



Vaccinating teens 'could help keep Covid at bay'

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Nature with Bob Tompkins

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Current hospital could be used for housing

By James Jeune

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HEALTH Department buildings – including the current hospital – could be freed up for housing now that there is 'more certainty' around the Overdale project, a minister and senior civil servant have said.

Andy Scate, director general of the Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department, said that with funding mechanisms now in place for the new-hospital project, Maison Le Pape at the Parade, West-away Court and the current hospital were among several buildings which could be redeveloped to supplement the Island's housing stock.

His comments come at a time of high demand within the Island's housing market, with the average property costing £100,000 more than it did 12 months ago.

Last week, the States Assembly approved the government's funding proposals for the Overdale project, which included setting a budget of £804.5m, the

majority of which will be borrowed.

Asked what could happen to the Gloucester Street site, Mr Scate said that housing was 'a possibility'.

He added: 'It's too early to say, but [it] could probably accommodate around six storeys of apartments.'

Housing Minister Russell Labey said: 'It is absolutely my mission to accelerate supply wherever possible, including identifying and securing more government sites for housing development.'

'With more certainty on the hospital, the greater the chance I now have of achieving this. While supply is key, we must also look at all suitable measures government is able to take to assist, ranging from individual assistance to the wider initiatives to help bring forward construction, including access to housing.'

During a Scrutiny hearing this week, Mr Scate said: 'There are a number of sites which are effectively not being

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Thinking big



■ Town Church associate rector James Porter views a five-metre-high installation built from recycled cardboard boxes, one of more than 20 artworks in the Skipton Big Ideas exhibition. Developed by ArtHouse Jersey, the exhibition is due to run for three weeks. Full story: Page 8 Picture: Rob Currie

'Airline collapses inevitable'

By Ian Heath

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JERSEY must not be 'complacent' about its travel links, as further airline collapses are 'inevitable' following the Covid-19 outbreak, business leaders have been warned.

At yesterday's Chamber of Commerce lunch, Matt Thomas, chief executive of Ports of Jersey, said he did not expect air travel to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels until 2023 but that neither did he anticipate sharp price rises as carriers would have to remain competitive.

Mr Thomas admitted that further airline collapses could damage the Island's connectivity unless proactive steps were taken to secure travel links.

He also praised the efforts of Islanders during the pandemic, which he described as a 'roller-coaster ride' for the travel industry.

He said that up to a third of Ports employees were redeployed to aid the emergency response. These included Airport firefighters who were reassigned to drive ambulances and security officers who worked in customer care at the Hospital.

Mr Thomas said that as the Island was now in a better position in relation to Covid-19, the Airport was now seeing passenger traffic at around 70% of 2019 levels, compared to a figure of 45% in the UK.

But he added that other airlines were likely to suffer the same fate as Flybe, which collapsed early in the pandemic, and the Island's connectivity was at risk.

He said: 'I have just spent three days in Milan with the world's airlines, airports, investors and governments. The takeaways were clear.'

'No airline has been immune, including those that serve Jersey. Further rationalisation in the sector is coming and further

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