STATES OF JERSEY

DEFERRAL OF LAND TRANSACTION: PHILIP LE FEUVRE HOUSE AND HUGUENOT HOUSE (P.59/2026) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 27th March 2026
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers rejects this proposition.
As a member of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, Deputy Warr has been advised in confidence of the identity of the buyer of these properties and has been offered a private briefing on the detail of the sale process, including the other bids received. It is therefore surprising, given that he has lodged this proposition, that Deputy Warr has not taken up the offer of this briefing.

Deputy Warr erroneously states that this transaction is being "rushed through". It is not possible for the Infrastructure Minister to rush through a property transaction. The process for a property disposal is clearly set out in Standing Orders, requiring a 15 working day notice period to the States. The purpose of that notice period is to allow Members to lodge a proposition objecting to the transaction, as Deputy Warr has done.

Furthermore, Members will be aware that the properties have been advertised for sale twice – firstly in 2024 and again this year (minus 38 La Motte Street). The sale process has been full and thorough, and overseen by a professional external agency (and, it should be noted, a different external agency on each occasion). There is no evidence at all to suggest that this has been a rushed process.

Deputy Warr has complained frequently during this political term about empty properties in the ownership either of the Government or the States Owned Entities. Yet here is an opportunity for the government to dispose of an empty property, and Deputy Warr is seeking to block it.

Further delay will simply lead to further cost for the Government and the public. Ultimately, these buildings are owned by the Social Security Fund, for which further delay means that no return is realised for the fund, or the public (be this financial or through the delivery of a public good) on an unneeded and deteriorating asset.

Deputy Warr offers no substantive alternative to the sale of the site. In his report, the Deputy makes reference to family homes, more green space, more play space, and parking provision. The Deputy states "The point of my proposition is to simply find the space to have a discussion around how we optimise the value of this key site in town". Deputy Warr fails to recognise that this discussion has already been had, and this proposition simply means more unnecessary delay.

The Regeneration Steering Group considered this site as an option for housing, assisted living and care, a car park with a park over, and a park-only option. If Deputy Warr would have taken the time to engage with Ministers or officers before lodging his proposition, he would have a better understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of each option. Considerations in these respects included: overall cost and viability, ongoing revenue and maintenance, policies set out in the current Island Plan, delivering value to the Social Security Fund, community wellbeing, placemaking and public realm, green space, traffic safety and congestion, and the long-term needs of the community. Ministers have considered the issues raised by Deputy Warr thoroughly and in the round.

These considerations were then balanced against the appetite of the market, which has now been tested twice. It is following these considerations that the decision set out in R.43/2026 has been taken. Members should note that a decision was taken not to sell 38

La Motte Street at the request of the Minister for Health and Social Services in order that it could be retained for the ongoing use of the Health Department – primarily as a facility to support the island's mental health services.

Accordingly, Deputy Warr is seeking further delay in order to consider issues that have already been considered. Ministers have no reason to believe that a different outcome would be achieved after further delay, only that the value we have achieved for the site might be put in jeopardy.

In respect of the value secured for the public and the Social Security Fund, Members may wish to note that, when the whole site (including 38 La Motte Street) was marketed in 2024, a 4,275sq metre site attracted bids of between £1 million and £2.9 million. In 2026, a 2,335sq metre site (minus 38 La Motte Street) attracted bids of between £1.9 million and £2.7 million. This adds further context and perspective to the competitiveness of the bids received in 2026, and of the £2.3 million bid that has been accepted. As stated in R.43, the £2.3 million bid was considered as offering the best overall value for money, given that the up-front payment of £1.3 million and later payment of £1 million are without condition, and significantly greater than the up-front payment that formed part of the £2.7 million bid, with the remaining payment for that bid being conditional.

For clarity, Members should be aware that the site has been released for housing – indeed all the proposals from the market in 2026 were for housing. It is indeed interesting that, whilst Deputy Warr states that "We already know that we have an excess of one-and two-bedroom homes in St Helier", the market responded in the way that it did.

Members are completely at liberty to block the proposed sale of Philip Le Feuvre House and Huguenot House. Should they do so, however, it should be in the full knowledge that Deputy Warr has made no effort to seek to understand the process that has been undertaken prior to the decision to sell the site, despite offers to do so. This proposition does not seek new work that has not already been considered or undertaken. It effectively asks that we undertake the same process again, presumably because Deputy Warr doesn't like the outcome this time. It erroneously misrepresents a long, detailed and thorough process for one that has been "rushed".

Investment in St Helier is vital and has increased under this Government. This includes more housing, improvements to the public realm, and a drive to deliver improved youth and educational facilities, and more green space. It is also recognised that more public parking facilities will be necessary. This proposal relates to one site, and whilst it's not possible to deliver everything that town needs on this one site, Ministers are committed to ensuring that other developments and projects balance the overall needs of St Helier, delivering a modern, greener, and better-connected capital town. What St Helier doesn't need is another building being left empty for longer, for no logical reason.

Members are asked to reject the proposition.

Statement under Standing Order 37A

This proposition was lodged on 20th March 2026 and is being debated following the agreement of the States to reduce the lodging period in accordance with Standing Order 26(7). It was therefore not possible to submit a comment within the required deadline set out in Standing Orders.