



Policy & Resources Committee

Response to a Question Pursuant to Rule 14 of The Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees

Subject: Le Bordage Seath Planning Application

States' Member: Deputy Y Burford

Date received: 12th August 2023

Date acknowledged: 14th August 2023

Date of reply: 24th August 2023

Questions

Some 7 months ago, in January of this year, I submitted Rule 14 questions to P&R on the subject of Le Bordage Seath (the field at the PEH).

I would now like to ask two follow-up questions, also pursuant to Rule 14:

1. In response to my previous question asking when Policy & Resources intended to submit the “detailed and comprehensive site selection study” to the Development & Planning Authority that is required for an application to be considered under Policy S5, and which the Island Development Plan states is expected as part of the submission for planning permission if considering applications under Policy S5, the Committee responded that: “there is no requirement under IDP Policy S5 to submit a site selection study or technical assessments and [the Committee] believes that the application would not have been accepted by the D&PA and published if it fell short of the IDP requirements.”

However, the supporting preceding text to Policy S5 of the IDP quite clearly states in paragraph 3.6.2 that a detailed and comprehensive site selection study will be expected as part of the submission for planning permission. Paragraph 1.5.2 of the IDP states that the Island Development Plan policies, their supporting preceding text and the Annexes, together with the Proposals Map, are all integral parts of the Island Development Plan and for this reason, it is important that they are read as a whole and that no part is taken out of context or in isolation.

Subsequently, in late January it was reported in the media that the Committee had been asked for the required detailed and comprehensive site selection study. Could the Committee please advise (a) when they submitted the required detailed and

comprehensive site selection study to the DPA, and (b) which other sites were included on it.

2. In response to my question asking what the Committee's alternative plan to provide this housing is in the case that planning permission is refused for Le Bordage Seath, the Committee responded that it was actively exploring in parallel every available option. Given that 8 months have elapsed since planning permission was applied for and 17 months have elapsed since the Committee first commenced discussions with the DPA on this matter, (a) is the Committee still confident that pursuing this avenue was the correct option and (b) can you advise what alternative options have been explored by the Committee to provide key worker housing in the meantime?

Responses

1. The Development & Planning Authority has written to the Policy & Resources Committee and explained that 'Although not a requirement of the policy, a detailed and comprehensive site selection study, together with more technical evidence such as environmental, economic and social assessments where appropriate, can [our emphasis] assist in the Authority's decision-making'.

The Committee is of the view that it is not a pre-requisite (and given the sensitivities in the document has not released it for publication). Furthermore given that the Committee is minded not to spend tax payers' money to progress opportunities that may have limited scope if the Authority is not minded to consider the principle of an S5 application, which is what the application is seeking, it has not yet invested in the technical evidence.

- a) The site selection matrix has not been submitted; and
- b) The other sites have not been disclosed.

However the Housing Action Plan circulated to States Members in July and published on 18th August does set out States-owned sites and those owned privately that had been considered by the former Housing Action Group and which have progressed to a priority ranking established by the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security under whose mandate affordable housing rests (key worker housing sits within the statutory definition of affordable housing).

2. a) The Committee remains steadfastly of the view that it must explore every possible route to increase housing supply and affordability, and especially the availability of key worker homes given the exorbitant cost of agency staff in the health and care sector. It will continue to do so but always mindful of securing the best value possible.

- b) The Authority has also asked as part of the Le Bordage Seath application for further information on 'the rationale for any criteria relating to distance of sites from the PEH should be clearly explained and justified, including in relation to the specific requirements for certain types of accommodation to be in reasonable proximity to the hospital, specifying the number of units of the type required and basis for any distance thresholds used within the study'.

The Policy & Resources Committee asked the customer committee that established this criteria to respond. The Committee *for* Health & Social Care (CfHSC) responded directly to the Authority in April.

The Policy & Resources Committee understands from the letter received from the Authority that it does not consider that a 10-minute walking distance as established by CfHSC is a suitable basis to eliminate potential sites located beyond such distance from consideration and would instead wish to consider a range of distances up to one kilometre from the PEH.

This barrier is a matter for the Authority to raise with the CfHSC which established the criteria but it has placed a different perspective on the application. The Committee has not actively progressed the application while it has been concluding other activity which would in any event provide homes sooner give the statutory processes required to progress this site.

- i. The purchase of both the CI Tyres site and the former Braye Lodge Hotel for key worker accommodation has been completed as set out in the recently published Housing Action Plan (an appendix to the Government Work Plan monitoring Report August 2023). Maximum capacity is c50 units on both sites but is subject to the successful conclusion of planning applications.
- ii. The Committee has also sought and secured the support of the Committee *for* Economic Development to extend the temporary exemption for use of visitor accommodation to bridge the gap between site purchase and completion of build work. The Authority has made appropriate Regulations.
- iii. The Committee is negotiating to purchase a property it has been leasing for some years in order to secure tenure for seven critical health workers because the property was placed on the market. This is not ideal as the property does not offer self-contained units but current tenants are comfortable there and the expenditure will realise as an investment as rent is paid to the States as landlord and the capital value will likely increase during the period of ownership.
- iv. Additionally the Committee has announced in the Government Work Plan policy letter published on 18th August that it is in sensitive commercial negotiations to support the regeneration of St Sampson's Bridge area

through housing and associated flood defences. It is very early in the discussions which remain subject to due diligence and achieving an acceptable financial arrangement, however the tenure will be mixed and very likely to include key worker accommodation that will again achieve a financial return for the States.

Deputy Peter Ferbrache

President

Policy & Resources Committee