

**Jersey Draft Island Plan Examination in Public****Day 4 - Friday 24 September 2010: 11.30 onwards  
Economy*****General notes for participants in all topic sessions***

*The Inspectors have been appointed to provide an independent review of the (Draft) Jersey Island Plan. After the EiP they will write a report to the Minister for Planning and Environment recommending, with reasons, which aspects of the Draft Plan should be retained and whether, and if so what, changes should be made. They will take into account all written submissions including the Minister's own proposed changes in response to consultations, published in a schedule dated 20 June (EiP library core document IP8). Participants should also look at the Minister's response to the Strategic Environmental Assessment dated 13 August which recommends changes to a number of policies throughout the Plan.*

*They have also selected key topics for debate. Participants for the debates have been selected to represent a range of views. The Inspectors are looking to them not simply to re-state their views (which they will have read) but to challenge or support the views of others. It will be helpful if there is a lively and constructive debate. The sessions will be held in an informal atmosphere, with no cross-examination. The Inspectors are conscious that some participants from organisations, or members of the public, may not have experience of these events; they are a relatively new phenomenon in Jersey. Those participants can be assured that they will not be put under pressure, but that the Inspectors are very keen to hear their views in order to get a rounded picture of the issues.*

*However the Inspectors are also looking where possible for specific proposals as to recommendations they should make; in particular they would welcome debate on specific suggested changes to the policies in the draft plan. Some participants have already couched their representations in this way but others have not.*

*Generally the timetable for the EiP is tight. Participants should therefore seek to keep their comments succinct and not to repeat views already expressed (though they may wish to express support for the views of another participant).*

*Participants should if possible have read the representations from other participants in the session, and also the relevant written representations from other parties.*

*The Minister will be represented at all sessions by officers from his department who will normally be invited by the Inspectors to respond to the points raised. Other Ministers and officials will be participating in topics of particular interest to them (housing for example); however the Inspectors want to hear a wide range of views also from organisations and individual members of the public.*

## **Specific comments for Day 4 participants – 11.30 onwards**

The Inspectors issued a list of questions on 29 July. This note is intended to help focus the discussion. Question 1 today concerns the protection of employment land; questions 4 and 5 address aspects of tourism and leisure. In the light of submissions made it would be useful if Participants first discuss these three questions, and then take questions 2 and 3 together regarding St Helier Town Centre and food retailing respectively.

As regards the Town Centre, Draft Plan paragraphs 4.37 – 4.42 and 5.52 to 5.61 provide a useful context. Yesterday, EiP discussion was directed mainly towards built form, next week the Transport discussion will include consideration of improved pedestrian facilities. Today's discussion should have emphasis on economic vitality. However, there is close synergy between these topics. Participants need not feel constrained to make artificial distinctions and may wish to range across any aspect so far as it bears on the town centre but with an emphasis on economic vitality, competition and kindred matters.

**Question 1 and Question 2** Employment Land. AJA argue that paragraphs 5.18 to 5.22 in the Draft Plan would lead to redundant employment sites, preventing their conversion or redevelopment for other uses including housing. They see this as conflicting with Draft Objective E1 'to encourage a balanced and more diverse economy and assist all sectors of the economy to adapt to change in the market place'. Rather, AJA see Draft Policy E1 as wrongly distorting market forces.

The Minister is now minded to amend Draft Policy E1, to exclude sites where 'the existing development is predominantly office or tourist accommodation' from the presumption against loss of land for employment use. To what extent does this meet AJA concerns? Is the change supported by Participants?

The Jersey Hospitality Association also raise objections regarding Draft Policy E1. They accept that the Minister's proposed change would, in principle, also meet their concerns regarding Draft Policy SP5. JHA maintain, however, that the exemption should be widened to 'tourism based employment sites'. The case for this is set out clearly in their written submissions. Others have made similar points. Should the exemption be widened as suggested?

Is there a case for a size threshold in the protection of employment sites (generally as well as tourism) that is to say flexibility for smaller units but a presumption against the loss of larger? If so, how might this be expressed?

**Question 5** Should the Draft Plan do more for marine leisure businesses and should it do more to promote what has been referred to as 'eco tourism', on land or marine. What is envisaged by marine leisure tourist businesses? Moorings, boat hire? What do Participants see as falling within eco tourism? Is it desirable? Is it essentially leisure activity with a smaller environmental impact (such as cycling and walking tours) or should it be seen as wider than that, including for example such activities as voluntary work on restoration schemes? Could eco tourism be important to the Island economy? In what way could or should the Draft Plan be amended in this regard?

**Questions 2 and 3** can perhaps be taken in two stages. First, do the Draft Policies for the town centre – defining its extent, its core retail area, and the applicable policies – provide a sound framework for the centre’s economic vitality?

Second, is the issue of convenience retailing provision. Notwithstanding the words ‘retail efficiency’ in Policy ER2, it has been argued that overall the approach inhibits new competition, to the detriment of Jersey consumers and the Island economy. This is a contentious issue (not just on Jersey). How much weight should be accorded to considerations of quantitative capacity (ie is the retail floorspace sufficient for the expected turnover) and how much given to qualitative capacity and competition? Does the sequential test for new retailing combined with the boundaries and policies for the Green Zone place too high a hurdle against a new entrant? Or should greater weight be accorded to safeguarding the town centre as a shopping destination? If the existing duopoly is seen as the problem (as distinct from floorspace capacity) could the answer lie outside planning policies, for example, in competition legislation?

There are likely to be strongly held opposed views on these issues. The Inspectors do not wish to inhibit a lively debate but ask Participants to explore constructively to what extent they might be able reach common ground, and as always to give specific indications of whether and if so how they would like to see the Draft Plan amended.