

Jersey Island Plan – Further EiP

Inspectors' Report – Addendum

10 June 2011

1. Following the end of the EiP and indeed following the completion of our report, the Minister asked us to consider a further piece of information. This consisted of the substance of a statement made by Senator Ozouf, Minister for Treasury and Resources, at the States Assembly on 7 June.
2. We are happy to do so, but we must stress that we do not have the views of other parties who took part in the relevant debates at the Further EiP. The statement had not been made at that time; if it had been, those other parties may of course have expressed views, either in support or otherwise.
3. The statement was made during a debate on the appointment of a Chairman and non-executive directors of the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC). The key relevant point was that one of the three priorities of the SoJDC is to be the provision of affordable housing on States owned land.
4. This of course is a matter which was debated at the Further EiP – see in particular paragraphs 37-39. Senator Ozouf's statement does make clear that it is now the firm intention of the States to seek the development of land, which it owns, for affordable housing and, at least by implication, to accept that land may be disposed of for less than the fullest market value. As we reported this is a matter which was unclear at the EiP itself. We are pleased to see this intention clarified. We concluded in our report that at that stage the development of States owned land was too uncertain to form a firm basis for housing provision, though we saw it making a contribution in due course. The statement by the Minister does remove one of the concerns we had about the States' intentions regarding the disposal of its land.
5. As reported, the Revised Draft IP included (in Policy H1) reference to five sites – Le Coin (Ann Street), former D'Hautree School, former Jersey College for Girls, South Hill States Offices, and the Rouge Bouillon Ambulance HQ. We are familiar with the D'Hautree and South Hill sites but not with the remainder. The policy mentions that other sites may emerge in the Plan period. It is suggested that between them these sites might provide for at least 150 affordable homes.
6. There remains one further, important, question. That is the timing of the release of that land. In our experience the intention to release land may not always lead to its immediate development. There are all kinds of matters which can intervene. For example there may be public opposition (this was expressed at the EiP in relation to the D'Hautree site, as we describe in part 2 of our report), and may exist in relation to other sites. There may be constraints in terms of traffic, access, site conditions and so on – or simply a delay in removing (in some cases) uses which are presently on those sites. We have no evidence on these matters; no way of knowing how long the release of these sites might take. But in

view of our conclusion that the housing problem is immediate, it must be a matter of concern to the Planning Minister and to all Members.

7. This being so, we approach the question with a degree of caution. We do accept that these sites, being within the Built Up Area, offer good potential for housing development – subject to all the detailed points mentioned above and subject to public consultation. We would go further and suggest that, locationally, and subject to those points, they might prove to be preferable to some of the sites we considered and recommended at the original EiP or the Further EiP and which are the subject of amendments (ie Samarès, Longueville, Le Quesne Nursery and Field 1248). They do appear to accord well with the strategic policies of the IP.
8. We would, on that basis, be less concerned about the policy now set out in H1 of the revised draft IP (but subject as we say to the fact that we have not heard the views of other parties). We lend this conditional support only on the understanding that the States owned sites which it is now proposed should be released do in fact come forward quickly. And we recommend that a “trigger mechanism” should be built in to the Plan, so that if in practice this does not happen, then the other sites should be allocated to the extent necessary.
9. We attach sufficient importance to this element to recommend that it be incorporated within Policy H1. We propose that within one year from the adoption of the IP applications for planning permission should have been made for 150 affordable homes on States owned sites; and within two years of adoption of the IP planning permission should have been granted for 150 homes and the land released. Should these criteria not be met the IP should immediately be reviewed in order to allocate other sites from amongst those which we have recommended to make provision for a minimum of 150 affordable homes.

Recommendation: That the Minister amends Policy H1 as follows:

After the penultimate paragraph of Policy H1 (ending “.....the need for affordable homes.”) insert a new paragraph:

“The provision of affordable homes on the States owned sites above will be monitored. In the event of either of the following not being met:

a) planning applications for 150 affordable homes on States owned land being made within 12 months of the adoption of this Plan;

b) planning permission for 150 affordable homes being granted and the sites released within 24 months of the adoption of this Plan;

the Plan will immediately be reviewed to provide for the development of a minimum of 150 affordable homes on some or all of the following sites: Samarès Nursery, St Clement; Longueville Nurseries, St Saviour; Le Quesne Nursery, St Clement; and Field 1248, St Helier.