

2011 Island Plan: Interim Review (1)

L2 – Reply to Minister’s Response

Glasshouse site Field 114, Le Passage, St. Lawrence

November 2013



The owner requests the Inspectors' recommend this site be rezoned for Category A Housing.

There remains serious doubt whether the Minister's proposal to re-zone sites will adequately deal with Jersey's affordable housing need during the life of the Island Plan because the Interim Island Plan underestimates the potential demand.

The Inspector's report May 2011 stated:

'There is a housing crisis in Jersey'; 'There is a serious danger that States Members risk failing in their collective responsibility to deal with this crisis' and 'deferring the problem will do nothing to solve it and indeed will only make it worse'.

Field 114 would help satisfy this need.

The Minister's response (Vol 2) is flawed primarily because it fails to take into account the proposal to develop the site for local housing need, i.e. for Parishioners of St. Lawrence as a H5 site, but contributing the Island's affordable housing stock. As Parish housing the main basis of the Spatial Strategy, a site's proximity to the Town of St. Helier, falls away. The Minister has made no comment in regard to the proposed site's use for Parish housing.

The Minister is also wrong in his interpretation of the Countryside Character Appraisal, referring to only the 'overriding character' or the area when in fact the Countryside Character Appraisal specifically states *'Small scale sympathetic development around settlements in the northern part of the area may be acceptable, for example around Carrefour Selous as this could help soften the existing hard urban edge'*. The entirety of the northern edge of Carrefour Selous is open fields with the notable exception of Cookes Rose Farm, including Field 114 that is already developed land. It is reasonable therefore to apply the specific Countryside Character Appraisal comments to this site, and therefore conclude the Countryside Character Appraisal supports some form of development, contrary to the Minister's interpretation.

The Minister's response states the suitability of the site and use rating as 'good', allied to its use for Parish housing and the environmental improvements detailed in the previous submission makes this site ideal for rezoning.

The Minister has stated in his responses to representation of alternative sites that he *'acknowledges the importance of protecting countryside and safeguarding agricultural land but has sought to identify those sites which have already been subject of some form of development, albeit for agricultural purposes, on the edge of existing built-up area as having the most potential to contribute to the Island's housing needs'*. This logical basis for rezoning equally applied to Field 114, a site which, ironically, has previously been safeguarded for housing development by the Minister.

However, this site, unlike some of the others proposed to be re-zoned on this basis, is within walking distance of a general convenience shop and is well served by public transport.