

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT

OPEN SPACE AND PLAY IN ST. HELIER

Lodged au Greffe on 27th October 2026
by Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North
Earliest date for debate: 10th November 2026

STATES GREFFE

COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY 2026-2030 (P.75/2026): TWENTY-FIRST
AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “report accompanying this Proposition” insert the words –

“, except that on page 16 of the Report, after 9.3 there should be inserted the following –

“9.4 Update the St. Helier Open Space Audit by the end of 2027 and, through the St. Helier Regeneration Strategy, set measurable standards for accessible green spaces and for children’s and young people’s play space per resident””.

2 PAGE 2 –

After the words “report accompanying this Proposition” insert the words –

“, except that on page 16 of the Report, after 9.3 there should be inserted the following –

“9.5. Ensure there is no net loss of publicly accessible open space in St. Helier over this electoral term””.

DEPUTY V. LI OF ST. HELIER NORTH

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

in accordance with Article 18(2)(e) of the States of Jersey Law 2005, to approve the statement of the Common Strategic Policy of the Council of Ministers as set out in the report accompanying this Proposition, except that on page 16 of the Report, after 9.3 there should be inserted the following –

“9.4 Update the St. Helier Open Space Audit by the end of 2027 and, through the St. Helier Regeneration Strategy, set measurable standards for accessible green spaces and for children’s and young people’s play space per resident”.

“9.5. Ensure there is no net loss of publicly accessible open space in St. Helier over this electoral term”.

REPORT

Summary

This amendment gives Priority 9 of the CSP a measurable commitment on green space and play in St Helier. Priority 9 promises "greener areas and more places for people to meet, play and spend time", but none of its three actions says how much, where, or how progress will be measured.

The Government's own 2018 audit found that St Helier residents have only 7.7m² each of freely usable public open space. Equipped children's play space falls about 60% short of the Island's own standard. At the same time, the CSP makes St Helier the primary focus for new homes and regeneration.

The amendment asks for two things. Part 1 asks Ministers to update the evidence and set standards. Part 2 asks that the town loses no publicly accessible open space this term. Neither part commits new capital spending.

The evidence: St Helier Open Space Audit (2018)

The Government's St Helier Open Space Audit, published in July 2018, is the most recent assessment of open space in town. It covered about 493 hectares and roughly 35,000 residents, nearly 35% of the Island's population.

The headline figure looks reasonable: about 90 hectares of public open space, or 25.5m² per resident. But that total includes outdoor sports facilities, cemeteries and natural green space with limited access. Space that is inclusive and free for anyone to use falls to 7.7m² per resident, just 6% of the town's area.

Against the standards in the 2008 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, which the audit judged the fairest local test, town falls short on four of five types of space, three of them substantially (standard in hectares per 1,000 people; actual hectares; hectares needed to meet standard; shortfall):

- Children's equipped play: 0.1; 1.38; 3.5; 61% short
- Natural green space: 1.0; 24.62; 35; 30% short
- Amenity green space: 0.25; 6.93; 8.75; 21% short
- Outdoor sports: 0.8; 27; 28; 4% short
- Parks: 0.5; 17.6; 17.5; standard met

Play is the starkest gap. Of 32 equipped play sites, the audit found only 6 fully open to the public; most of the rest sit within social housing estates. Provision for 10 to 19-year-olds was 0.01 hectares per 1,000 young people, which the audit described as markedly low.

The accompanying 2018 Open Space Survey found that about 18% of St Helier residents, over 6,000 people, have no outdoor space at home. For those households, public space is the only outdoor space they have.

How St Helier compares with UK benchmarks and London

The 2018 audit itself compared town with the UK's national benchmark, the Fields in Trust guidelines. On that measure, St Helier falls short on every type of space it tested (St Helier in hectares per 1,000 people; benchmark; shortfall in hectares):

- Natural green space: 0.70; 1.8; 38.5
- Amenity green space: 0.20; 0.6; 14
- Parks: 0.5; 0.8; 10.5
- Children's equipped play: 0.039; 0.25; 7.4

On children's play, town has less than a sixth of the UK benchmark. The audit judged the Fields in Trust guidelines too demanding for a compact island town, as they are based on England, and preferred the lower 2008 local standards shown above. Even against those local standards, town falls short on play, natural and amenity green space.

Supplementary comparison: London. On the broadest like-for-like measure, St Helier has about as much public green space per resident as London, and London is well below the British average:

- Great Britain average: about 35m² (Fields in Trust Green Space Index)
- St Helier (town): about 22.5m² (author's calculation from the 2018 audit, excluding cemeteries and churchyards)
- London: 20.98m² (Fields in Trust Green Space Index)
- St Helier, freely usable space only: 7.7m² (2018 audit)

The Green Space Index excludes cemeteries, religious grounds, golf courses and allotments, but counts sports grounds. The St Helier figure of 22.5m² is adjusted to match by removing the audit's 11 hectares of cemeteries and churchyards. There is no published London equivalent of the 7.7m² "freely usable" figure, so that line should not be compared directly with London.

By share of land the picture is similar. London's publicly accessible parks and green spaces cover 18% of the city (London Assembly, 2025); St Helier's public open space covers 18.25% of town, though that includes civic squares and sports grounds.

In other words, Jersey's capital already has open space at roughly the level of London as a whole, not of a small island town. London is responding: in September 2025 the London Assembly's Environment Committee recommended that the new London Plan include "clear minimum standards for the provision of green space per person". Part 1 of this amendment asks St Helier to do the same.

St Helier does have assets London lacks. About 163 hectares of sandy beach at St Aubin's Bay and Havre des Pas lie next to town, nearly ten times its parkland. But beaches are tidal, seasonal and not play space, and the audit found much of the natural green space on town's edge hard to reach on foot.

Why it matters now

The CSP will put more people into St Helier, but it does not say how town's open space will keep pace. Several priorities point the same way:

- Priority 6 commits to providing more homes for Islanders.

- Priority 4 commits to revising the Island Plan to facilitate economic growth and to revising planning guidance and regulation.
- Priority 5.2 relocates further and higher education to a new campus in the heart of St Helier and releases the Highlands College site for homes.
- Priority 9 makes St Helier the primary focus for regeneration and promises a regeneration strategy for town.

These are reasonable aims, but each adds residents, workers or students to the same land. The 2018 audit warned that, with no new open space, space per person in town will fall as population grows. Applying the audit's own population projections to its 7.7m² figure, freely usable space would fall to about 7.0m² per resident by 2035 under a +325 net migration scenario, and to about 6.1m² under +1,000.

The audit was also candid that meeting its standards in full would need 25 to 40 additional hectares by 2035, up to 45% more than exists. It judged that unlikely, and concluded that improvements would depend more on quality and accessibility. That is why this amendment asks for standards and evidence first, rather than fixed hectare targets.

The evidence base is now eight years old. Since 2018 new housing has been built in town, and major sites including Overdale, Fort Regent and the Waterfront are being redeveloped. A regeneration strategy built without an updated audit would be planning without a baseline.

What the amendment asks

Part 1 (new action 9.4) asks Ministers to do three things within the existing Priority 9 programme:

- Update the St Helier Open Space Audit by the end of 2027, so the regeneration strategy rests on current evidence.
- Set measurable standards for accessible green space per resident, building on the 2008 study standards the audit already tested.
- Set a separate standard for children's and young people's play space, the area where the shortfall is greatest.

It does not fix the standards in advance. Ministers, officers and the Assembly can decide the right levels once the evidence is updated. It simply ensures that "greener areas and more places to play" can be measured and reported on during the term.

Part 2 (new action 9.5) asks that St Helier ends the term with no less publicly accessible open space than it started with. Until the audit is updated, the 2018 audit provides the baseline. It does not prevent any individual space being developed. Where a scheme takes open space, it would need to be replaced elsewhere in town, consistent with the long-standing Island Plan approach that Protected Open Space should be lost only where it can be offset elsewhere.

Members can support Part 1 without Part 2. Part 1 is about evidence and measurement; Part 2 is a firmer commitment that Members may wish to weigh against housing delivery.

Conclusion

The CSP rightly makes St Helier the focus of regeneration and new homes. This amendment makes sure the people who live there, especially children and young people, are not left with less space as town grows. Part 1 gives the Assembly a way to measure "greener areas and more places to play"; Part 2 protects what town already has. I ask Members to support both parts.

Sources

Government of Jersey, St Helier Open Space Audit Summary, July 2018:
<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/R%20St%20Helier%20Open%20Space%20Audit%20ND.pdf>

Government of Jersey, Islanders rate open space, 10 April 2018:
<https://gov.je/News/2018/Pages/IslandersRateOpenSpace.aspx>

Council of Ministers, Proposed Common Strategic Policy 2026–2030, September 2026
Ordnance Survey, The Green Space Index (Fields in Trust data), June 2019:
<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/blog/the-green-space-index>

London Assembly Environment Committee, Parks: Under Pressure, September 2025

Financial and staffing implications

This amendment commits no new capital spending. Part 1 asks for an updated audit and a set of standards. The 2018 audit was produced by Government officers using GIS mapping, site visits and an online survey. It is expected to be met within existing departmental resources and could form part of the evidence base for the St Helier Regeneration Strategy that Priority 9 already commits to. Part 2 has no direct cost. It may shape how individual schemes are designed, and any cost of replacing open space would fall to the scheme concerned through the planning process.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.