

4.5 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Children and Families regarding a Play Strategy for Jersey (OQ.213/2025):

Further to the adoption of Amendment 18 to the Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028, which allocated funding to deliver a Play Strategy for Jersey, will the Minister provide an update on the progress made to date?"

Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter (The Minister for Children and Families):

I have asked my Assistant Minister to answer his question as he has delegated authority for that area, and Deputy Gardiner has agreed to that.

Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour (Assistant Minister for Children and Families - rapporteur):

I thank the Deputy for the question. The Play Strategy remains on track for completion by the end of this year. Stakeholder consultations, including engagement with children and young people, were successfully concluded earlier this year. The strategy is being formed by a wide range of recent data and feedback from children and young people, including insights from the *Right to Play* report produced by the previous Jersey Youth Parliament. The initial draft of the strategy has been circulated to stakeholders for feedback and a review meeting held to discuss the first draft. The draft will then be presented to the School Council Network on 8th October to gather further input directly from children. Following this, revisions will be made and the updated draft will be shared again with stakeholders prior to finalisation and publication in mid-December.

4.5.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for the Assistant Minister and it is great news that it will be published in mid-December. Would the Assistant Minister advise what funding, if any, has been ring-fenced in the Budget 2026 specifically for delivering new and upgraded play spaces, which probably are envisaged within the strategy?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Once the strategy is produced there will be identified actions that will be taken forward with a steering and delivery group, and that will focus on internal resources and processes that could be used to create play spaces and inspire children and their parents or guardians to have more interactive play. But beyond that there is nothing specifically allocated monetarily wise in the budget.

4.5.2 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Following the Assistant Minister's last answer that there is no budget allocated to this, what is the expectation on the Parishes to fund the play facilities that have been identified? Has there been any direct consultation with the Comité des Connétables?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank the Deputy for that question. Yes, there was a presentation to the Comité des Connétables and there were certainly good soundings from all Parishes that there was a willingness to create play spaces and work with Government to do so. It is down to a question of what money is available and how we can work with other stakeholders to produce those play spaces. But there was certainly good interaction with the Comité des Connétables. On that

note, we have also produced a map of all the available play spaces throughout the Island and shown their accessibility and what type of apparatus is involved in each of those play spaces.

4.5.3 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I thank the Assistant Minister for the answer. On the basis that there has been consultation, on the basis that there is no budget, can the Minister confirm that there is an expectation that the Parishes will need to fund the play equipment?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Yes, I think there is an expectation that there will be monies forthcoming, and of course each individual Parish has their own way of doing that. I know within my own Parish we are creating, or the Connétable will be creating, a play space as part of the development behind the Parish Hall. I think it is just getting that thinking involved in all developments of how play spaces can be incorporated into them.

4.5.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

It is really great to hear the progress on this. Part of the original plan was to have a dedicated play officer who could deliver the play strategy. Is this still planned as part of this strategy, and if not could the Minister explain why?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

It is more to have a group of people who are ... we have lots of people in Jersey who are really passionate about play and how it helps young people develop. We have got lots of existing resource across government and in the wider community who are really keen to progress this work. We need to harness that enthusiasm, and that will be the throughput of the strategy is that we will have a group that carries forward on the play strategy and make sure that it delivers.

4.5.5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for his answer, and I understand that the steering group will be critical. Does the steering group agree that no play officer is needed? If they have not been asked about this, could the Minister commit to consulting with the steering group about whether they think a dedicated play officer is necessary?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I will certainly take that back to the lead officer and we will take that forward in any future discussions.

4.5.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour:

From the previous question as well, which departments exactly or membership has the steering group leading on delivery of the play strategy, and how are they co-ordinating efforts considering that the expectation is the Parishes to fund it? Also, how is the intention to address both urban and rural needs for play spaces equally considered in all that?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

The strategy delivery group does not have a terms of reference yet. That will be the throughput from the Play Strategy. All those pieces that the Deputy has highlighted will be in our thinking when developing a terms of reference for that group.

4.5.7 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

While I commend the Assistant Minister for the strategy that he has instigated, would he confirm that my understanding is correct in that there is no funding coming from the Government to Parishes to implement the strategy as proposed?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

That is currently the case, that is correct.

4.5.8 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will the Assistant Minister consider providing such funding to Parishes to enable them to instigate play parks to a greater extent than they are at the present, so that we can comply with the strategy as proposed?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I think that will need to be forthcoming in future budgets. These things will not happen on their own and they will not happen without funding. So, yes, that will have to form part of thinking of future budgeting processes.

4.5.9 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:

I think the Assistant Minister will agree that the Parishes have been delivering and providing amazing playgrounds and play spaces. Are there any specific grants available to Parishes? We did receive a grant of £5,000 for our playground, which we are very grateful for. But the playgrounds and the Viking swing that we provided in St. Martin cost in the region of £150,000, so £145,000 we actually managed to provide via the donations, which is not an easy task. As this is a government policy, and all the Parishes pay the all-Island rate, which I think a lot of people are not aware of, do you think it is fair that this Play Strategy should be totally financed by Parishes who are all, speaking for St. Martin, quite strapped for cash and we all operate on a really shoestring budget. There was a will there and there is a way, we have got so many Parishes doing fantastic work ...

The Bailiff:

I think we do have to get to the final question, Connétable.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I do not think it is fair of the Government to say they have a Play Strategy and then not offer any funds for the play equipment, thank you.

The Bailiff:

What was the question?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Sorry, does he agree that it is not fair that the Government has a Play Strategy and actually does he agree that it would be better to put funding into the Parishes rather than have a play expert because we do have a lot of expertise in the Island anyway.

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I do agree that this should be a joint initiative between Parishes and Government. That is the way it is going to work. The Connétable's own Parish is a great example of how funding can be sourced by philanthropists or other funds that want to support play for children and young people. I think it will be a number of funding streams that will come together to make this happen in the individual Parishes.

4.5.10 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Does the Minister agree that a good strategy must include a clear action plan, milestones, defined outcomes and measures of success and if they would be included in the coming strategy?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I think the Deputy has encapsulated exactly what a good strategy should contain. That is part of our thinking, to have all of those things in it, because otherwise it is not a strategy, it is just a wish list. It has to be grounded in reality. All those things that the Deputy describes make sure that it becomes manifest.