

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY C.S. ALVES OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2018**

Question

What plans, if any, does the Minister have for encouraging the use of ground-based photovoltaic (PV) arrays on brown field sites?

Answer

I'm keen to promote the use of renewable energy, including ground-based photovoltaic systems, to support Jersey's Energy Plan and our aim of secure, affordable and sustainable energy.

While we don't currently have any specific policies to encourage PV arrays on particular types of sites, a number of Energy Plan workstreams are being progressed to encourage the uptake of renewable energy.

The Energy Plan – the context for the uptake of renewable energy in Jersey

Pathway 2015: An Energy Plan for Jersey, agreed by the States Assembly in May 2014, outlines a goal of sustainable, affordable and secure energy for the Island. Chapter 4 of the Energy Plan outlines our actions around renewable energy both at the Micro (or domestic/household level) or the utility scale which includes commercial/community scale or utility scale generation (e.g. marine energy such as wind or tidal power or onshore power generation such as ground based solar).

The spatial planning framework for ground based solar PV

The Island Plan, which has been approved by the States, provides the framework against which any planning applications to install PV arrays would be assessed on any site. These support the delivery of the Energy Plan whilst seeking to ensure that the environmental impact of any development proposals are properly assessed.

The key Island Plan policy is Policy NR6: **Proposals for on-shore renewable energy production as follows:**

Proposals for on-shore renewable energy production will be encouraged where they have produced an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the Planning and Building (Environmental Impact) (Jersey) Order 2006 that demonstrates inter alia:

1. *detailed engagement with all stakeholders;*
2. *that there will not be an unacceptable impact on features of ecological, archaeological or historic importance;*
3. *there will not be an unacceptable visual impact;*
4. *there will not be an unacceptable impact on the character of the immediate and wider landscape;*
5. *there will not be an unreasonable impact on neighbouring uses and the local environment by reason of noise, odour, pollution (air, water and soil), visual intrusion or other amenity consideration both during construction, operation and decommissioning;*
6. *It will not affect the safe operation of shipping and / or Jersey Airport;*

7. *there will not be any unacceptable impacts as a consequence of any associated infrastructure required to service the site, such as grid connections; and*
8. *an appropriate monitoring programme specific to the design, scale and type; and,*
9. *acceptable restoration and maintenance proposals.*

The impact of P.88/2018 on renewable energy policy

Proposition P.88/2018 was adopted by the States Assembly earlier this year. It has initiated several work streams that work in parallel to the Energy Plan objectives and will require Government to further consolidate its' renewable energy policy and may ultimately bring forward for agreement proposals that impact future proposals for ground-based solar PV arrays. The P88 work streams include the following relevant components:

- **An independent assessment of Jersey Electricity's proposed stand by charge.**
This charge is intended to apply to energy generators who rely on the grid for 'back up electricity. Given that stand by charges only apply if the generator relies on back –up electricity from the grid, the implications of this part of the proposition do not necessarily affect ground based solar PV generators. For example, in the recent call for interest by Jersey Electricity for ground based installations, the model is one of direct export of electricity generation to the grid in which circumstance stand-by charges (and any associated new policy interventions) would not apply. The report on the review of stand by charges is due to be made public in Q3 2018.
- **An assessment of the impact of a stand-by charge on the uptake of renewable energy**
Once the appropriateness of the stand-by charge is assessed, phase two of work will follow whereby the impact of this cost to renewable energy generators will be assessed in the context of how this impacts the overall uptake of renewable energy in Jersey. Given that the Energy Plan aims to support the uptake of renewable energy in the context of sustainability, affordability and affordability, a requirement may thus be highlighted for Government to make further policy decisions to support the uptake of renewable energy. This phase of work will follow the publication of the stand-by charge report in Q3 2018 and will extend into 2019 depending on the scale of the work identified
- **A review of the Electricity Law**
The Minister for Environment in his position as Chair of the Energy Executive has made a commitment to a review of the 1937 Electricity Law to ensure it is fit for purpose and future-proofs the island's energy aspirations now and as new technology, storage and distribution systems become commercially available.

It is recognised that such a review will require carefully scoping, planning and is a significant piece of work that will require a multi-departmental approach defined by a scope and work plan agreed by all the relevant Ministers. The expectation is that this work will begin later in 2018 and extend into 2019. This a substantial piece of work that touches many areas and whose impacts must be carefully considered, quantified and consulted upon before any final decisions are bought before the States Assembly.