

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
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ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 5th DECEMBER 2006

Question

- (a) Would the Minister agree to set targets for Jersey to reduce its CO₂ emissions so that the Island plays its part in assisting the global environment and, if not, why not?
- (b) What concrete steps, if any, will the Minister take to ensure the Island reduces CO₂ emissions and, in particular, would the Minister undertake to provide grants to improve the thermal efficiency of homes to reduce energy loss?

Answer

On a global scale Jersey's emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases are tiny. Nevertheless we have the opportunity to show that Jersey maintains the highest possible standards in respect of our global obligations and at the same time put in place measures that will reduce our dependency on imported fossil fuels and generally benefit the economy.

Measured against the accepted baseline standard of 1990 levels Jersey has already outperformed most other developed nations by achieving a cut in emissions of about 30% due to the way in which we now import electricity from France rather than generate it on Island. (French electricity production is almost carbon neutral because it is generated by nuclear and hydropower sources). However there is still scope to go further.

I can confirm that we will be setting targets to reduce CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, indeed the States Strategic plan already contains a commitment to reduce the Island's emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases and to set targets and timescales for this process. In Section 1.1 of the strategic plan we have, as an indicator of success, a commitment to targets and timescales for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that reflect global commitments. Further on in section 4.3 we set the target of containing greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels. At section 5.2.8 we have agreed to meet, where possible, international standards set through the extension of international treaties and conventions over the plan period. And of course one of the top priorities for the Council of Ministers set out in the strategic plan is to develop and implement an energy policy that addresses the environmental impacts of Energy

New and ongoing work streams agreed in the Strategic plan will set ambitious but achievable targets for the Island, these include Policies that will shortly be brought before the States prior to wider public consultation, notably the Energy Policy, Environmental Taxes, the Integrated Travel and Transport Plan followed later in 2007 by an Air Quality Strategy.

These Policies will propose concrete mechanisms to reduce the Island's emissions of greenhouse gases, amongst which there will be measures to improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock. Reducing demand for energy by implementing measures that improve the efficiency of energy use is almost always a win-win situation, whereby the user experiences reduced energy costs at the same time as emissions being cut. I will be using the Eco-Active programme to provide up to date and independent advice to people about how to go about being more energy efficient in their homes and at work and explaining just how good the pay back on such investments can be.

Although in most cases there is a clear financial case for undertaking energy efficiency measures I accept that there may also be a need to offer grant support to encourage take up and I will undertake to examine the provision of such a scheme where it seems necessary and appropriate. In addition I will also ensure that building standards are continually improved by strengthening the building bye-law requirements. The bye-laws were last updated in 2004 with the aim of improving energy efficiency in all buildings and these have had a significant impact on the way new buildings are now constructed with energy performance being improved by some 18%. I do however

believe this is not a reason to be complacent and plan to publish proposals within the next 12 months to strengthen the building bye-law requirements relating to conservation of fuel and power that will further improve standards for all new buildings. These will include measures to improve the energy efficiency of new homes as well as making improvements when homes are extended or materially altered. I anticipate the revised bye-laws will be far reaching and will result in significant reductions in the annual CO2 emissions from Jersey's building stock.

The question starts with an assumption that there is a pressing need to reduce Jersey's emissions of carbon dioxide. I share this view but for completeness I append a short argument setting out the case for action.

1. What evidence is there that climate change is happening ?

Scientists across the globe have used numerous pieces of evidence to show that atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have risen sharply since the industrial revolution. An example are ice cores from the Antarctic. This evidence has shown a magnitude and speed of change not seen before in history.

Global average temps have risen by approximately 0.7°C in the last 100 years. Surface temperature modelling taking into account atmospheric conditions has shown that these rises can only be explained by elevated concentrations of carbon dioxide arising from man's recent activities.

Current trends show that global temps will rise by 2-3°C within 50 years and remember that a rise of 5°C is the equivalent in magnitude to the change between now and an ice age.

Records from our own climate recording at Maison St Louis shows Jersey's temperatures are rising in accordance with the globally accepted trend. It is folly to imagine that Jersey is immune to what is accepted to be one of the most important environmental and economic threats to the world today.

2. What might climate change look like for Jersey?

The Hadley centre, which is part of the UK Met Office, have carried out fine scale modelling for Jersey and have given us the best indication of what climate change might look like -

Predicted scenarios of climate change for 2080 assuming medium carbon dioxide emissions are -

- Warmer winters by on average nearly +2.5°C

- Drier summers – on average 45% less rainfall

- Days of heavy precipitation increase by 30/50% in winter but decrease by 40/50% in summer

- Increased storminess

- Frosts and snow will become even more infrequent

3. What do these predicted changes in weather mean for Jersey?

There are many potential ramifications for climate change locally, please allow me to give you a few examples -

- The island will face water resource management issues

- It is likely there will be new pests and diseases that won't be killed over the far warmer winters. This may have a substantial impact on our agricultural industry

- There will be changes in biodiversity since the evidence is that nature is finding it very difficult to evolve keep up with the unprecedented rate of change that we now see.

4. What is being done to address these predicted changes

Through the work we are carrying out on energy policy, we are identifying the risks and outlining adaptation scenarios. We are assisted in this work by the relevant UK scientists and organisations like the BIC climate change programme.

What is clear is that we must act sooner rather than later. Climate change is a global phenomenon and whether Jersey emits carbon or not, we will be exposed to its effects and costs. The greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere have already committed us to a certain amount of climate change.

As the Stern Review has shown, the longer we leave addressing climate change, the more it will cost. The economic costs of reducing greenhouse gases to avoid the worst of climate change is far less (about 1% of global GDP) compared to the costs and risks of climate cost (about 5-20% of global GDP)

5. If Jersey has already achieved UK levels of carbon reduction what is the point of Jersey becoming a signatory to Kyoto ?

Jersey is committed to showing the world that economic and environmental success can work together. We have already achieved substantial reductions in carbon emissions outside of the Kyoto framework. By finally ratifying alongside 160 other countries, we are showing the world that we take our global responsibilities seriously and intend to be examples of best practice not only in the financial domain but also in environmental matters.