

4.0 Project benefits

4.1 Regeneration benefits

The Esplanade Quarter scheme will represent a significant £250m investment in the urban fabric of St Helier. This will not only generate development value within the scheme, but will also enable significant investment to be made in the regeneration of the established parts of St Helier as part of the town's Regeneration Strategy. A range of regeneration benefits will emerge, as the scheme matures to become a thriving urban neighbourhood within an enlarged St Helier. The wider purpose, aside from providing a new financial and residential quarter, is to refocus the harbour and waterfront areas of the town into popular leisure and recreation destination for both residents and visitors. The scheme will form part of the well-established international tradition of high quality waterfront development, which will be a catalyst for further investment and regeneration in the wider surrounding area of the town.

Benefits provided by the new Esplanade Quarter.

The Waterfront will be a new urban neighbourhood. This scheme will provide a major extension to the town, adding significantly to the range of uses and facilities available to islanders.

There will be almost 400 new homes within the scheme. Including Castle Quays Phase I, there are 760 new homes. That relieves pressure on new development sites in the countryside.

The new quarter will provide more high quality facilities for visitors in the town, complimenting recent investments in the Grand Hotel, the Royal Yacht and the new Radisson Hotel. This substantial addition to the town's stock of visitor beds, both in hotels and in self-catering accommodation, will support the strategy to develop St Helier as a city break and short stay visitor destination.

The scheme incorporates a very major investment in the public realm of the town. This is not just regarded as a 'nice to have', it is a central purpose of the scheme, lying at the very heart of the Esplanade Quarter proposals. There will be: high quality, landscaped boulevards and public squares; piazzettas and other urban spaces; busy new pedestrian connections between town and harbours, and scope for a variety of themed outdoor public spaces incorporating water features and public art.

The design approach places a premium on pedestrian comfort and easy accessibility. The scheme draws on the best standards of street furniture, with high quality materials in all the public spaces. It will be a place for daytime and evening recreation, throughout the year, thanks to a design offering generous weather protection. Overall, the public spaces of the town centre of St Helier will be almost doubled in size. If this scheme is approved, the Minister will insist on investment in high quality public spaces, in order to start delivering these benefits at an early stage of the development programme.

This scheme will establish a new standard of design and quality in St Helier. There will be an unwavering commitment to the highest quality urban design; the purpose being to restore confidence in the waterfront as a whole and to enhance the reputation of the town. This will translate into value for both developer and tenant within the Esplanade Quarter and will also act as a catalyst to lift the quality and value of new development across the town as a whole. This scheme has a real capacity to enhance the image of St Helier. It will boost the town's reputation as a destination for business investment, as a visitor destination and as a place to live; much as Brindley Place has for Birmingham and Gunwharf Quays is achieving for Portsmouth.

There are also straightforward financial benefits. The Esplanade Quarter will deliver a major enhancement of the town's rateable base. It will therefore represent a long term investment in the future resources of the Parish to regenerate, maintain and manage the town. Given the financial deal to the States, there is also the potential for an ongoing investment into future regeneration and development programmes for St Helier. The scheme will therefore help to provide the necessary resources to deliver the St Helier regeneration strategy and to deliver future stages of waterfront and harbours redevelopment. The scheme will also represent a major investment in the town's infrastructure. In addition to the sinking of La Route de la Liberation, and the public realm enhancements within the scheme, the developers will be required to invest in improved traffic management systems over a wider waterfront area (extending to Green Street roundabout) and to fund a package of improvements to the bus services serving the town centre.

The scheme will encourage investment into the town as a whole. The scheme must be part of St Helier – complementing its facilities, without detracting from the existing commercial centre. There will be a period of transition, as the financial sector shifts its main base of office accommodation onto the waterfront. This will provide a range of opportunities for future development on prime sites in the established town centre. It is intended that a new regeneration task force will be established to work alongside the proposed Jersey Enterprise Board to manage and deliver this transition. This will replace the St Helier Task Force which was established to deliver the St Helier Regeneration Strategy and will produce a project plan for its implementation. As outlined in the St Helier strategy, the twin purposes will be: to attract new business growth into the office accommodation that is being vacated; and to take advantage of the potential for new residential accommodation within the town, where the demand for office accommodation subsides. The Minister has recently published new planning guidelines for development in the established town to support this objective and kick start its regeneration.

These new planning guidelines recognise the important role that regeneration and redevelopment can play in revitalising St Helier and in making the best use of the town's resources.

The Minister is bringing forward new standards in relation to parking and amenity space in order to ease the delivery of some sites into residential use. Whilst he is intent on safeguarding the quality of life of town residents he recognises the role that town might play in increasing densities only where it is appropriate to do so. He will ensure that his department prioritises requests for preliminary advice on development proposals in the town and will insist the department works in conjunction with the Regeneration task force to ensure a streamlined and integrated response.

Given the strength of demand for all types of residential accommodation in Jersey, this will be an important component in the future strategy to meet the Island's future housing needs.

It is clear that the widespread development of greenfield sites for future housing and other development is neither popular, nor sustainable. Accordingly, the new Island Plan will propose, and make provision for, a significant quantum of high quality residential development on undeveloped and underdeveloped sites within St Helier. The revenue from the waterfront will provide the States and the Parish of St Helier with the means to make this happen.

4.2 Benefits for families and young people

The proposals are for a new urban neighbourhood on the Esplanade Quarter. This will be a rich network of varied and connected public spaces and buildings with a diversity of uses. This diversity is important, if the area is to develop into a lively neighbourhood which will appeal to both residents and visitors.

Successful neighbourhoods bring people of all ages and interests together. This is the approach adopted for the whole of the waterfront development. A particular focus for the States of Jersey is to ensure that the waterfront will be attractive and accessible to young people and families.

The area has already established major new uses for young people. The Waterfront Leisure Centre is Jersey's biggest draw for the young with its cinemas, swimming pools, restaurants, bars and night clubs. Lowering the road into an underground tunnel will make this centre more easily accessible and make it look and feel more a part of St Helier. There will be easy pedestrian linkages between the various waterfront sites and as the number of people living and working on the waterfront increases the wide range of leisure facilities and new public spaces will gather custom.

The next phase of waterfront development at Castle Quay will provide a busy, mixed use development where waterfront leisure will be the main attraction. There will be shops, bars, restaurants and cafes framed by neighbouring open spaces and the new marina. Covered boulevards, footpaths, and pedestrian routes around and through the buildings will deliver the kind of water's edge experience that will attract all ages, whether residents or visitors. The ability for the public to move through the buildings and along the covered boulevards is designed to deliver the kind of all year round experience available in many European cities, which is key to the nature and character of the new development on the Waterfront.

The masterplan proposals suggest significant enhancement of both Les Jardins de la Mer and the Weighbridge. Both these areas are currently enjoyed by large numbers of people of all ages, particularly the young and - especially Les Jardins de la Mer - by families. The improvements planned for the Weighbridge will create a major new public square at a focal point for the town: this is a main point of connection between the old town and the waterfront area and will mean that the old harbour area and the popular Maritime Museum are more accessible, visible and visited.

In addition to this, there is already a commitment to provide a permanent youth facility within the waterfront, as the development programme proceeds. These include a skateboard park and the popular Move-On-Café. This important commitment provides an opportunity to enhance further the range of leisure and recreational opportunities. A potential site has been identified for a skateboard park which will require to be the subject of a planning application. An appropriate site for this use has proved difficult to find up to now.

The provision of new areas of open space within the scheme, whether large squares or smaller more intimate areas, provides a series of 'stepping stones' to the waters edge. Each space must have its own special character and identity, so that navigation through the area becomes a transparent and enriching experience to the pedestrian and visitor. In this way, these spaces not only function as route ways but are also places where people of all ages can derive pleasure and experience the character of the quarter. Just as in many European town and cities, the new urban squares will provide space and break the rhythm of the town by offering different and special building forms. They also take the opportunity to deliver different kinds of uses and activities. They will be landscaped and designed to provide movement, action and vitality through the use of water, sculptures, noise and colour. They will offer pleasure and interest to all sections of the community, in the same way that the Royal Square gives enjoyment across the entire age spectrum.

Integral to the Esplanade Quarter are a new hotel and self-catering apartments. In addition to that, almost 400 new residential apartments are also envisaged. In order to provide for those who will work and live here, there are also to be cafes, shops and restaurants within the scheme. These facilities, in conjunction with the new roads, boulevards, squares, cycle-paths, running, and fitness trails and pathways through the scheme, are designed to be attractive to all users. These will be places for everyone to enjoy in all weathers, whether they live and work on the waterfront, or elsewhere in Jersey, or are visitors to the Island.

