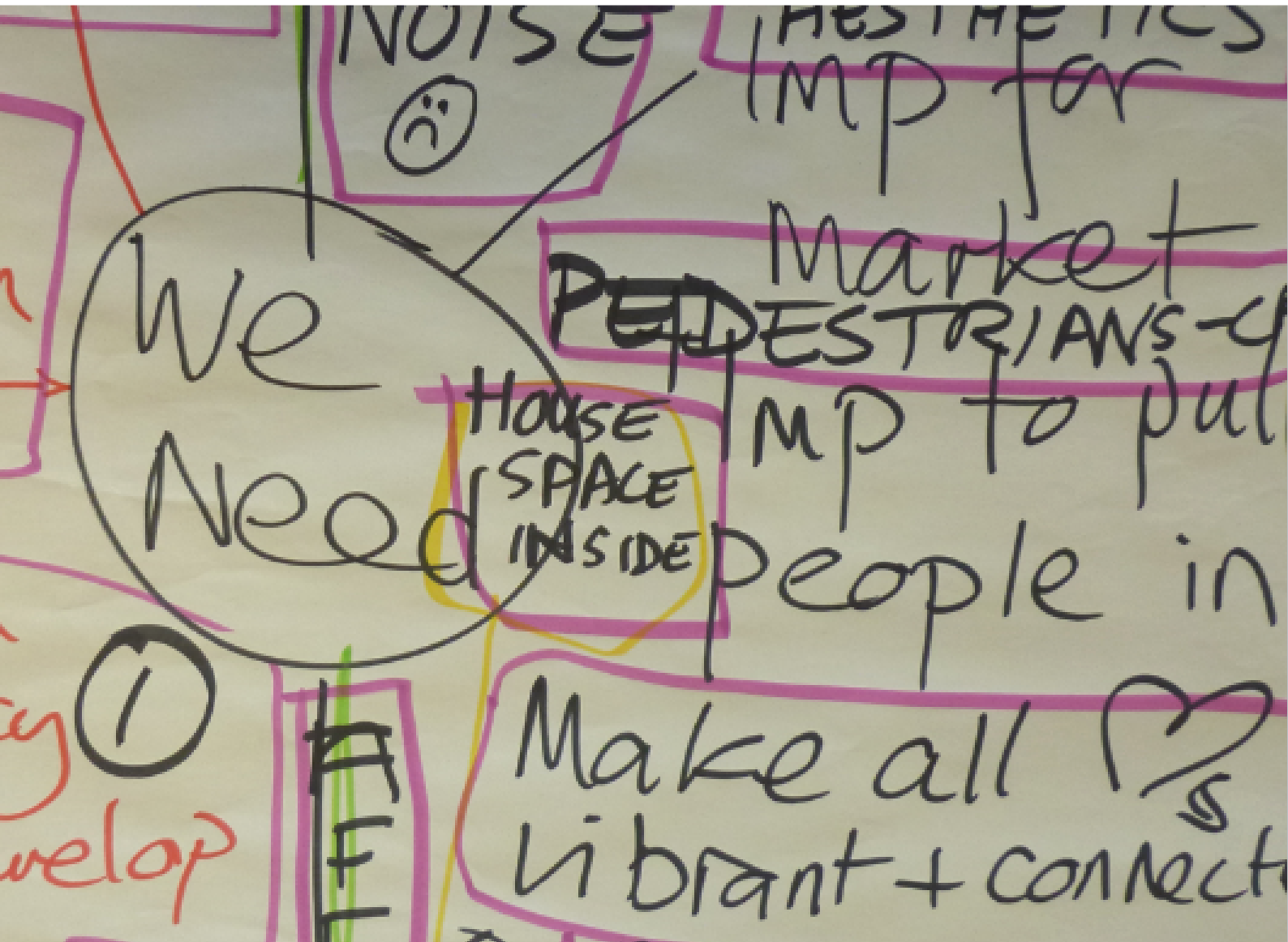




YEARS  
OF PLANNING  
& BUILDING  
IN JERSEY



Future St. Helier Workshop

Urban living and environment: what you said...

May 2015

## **Future St. Helier: urban living and environment**

People who engaged with the workshop were asked to address the following issue:

- *Future St Helier is a place where you would want to live in or a place that you would want to visit and spend time in.*

This is a just summary of what people said: it provides the context for what people identified as priorities for change.

## **What you said...**

### **Making best use**

Making best use of the assets of land and buildings in St. Helier emerged as a theme. It was considered that there was a need to encourage the better use of land that was vacant or underdeveloped in St. Helier (for example, through a property tax or the use of compulsory purchase powers) and also to encourage the optimum use of space in buildings, such as the space above shops that was likely to be underused (e.g. for storage), when it could provide residential accommodation.

Elements of new buildings could be better used – such as flat roofs, which could be used as gardens. More intensive use could be made, by the community, of existing buildings, such as churches and schools. Fort Regent was identified as key in this respect: it was widely felt that it offered, or had the potential to offer, so many of the amenities and facilities that the town needed. It was suggested that the Central Market could have a mezzanine floor.

### **Quality of development**

Some people felt that the quality of residential development in St. Helier, in terms of the living space that it provided, needed to be improved: rooms needed to be larger, so that they could be used more flexibly. To these people, the density and height of new residential development in St. Helier was less of a concern than the quality of living space. Others felt that there was not necessarily a need to go higher to get more dense forms of development.

There needed to be a greater range of urban accommodation available. The increase in traffic, and the associated noise generation, was an issue to be addressed if urban living was to be encouraged.

### **Heritage and character**

For some, the historic character and charm of St. Helier – its *genius loci* – was under threat from new development and was being eroded: development was not sympathetic to its context.

It was considered that there needed to be a greater awareness and appreciation of St. Helier's historic character and that its heritage needed greater protection. Some were of the view that protection of heritage should not unduly stifle development, and that flexibility was important.

The notion of a 'sculpture trail' was mooted to tell the story of St. Helier.

### **Open space and greening of St. Helier**

There was a strongly held view that St. Helier needed more open space, both public and private, and that it needed to be greener.

More private amenity space needed to be provided as part of new development: this could take the form of balconies that were big enough to be useable and affordable family homes needed to have gardens.

There was a strong desire to see more public open space. In association with new development, this could take the form of roof gardens or open space on the ground floor of development: buildings needed more 'space to breathe'. There was a view that this should be required to be provided as a condition of new development.

More communal green space was needed, to grow food (community gardens), and for children to be able to play safely. Open space did not always have to be 'green': it was proposed that there was a need for 'urban squares' in the residential parts of the town: there was a need for space and seating for people to be able to 'sit and contemplate'.

### **Connectivity**

Better public open space and green space could also take the form of routes and corridors and be used to provide better connectivity around St. Helier: a need was identified to better connect people to the countryside around the town; to the St. Helier waterfront, town beaches and the sea. There was a need for better access to Fort Regent and Elizabeth Castle.

Less dominance of the car and better provision for pedestrians, through improved pedestrian infrastructure (ranging from pavements and crossings to covered precincts), was a theme that was revisited.

There was a need for a plan for the 'greening of St. Helier' and clear support for more urban trees.

### **Community and neighbourhood**

The provision of open space, as well as other community facilities, was considered to be important for the sense of neighbourhood and community in St. Helier. It was felt that there was a need to encourage, develop and improve neighbourhood centres: encouraging a 'café culture'; the availability or use of a 'community building'; or the provision of a community or creative space (shutting the road to hold a party or an event) were suggested.

Specific facilities needed to be provided for young people and spaces designed for kids: St. Helier needed to provide more safe places to play. The extension of the Town Park was proposed and specific provision for skateboarding, BMX and football identified. It was suggested that there was a need for a town crèche.

It was noted that St. Helier does have distinct community areas, often linked to immigrant communities. Some people expressed concern about a lack of integration, others saw this as positive, adding to the diversity, mix, vitality and unique offer of the town, and something to be encouraged and celebrated.

The issues of drug and alcohol abuse and violence, linked to the night-time economy of St. Helier, were acknowledged and the implications of this for the perception of the town as a safe place needed to be addressed. The vitality and mix of land uses throughout the town was felt to be important in providing natural surveillance of the streets and public space, especially in the evening.

### **Information and engagement**

There was a view that there needed to be better engagement, dialogue and communication with town residents, providing them with better access to and sharing of data. More information and data needed to be available to people about what was happening in St. Helier and about how they could engage with it. Information technology was seen as having much potential in helping people engage with Future St. Helier as a place to live in and visit.

### **A plan**

There was a need for a plan for the town, particularly its 'greening'. Plans for specific areas, such as North of Town and Havre des Pas, needed to be developed and pursued. Places like the Central Market and Fort Regent were seen as key elements of any plan for Future St. Helier.

Some frustration was expressed at the perceived bureaucracy associated with making changes and bringing regeneration about, as well as securing consent to hold events and entertainment.

### **Other ways to have your say**

This is a summary of the output and feedback about urban living and environment from the public workshop.

If you want to add to or join the debate about this aspect of Future St. Helier and the changes you would like to see happen, you can do:

- **Send us an email:** drop us a line at [futuresthelier@gov.je](mailto:futuresthelier@gov.je)
- **Twitter:** follow the conversation at [@FutureStHelier](https://twitter.com/FutureStHelier)

## Priorities for change

Participants at the workshop were asked if they could only make two changes about urban living and environment in Future St Helier what would they be: this is what they said was most important to change:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low value usage changed to higher value (<i>i.e. make better use of vacant, under developed land and buildings e.g. 'living over the shop'</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living: urban mix (<i>i.e. better range of urban living accommodation</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green public spaces: go higher and green on bottom floor (<i>i.e. allowing higher bldgs to secure more public open space</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (More) open spaces</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More trees</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child friendly places (<i>i.e. St. Helier needs more safe places for children to play</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People owning outside space (<i>i.e. create more community open space</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community resources (<i>i.e. create more community open spaces, gardens and buildings</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sense of community (<i>i.e. engender by encouraging and enabling neighbourhood centres and events</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information for people living in St Helier (<i>i.e. more information for town residents about what's happening</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Incentivise full use of what we already have (<i>i.e. make people aware of, encourage and enable better use of existing community facilities</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connectivity (<i>i.e. better links to beach, sea, countryside and between neighbourhoods</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integration of shoreline with town (<i>i.e. better connections between the town and the waterfront/ beach and sea</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public engagement and involvement (<i>i.e. more engagement of town residents</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Havre des Pas: fair share (<i>i.e. needs to be focussed on and prioritised</i>)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• North of Town (<i>i.e. needs to be focussed on and prioritised</i>)</li></ul>

## Your top priority for change

Tell us what you think is the most important change for urban living and environment in Future St. Helier.

Go to our online survey and vote: <http://consult.gov.je/public/fsh/living>