Field" sites without an in depth re-examination of the whole planning philosophy behind the Island Plan. A piecemeal approach to such matters simply perpetuates the worst bureaucratic characteristics that have created current and previous Island Plans.

Members of my family, friends and others have an established need for adequate housing accommodation at an affordable price. Others will have specific needs for accessible living spaces and/or flexible design layouts but the current Plan is remarkably deficient in addressing the diverse housing needs of the whole population.

The development of this site should be considered with specific, affordable housing needs in mind rather than some vague assumptions that do not serve the best interests of the community as a whole.

Graham J. Bisson

11th December 2013