

Meeting between Vale Parish Douzaine and President of the Development & Planning Authority
10th August 2020

Attending

Richard Leale -Vale (RL)

Richard Digard -Vale (RD)

Dawn Tindall - D&PA (DAT)

(Recorded with the permission of all parties)

- DAT provided RD and RL with the Interesting Facts and Figures page from the Gov.gg website
- In response to RD's question why there has been so few homes built in the north, DAT advised she thought it was because of the current toxicity of some sites. DAT felt that the community wanted affordable homes built but did not want them on certain housing allocation sites. These sites were identified in 2002 and confirmed later by the SLHAA but there have been various reasons over the years why buildings hadn't been built primarily viability and the community's objections.
- In response to RL's question over whether Leale's Yard would be first to be ready to be built, DAT confirmed that Saltpans and Pointues Rocques had all but the planning application to do before a spade could go in the ground whereas Leale's Yard was still needing further work to enable a planning application could be made. This was even though Leale's Yard was more acceptable as it is in a main centre and the main centre is the place to build because of easy access to work and shops.
- In response to RL's question over the involvement of the D&PA in discussions on Leale's Yard and the Recovery Strategy, DAT explained about the difficulties faced by the D&PA to try to be party to discussions on the Recovery Strategy as there was no representative of the D&PA at the meeting when it is being discussed. The CRAG is the Covid Recovery Advisory Group where the Presidents of the Principal Committees and States' Trading Supervisory Board and Deputy St Pier and Deputy Trott of Policy & Resources Committee attend. DAT with the Director of Planning attended last week's CRAG meeting for half an hour and spoke for 15 minutes. Questions were then asked for 15 minutes but the any answers were deferred to later in the meeting but DAT and the Director of Planning were not invited to that part of the meeting.
- DAT explained the progress of the D&PA's attempt to be involved in decision making cross-government since inception in 2016 had been initially been difficult as the D&PA was on the defensive trying to find its feet. Having identified its role, the Action Plan was a means to move things forward and get the right conversations started and for the benefits of proper consultation with the D&PA to be seen such as for Leale's Yard. DAT advised she felt the D&PA should not be involved in planning decisions but concentrate on discussions on policy and how to get the planning system working for Guernsey yet because of the perception the D&PA was the regulator, this was difficult to achieve. DAT was frustrated over the lack of involvement considering the D&PA's mandate relating to the built environment and that the fight had already been won in respect of the D&PA's involvement on the Seafront Enhancement Area Group. DAT advised that, despite 3 years of the D&PA pointing out the need for our involvement, it took an external consultant to point this out to the SEA Group.
- In response to RL regarding the likelihood of development at Leale's Yard, DAT thought building in the main centre at Leale's Yard would take time because of funding for the

infrastructure rather than issues with the planning system although that would take time as it required a master developer approach. DAT confirmed that it would be quicker for building somewhere like Pointes Rocques or Saltpans because the planning side had been completed other than the planning application itself. DAT also advised that recently the D&PA was informed that a timeline for Fontaine Vinery was revised by ESS and the GHA form 2022 to 2020 and so the work on that Development Framework was reprioritised so this may come forward shortly.

- In response to a question from RD, DAT confirmed it was not the role of the D&PA to prioritise which site should be built upon first but to provide the options and it was for the market to decide where to build. However, for the States, it was easier to build on States' land such as Fontaine Vinery.
- In response to a question from RL, DAT explained that if the Co-op wished to take Leale's Yard forward, it would probably not be the D&PA who they'd approach but they would need to approach P&R as it was a question of States' support rather than a planning matter. If they wished to discuss the planning side, then it would be a pre-application enquiry which was an operational matter which the politicians on the D&PA would not be party to. In answer to a question from RL, DAT explained that the role of politicians in operational matters was topical but for the D&PA it was very relevant as the operational side was putting the policies into practice and so a direct link between the two.
- In response to a question from RL, DAT confirmed that the D&PA could not properly justify starting work on a Development Framework for Leale's Yard when there was extant planning permission for over 400 homes. Once that lapsed we asked for up to £400,000 pounds to do the Frameworks for Leale's Yard and the three other Regeneration Areas which were now progressing.
- In response to a question from RL, the options with Leale's Yard could be as extreme as one philanthropic developer developing the whole Yard and started this year if they had the money and the will. The other extreme was using a master developer to get say 22 other developers together and divide up the plots with funding from the States which could take perhaps 2 years before a spade could go in the ground.
- In response to a question from RL, DAT explained about the density range which usually appeared in Development Frameworks. She advised that the number of units built would depend on the combination of the number of flats, maisonettes and houses. The lower the number of bedrooms in the unit the greater the number of units overall. In principle, the maximum density would probably be acceptable if the units were one-bedroom and if all four bedroom homes then the lower density would be expected although a good design may see a different outcome. A planning application would be expected to take account of the size of housing identified as needed by way of the number of bedrooms. There was currently a need for 2 and 3 bedroom homes. DAT felt that a simple change in the description between units and bedrooms may help the public to appreciate the density.
- In response to a question from RL, DAT advised that the density was not flexible to allow a developer to build as much as they could but to represent an expectation of the good use of the land whilst providing for amenity for the occupiers and neighbours such as public spaces.
- In response to a question from RD, DAT advised that the number of Development Frameworks were issued to enable the market to have options where to build. It was not for the D&PA to prescribe the next place to build but to provide a choice. It was acknowledged that probably five sites may have planning applications come forward but only two may actually happen. So there is the offering of a choice in order to try and get people to build

on one or two.

- In response to a question from RL who asked why some developers some were struggling to sell some properties, DAT advised that she was told they had all been sold but would check.
- In response to a question from RL asking if it was correct that the D&PA is pushing for Leale's Yard to be first, DAT advised that the D&PA do not push for anything. DAT advised that she felt affordable homes should be built for people and, as there was investor interest, Saltpan or Pointues Rocques should be progressed so we can help key workers in particular.

In response to a question from RL who felt that the Co-op would mothball Leale's Yard and so compulsory purchase may be needed, DAT advised that this would be expensive and so the States would be naturally averse to that idea.

- In response to a question from RD, DAT advised that building on greenfield sites was an option as disused glasshouse sites were greenfield. DAT felt that these should be re-classified with a view to protecting true green fields but that would have to await a planning inquiry to consider the change to the IDP.
- In response to a question from RL, DAT advised that the centre of Town or the Bridge was preferred as the place to build whilst developers want to build where it is the most profitable. So Leale's Yard is the preferred first choice whereas others want it as a People's Park but DAT felt that affordable homes are the priority.
- In response to a question from RL as to the potential for compulsory purchase of Leale's Yard, DAT advised she was unaware of the States' appetite for this but, when advised by RL and RD of places which were compulsory purchased, that because of Covid there would be a reluctance to spend money unless absolutely necessary but an incentive of sorts may be considered.
- DAT confirmed that that was what the IDP was a facilitator that brought together all of those difficult market forces who decide the best value for money and how to get buildings built.
- In response to a question from RL, DAT advised she was unaware of what appetite there was in the current States for support to incentivise the building on Leale's Yard but thought the next stage was for P&R to take up the idea of putting in the infrastructure but there is opposition as DAT felt some would say why treat the Co-op differently from anybody else or pay for to help developers
- In response to an observation from RL that both parishes ant Leale's Yard to go ahead, DAT explained that the D&PA could not dictate which development comes forward first. The IDP was intended to identify what could and could not be built in different places and, because there were many permutations, the IDP was long describing each type. Developers wish to build in the easiest places such as open green fields because of the viability of the site but the IDP and SLUP promotes brownfield ahead of greenfield sites not by specific sites but by default such as removing areas around Centres and in the Agriculture Priority Areas. Certain green fields in the Centres are only protected if designated as Important Open Land so some areas were vulnerable.
- In response to a question from RL about the use of Development Frameworks, DAT confirmed that a Development Framework gives more information on a particular plot to the developer than the IDP taking into account the responses of a consultation with the public. Whilst there would also be a consultation for the planning application, if there was no Development Framework, developers usually come forward with a proposal on behalf of a landowner to ask if a type of building could be built on the land and there would only be the one consultation. Also, previously some of these sites would require a local planning brief which would require a planning inquiry, which was expensive and time consuming.

- In response to a question from RL about the time scale for a planning application, DAT advised that the Planning Service aim to get most planning applications decided in eight weeks with 13 weeks as the statutory maximum, however, DAT acknowledged that this target was not being met due to a lack of staff.
- In response to a question from RL who asked why Leale's Yard wasn't prioritised for development when it is highlighted as an urban regeneration project that needs to go ahead, DAT advised that whilst it was a Regeneration Area, that does not prioritise development but it does enable a greater flexibility of what can be built once there is developer interest. The D&PA did not focus on Leale's Yard alone but other areas so that a choice can be offered to developers
- In response to a question from RL, DAT confirmed that whilst there are no shortcuts to get planning permission, work is being done to make sure the same planning process takes less time but work is needed on non-planning aspects such as getting the people around the table to actually discuss the infrastructure for Leale's Yard.
- In response to a question from RL about the whether Planning takes into account the traffic in planning applications, DAT confirmed that they did but different planning processes demanded different approaches. She advised that, when considering planning applications, traffic in the local area around the planning application and on the site is taken into account. As a result if there was an application for six homes then it is likely increased traffic would not be an issue and a traffic impact assessment would not be required although advice from Traffic and Highways would be requested because there might be issues such as with the access, it might be a blind corner and so forth. The approach to traffic for each application is proportionate to the site With a Development Framework Traffic and Highways would look at a larger surrounding area to probably include the local arterial route. Each assessment I made based on it being the first application being built. So, once that first one is built, it will have a knock on effect on all the others. This will affect the density range as each plot is built upon. DAT acknowledged that this still does not gives anyone certainty of what would be built on any one plot as it would not be known in what order plots will be developed. DAT confirmed that the amount built on remaining plots should reduce as each plot is developed but again would depend on the number of bedrooms in each unit as previously explained.
- In response to an observation by RL that the cumulative total of homes in Development Frameworks and the resultant effect on traffic would not be the 1500 or so as the Vale Parish had thought, DAT advised that traffic impact assessments would also need to be revised as developments began. DAT also confirmed that the traffic impact assessments were being collated including the ones completed including for the two school sites and that the D&PA asked Traffic and Highways for a rolling traffic impact assessment so becoming a living document with the intention for it to inform any development in a particular area. DAT also confirmed that, whilst it was intended to be created early in 2020, she had confirmation it should be completed this year albeit it it would not fill in all the gaps between the assessments already completed.
- In response to an observation by RL that it was public perception that was at issue with a fear of more traffic yet little appetite to get rid of the car, DAT agreed that there was misinformation about the IDP.
- In response to an observation by RL that the IDP was such a thick document, DAT agreed that, despite being one of the largest consultations on Island, it was only when the policies were put into practice that people understood the effects. DAT confirmed that the policies were flexible and so the D&PA had pressed for changes having listened to consultation

responses such as more and bigger open spaces in Development Frameworks, more native trees and larger buffer zones. DAT confirmed that every single letter is taken into account although not if it repeats the points already raised because once the point is made it does not need to be repeated. One letter would suffice, setting out these objections and observations are taken into account unless it raises non-planning matters. DAT confirmed that the only point which is a planning matter that on the whole cannot be reconsidered is the principle of development itself as that was decided in 2016.

- In response to an observation by RD as to how to inform the public of this, DAT confirmed that it was through meetings such as this one. DAT felt that these meetings should continue by the next D&PA and that the new members should be encourage to talk to the public be they applicants or objectors and, if necessary, recuse themselves from planning decisions to ensure a better understanding of the IDP and the best use of the IDP policies is achieved. DAT felt that was the most important aspect of all the work being done to get the D&PA and therefore the IDP at the centre of conversation about the natural and built environment.