

STATES OF JERSEY



ISLAND PLAN 2011: WIND-FARMS

**Lodged au Greffe on 12th February 2013
by Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Minister for Planning and Environment, having undertaken the required consultation process, to bring forward for approval by the Assembly amendments to the Island Plan 2011, and in particular to Section 9 of the Plan, to provide that utility-scale wind-farms will not be permitted in Jersey, on its offshore reefs or in its territorial waters.

DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT

REPORT

It is with increasing alarm that I see planning applications for the erection of wind-measuring masts on our offshore reefs, with the stated purpose of assessing suitability of these areas for future wind-turbines – the most recent being for Les Minquiers. That purpose is made quite clear in the bumph issued by the Met Office.

The project is called ‘Met Office plans for offshore wind project’ and goes on to say: “The Met Department wants to find out more about the wind around Jersey’s territorial waters to inform future planning for renewable energy”. Further on, it states: “The three-year offshore wind project is sponsored by Jersey Electricity”. No doubt about what’s going on there, then.

The stated secondary purpose of providing wind data for shipping is, in my view, merely an attempt at justifying the unjustifiable. Whilst wind data could be of limited value for sailors travelling between St. Malo and Jersey (as I sometimes do), it has not been considered necessary before and could easily be provided by an unobtrusive device on one of the huts at Les Minquiers anyway. In reality, all that is needed is to listen to the shipping forecast, which gives wind-speed at Dinard as well as Jersey.

Assessing the suitability of these sites for wind-farms is, however, much more worrying. Having been in politics for many years, I am acutely aware of how projects such as these start out unobtrusively but, by the time they are eventually put before the States for decision, have accumulated an unstoppable energy of their own. Another worrying trend is that arguments in favour of such projects often include comments such as “we’ve already spent/committed £x on this project; we can’t pull out now”. What is the point of doing costly research if the projects being evaluated are never going to go ahead?

I am of the opinion that few people would support wind-farms on either Les Ecréhous or Les Minquiers. The wind-farm at Carteret is enough of an eyesore; and that’s 15 miles away. And that’s not to mention the noise such turbines make, the danger to wildlife and the fact that, despite costing a fortune, they are little more than useless, so it could be argued they exist solely as a sop to the green lobby. In low wind they produce next to nothing, whilst in strong wind they have to be shut down lest they self-destruct. Indeed, the only reason wind-farms exist at all is because they are massively subsidised, as they don’t even generate enough energy to pay for their construction and maintenance.

So I believe the Island Plan should be amended to provide that applications for commercial wind-turbines would simply not be allowed. If anyone wished to review this decision at a later stage, it would be necessary for the States and people of Jersey to decide at that stage whether or not they would be minded to accept wind-turbines on our offshore reefs because, if issues such as unsightliness, noise, environmental damage – not to mention a possible financial liability to the Jersey Electricity Company – mean that they would not tolerate them, then the present plans to erect stations to monitor suitability of sites for wind-farms is a waste of time and money.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower matters arising from this proposition other than the internal work required in the Planning and Environment Department to undertake the required consultation and then bring forward for approval the amendments to the Island Plan.