

20.11.30

**9 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for the Environment regarding landfill space (OQ.351/2020):**

Will the Minister advise how long it is estimated that current landfill space in Jersey can be used and whether any other sites are being investigated; and, if so, will he state which sites are under consideration and what is being done to reduce waste and to enable a sustainable approach to waste management?

**Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade (The Minister for the Environment):**

Our solid waste strategy adopted in 2005 seeks to reduce and recycle inert non-combustible waste and the current Island Plan already seeks to ensure that waste site management plans are required as part of planning applications when development generates waste material. It also encourages the reuse of existing buildings and requires justifications where structures are proposed to be demolished. This is a matter I want reinforced and give greater emphasis in the new plan when it comes. But it is encouraging at the moment that the rate of recycling of aggregates compares favourably with other places and we recycle about 40 per cent of this material. Now La Collette reclamation site provides a principal solid waste disposal facility. It is my understanding that at current rates of fill, the facility has less than a year's capacity but work is being undertaken to extend the short-term lifetime capacity and I think it is best for the Minister for Infrastructure who manages that site to detail that. But when La Collette is unable to receive further material, the site of La Gigoulande Quarry in St. Mary already has planning permission for the management and disposal of future solid waste arisings as part of their activity. As part of the Island Plan review, work is being undertaken to ensure that the next Island Plan can safeguard existing inert solid waste sites and that further options are identified. Those options may include emergent proposals which seek to advance the line of sea defences in response to the increased flood risk from sea level rise and wave overtopping, as was set out in the Island shoreline management plan.

**3.9.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

What consultation will be undertaken with which groups on the Island? Because I think he would agree there are many more ... the understanding of our effect on our environment is growing exponentially among the people of Jersey and around the world and in groups, and so what consultation will be undertaken before any decision is made on a use of a site?

**Deputy J.H. Young:**

Well already I think, the entire process I have described and summarised, the detail of them requires extensive public engagement and consultation at every stage. So if we start with the current issues that arise on individual sites when waste management plans are required as part of planning applications, of course those matters are a matter of publication, everybody can read the plans, they can go to the Planning Committee and make arguments and there are a number of occasions where applications have been refused because of failure to manage that waste properly or failure to have a plan. There is also the fact that where, with the refurbishment of existing buildings, plenty of planning decisions have been turned down because those structures are regarded as not sustainable. But again there is consultation, it comes from the applicant but it goes to the public and obviously evidence comes forward from groups and expert information is obtained. Planning policies, well this is the ultimate, I think. The Island Plan has a huge comprehensive public consultation route and there is expert evidence which will come in or be presented and I think they can all be gone over.

[16:15]

So I do not think there is any chance that the Deputy, if he has those fears perhaps, that somehow some new site is going to be proposed and there will not be any opportunity to have expert evidence on it, to have groups look at it, to have their views and earn a public inquiry and finally a democratic decision. After all, that decision will be within this Assembly, so I think there is just absolutely endless procedures there and it is my job to make sure they happen.

### **3.9.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister be setting fresh, more difficult targets for all sorts of solid waste in order to extend, if possible, the lifetime of the site?

### **Deputy J.H. Young:**

The question I have answered is about what used to be called “non-combustible waste”. It is solid waste that you cannot put in the Energy from Waste plant. Yes, I certainly want to see more of that material recycled. I think not many years ago we were recycling hardly any of it, now we are doing 40 per cent. There are plans afoot to enable, I understand, the cleaning and washing potentially of that material to try and increase its uptake because that is an issue where the standards of that material increase its market ability, so certainly, yes, that will be. In terms of the rest of the waste, because I think the Deputy spoke about other waste, very much so I would like to see waste reduction generally. But of course those matters, the waste management strategy, this is one of the functions that cuts across myself and the Minister for Infrastructure. The Minister for Infrastructure runs the E.f.W. (Energy from Waste) Plant, runs all the operational side. I believe my colleague Minister wants to see that and I shall make sure in every way that we can do it within the Planning Law and what tools I have got under waste management, then we can achieve an improved management of waste because I do not think we can carry on with the current generation as it is.

### **3.9.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

The Minister mentioned targets there; what carrots or sticks does he have in mind in order to make sure that higher targets for recycling are being met or will be met?

### **Deputy J.H. Young:**

Well, I am not too sure I have any carrots because you know the amount of environmental budgets that exist. One scrapes the barrel for every penny that we can to get essential work done, such as the investment in the past in our environment which I am determined to put right. But there are sticks because if, in the new Island Plan, we have tighter policies and we have tighter targets of recycling the material or on criteria for waste management and so on, yes, that is a stick. Because in a nutshell, if you do not comply, you will not be getting consent, so, yes, there is a stick there. In terms of bigger carrots, I very much look forward to the States approving a waste management strategy which does not just cover solid inert waste, like I have covered in my answer, but in every aspect of waste, including the stuff we burn, and I think there are things we can do there. The Deputy will know that Guernsey successfully introduced the charge for that material and as a result dramatically reduced the amount of its domestic waste arisings. Those opportunities are available in terms of our long-term strategies.

### **3.9.4 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:**

In the Minister’s answer it is clear that La Collette will be full before the new Island Plan is agreed and it may be, I hope he would agree, that La Gigoulande Quarry needs to be revisited as an inert waste dump. But the question to him is this: would he agree with me that there is an utmost

urgency to look at the recycling of aggregates to produce sand which would have 2 effects: (1) would reduce the amount of inert waste going into La Collette and (2) would be to reduce the amount of sand needed to come out of the sandpits at St. Peter?

**Deputy J.H. Young:**

Yes, I think there is a very complicated set of issues there which I will try and sum up. The Deputy will know that the matter of the sand quarry in St. Ouen's Bay is a matter that has been actively considered within the mineral strategy. One of the positions that we know at the moment is it is possible to use, to generate sand, if you like, from the quarry operations. But the figures I have is that is only responsible for about 50 per cent of our current demand and that the other 50 per cent would have to come from importation of sand, and I am advised in principle that the Ports of Jersey can do that. So all those issues, they are all in the strategy which has pretty well come to a head, will be the genus of the new policies in the Island Plan. But, sorry, I cannot give total definitive answers at the moment on all those issues because these issues are so highly complicated. Perhaps if the Deputy wants to ask a supplementary I can perhaps be a little bit more focused but it is pretty difficult to do so at the moment.

**3.9.5 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

On a slightly different subject, could I ask the Minister whether he will resist any further super fill at La Collette other than that which is permitted at the moment?

**Deputy J.H. Young:**

My feeling, and I have not looked at this in detail, I think that would be a matter, if the Minister for Infrastructure proposes that, that would have to come forward to the regulator, which I think is myself. My feeling at the moment is there would have to be really good reasons to do that. Past records of us doing that in previous sites, on the West of Albert, for example, were pretty unsuccessful I think. I cannot give a guarantee that that will not happen. It certainly would have to be investigated as to whether there would have to be no other alternative. But there is not any question that, while we continue to generate this waste in the long run, we either have to find (a) a route for its disposal or (b) increase its recycling.

**3.9.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

In the wider issue of waste, the incinerator is not at capacity. What is the Minister's view on the incinerator and in particular in reference to our commitment on reducing emissions?

**Deputy J.H. Young:**

This is where we are betwixt and between, there are 2 arguments here. Obviously I was not in the States as an elected Member when the decision to have an Energy from Waste plant was introduced and, of course, at the time there were a lot of opponents of it. But what we do get, we do get electricity as a gain and so it is viewed as a recovery plant as opposed to a disposal but nonetheless I think if one looks at other societies, we look at our sister Island again, Guernsey, who chose not to do so and instead introduced the kind of systems to reduce their waste, they have managed to do it. So, at some point I think, we have got that plant now, I am told it will be made more efficient if we could have additional waste. Am I really keen in bringing in loads of waste from outside and trying to set up in a new external business? No, I am not, but if anybody proposed that, or proposed by somebody else because it would not be me, they would have to go through all sorts of regulatory hoops, I can assure the Deputy of that.