



HEALTHY,
VIBRANT
AND FUN:
OUR RESPONSE
TO THE TOWN
REGENERATION
FRAMEWORK



2021

INTRODUCTION

International evidence shows that there is a relationship between the places that we live, work, and socialise (the built environment) and our health. From enabling and encouraging contact with nature (both green and blue spaces), creating smoke free areas, providing spaces for recreation, play and physical activity, and public art to increasing accessibility to affordable healthy food and the infrastructure that enable and incentivise active travel, the potential for our local built environment to improve our health is vast.

The regeneration of the identified areas in St Peter Port presents a wonderful opportunity to purposefully design areas to enable healthy living and make healthy choices easier at the same time as other key aims such as increasing vibrancy, dwell time and improving the public realm. In light of the negative impact of Covid-19 on both our economy and our health, now is the time to invest in building environments to which will help stimulate recovery and future prosperity in both areas.

Drawing on principles outlined in [Public Health England's Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places](#) document, we focus on three principles that can be applied to developing healthy urban environments including in Guernsey.

- Making neighbourhoods a healthy and sustainable place to live
- Building an environment that makes it easy to be active
- Building an environment where it is easy to eat healthily

These themes guided our analysis of the Draft Development Framework and our response to it.





OUR APPROACH

Following review of the Draft Development Framework, our team (working in Substance Use, Eat Well, Be Active, Healthier Weight and Social Prescribing) undertook walking tours of the three proposed regeneration areas (see the image below). We were accompanied by our Chairman, Stuart Falla and Simone Whyte, Principal Forward Planning Officer at the States of Guernsey.

In three small groups we spent time walking all three regeneration areas with each group focusing on one of the key priorities above (healthy and sustainable, being active or healthy eating). Each group took photos, explored strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and recorded their observations. These were then collated and shared in a workshop. In the pages that follow we present our reflections on the Draft Development Framework through a lens of opportunities for health and well-being.



The walking tours

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Overall we are impressed with the vision and objectives presented in the draft framework and believe that they have great potential to positively influence population health through urban design. We are pleased to see that many of the themes that we raised in our earlier meeting with Planning Officers have been included.

We are delighted to see a consistent and strong focus on connectivity with safe and efficient pedestrianisation and cycle infrastructure. We are very keen to see the central pedestrian spine concept realised. The provision of “destinations” at the gateways that are pleasant to arrive at, depart through and dwell in, connected by a pedestrianised route will incentivise people to utilise the pedestrian route, increasing footfall in areas that are currently underutilised such as Mill Street. We are pleased to see the recognition of the potential economic benefits of enhancing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in Section B.

The Draft Development Framework is very strong on designing in physical activity opportunities. However, it is weaker on considering the impact of proposals on the food environment as one element of good place-making. This includes food retail, growing opportunities and the avoidance of a high density of hot food takeaways. We advocate for a planning approach which supports provision of healthier, affordable food for the general population which includes decreased exposure to unhealthy food environments.

To this end, we would like to see Health added as a Key Planning Issue in Section A. Whilst we understand that there are no specific policies which require health impact to be assessed, we would encourage planners to acknowledge the evidence for a link between our built environment and health and demonstrate how this has been considered in the final framework (including positive factors such as pedestrian infrastructure as well as potential negative influences such as areas becoming overly populated by food outlets). This approach would be consistent with the States resolution that all policy decisions of the States should include consideration of the impact of those decisions on health and wellbeing (Resolution 11A of Article I of Billet d'État XII of 2017.). This approach is highlighted in the Government Work Plan (2021) as an ongoing principle of the States and would help realise the ambitions of the Government Work Plan with regards to community well-being, not least the direct and indirect effect of the natural and physical environments on human health (Government Work Plan p21).



Learning from other jurisdictions:
Bordeaux waterspiegel
le miroir d'Eau



TAXI RANK, LOWER POLLET AND NORTH PLANTATION

The proposals for the taxi rank are an exciting opportunity to develop a keystone gateway to town and a high-quality civic space. Creating a “destination” will draw people along the central pedestrian spine, encouraging physical activity. Proposals for new planting, water features, public art and sustainable development will provide increased contact with nature in an urban centre which positively affect well-being. We also support the inclusion of formal/informal play elements. Currently there are very few places in town for children’s active play. Such elements would likely encourage families to visit town and or stay longer. We would like to see all new civic / public amenity spaces designated as smoke and alcohol-free zones.

Many of the enhancements in both the low and high intervention proposals aim at making it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk, or wheel around town, an objective that we fully support. We are pleased to see the concepts around extending the harbourfront cycle lane to reach La Vallette with segregated infrastructure. Bike park stops, including sculptural cycle parking, along the route would incentivise those who choose to cycle with direct access to the centre of town. We love the concept of enhancing public/active travel between Admiral Park and central town. Could Admiral Park be a “Park and Stride / Park and Ride” option at weekends? Relocating the taxi rank to North Beach presents an opportunity to design a facility which is safe, well lit, and sheltered. Greater use of taxis plays a role in efforts to reducing drink driving. Including performance spaces for entertainment may change the atmosphere at the rank and encourage more people to use it.

We note the potential for a food outlet in the remodelled taxi rank area and would encourage planners to consider policies to ensure that the eating environment created provides a balanced food offer including easy access to healthy eating options. The area already is characterised by a high density of fast-food outlets and evidence shows that density of such outlets is related to weight status and health outcomes. Other health enhancing concepts in this area could include free drinking water refill stations, hand washing facilities and vertical gardens.

SOUTH ESPLANADE

The proposals for the south Esplanade again offer great potential to improve how St Peter Port can be designed with well-being in mind.

We like the medium and high intervention approaches as they offer greater potential for flexible open space, play areas (including gated play space for younger children) and recreation spaces. As well as petanque and table tennis, street football/futsal pitches have been successful in other urban spaces particularly providing a place for younger people to be active. Solutions need not be expensive or complex. Our recently installed graphics on a stretch of tarmac at markings at Sausmarez Park show that simple design elements encourage children and families to use spaces differently to play, learn and be active.

The open pavilions and flexible space ideas provide opportunities to make affordable healthy food available, for example in stalls selling nutritious local produce. Alongside the built infrastructure, adopting policies which require a balanced food environment (i.e. what is sold) will ensure that people are put first. There are examples of how this has been achieved elsewhere using planning policies in the links in our General Observations.

The area could also include opportunities for community (urban) food growing, providing interlinked benefits of social connectivity, improved mental health, contact with nature and fruit and vegetable consumption.

Again we would advocate that this public open space should be designated as smoke and alcohol free.





MIGNOT PLATEAU AND TOWN CHURCH

Converting Mignot Plateau to a main public attraction could offer opportunities for the built environment in the area to improve health. The steep topography leading to Mignot Plateau provides a good opportunity for people's movement around town to include more vigorous activity. However, this also means that routes to the area and the destination need to incentivise people to visit as well as consideration for accessibility. A public art/sculpture trail alongside improved lighting and places to rest and take in a view on the way may help.

The area could include a play space, or a flexible area that could be used by community leisure providers in good weather to run classes such as yoga with a view. We support the retention of the existing landscaped area as a valuable "green lung" within St Peter Port. Could Ozanne Hall accommodate a Children's Centre in the heart of town?

Our visit to the Town Church area led to similar proposals to those in the Draft Development Framework. The inclusion of a cycle hub would incentivise active travel with access to the centre of town. We noted the many bikes locked to railings outside the library since the improvement of the public realm in Market Square, showing the desire for cycle parking in the heart of town.

Again we note the potential for a kiosk presence in the space, and refer to our comments on similar ideas for the regenerated taxi rank. It is often a default response to provide unhealthy foods in such settings. However, it is important that new developments decrease, not increase exposure to unhealthy food environments so careful consideration of the type of concession in such spaces would be valuable to consider.

Smoke and alcohol-free zones alongside water refill stations and hand washing facilities could also be considered.

TRINITY SQUARE AND MILL STREET

Similar to the taxi rank proposals, the regeneration of Trinity Square as a gateway and destination on the pedestrianised spine is a good example of improved safe infrastructure and street connectivity. This would provide added incentives for people to explore and build up incidental daily physical activity.

Public parking at Sir Charles Frossard House at weekends, would create a natural “park and stride” location, opportunities for physical activity and increased footfall through Trinity Square and Mill Street.

Mill Street and Trinity Square is currently a food desert (an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food). A priority in this area should be working with the local community to identify needs in terms of accessibility to affordable nutritious food.

Mill Street presents an excellent opportunity to embrace its existing creative identity. Schemes that incentivise the development or inclusion of spaces for creative activities alongside live/work residential spaces, courtyards and exhibition/event venues would bring social activity, connection and opportunities to enhance well-being.

The area currently lacks green space, and biodiversity and deprives people of a connection with the natural world. Redevelopment offers an opportunity to make nature more visible, for example including parklets, living walls.



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