

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 12th APRIL 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 19th APRIL 2021**

Question

What alternatives to carbon offset schemes have been investigated to achieve the goal of a carbon neutral Island by 2030, as agreed to by the States Assembly?

Answer

The Carbon Neutral Strategy (CNS) as agreed by the States in (P.127/2019¹) has five defining principles.

Principle 2 of the CNS defines carbon neutrality as ‘balancing the scope 1 and 2 emissions we produce against any activity that captures, absorbs or reduces global emissions so that they are equal.’

The primary route to carbon neutrality is reducing our own scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions through reduction policies. This will remain the focus of government and we have done extensive work to enumerate these as scenarios and the role they could play in reaching carbon neutrality.

1. Carbon reduction policies

70% of Jersey’s emissions come from heating and transport. In developing the CNS, work was commissioned to explore the policies that could be adopted in Jersey and enumerate their impact on emissions and their likely costs and benefits.

Chapter 5 of the CNS illustrates a **possible range** of policy scenarios that would deliver against the aim for Jersey to be carbon neutral by 2030, with a focus on achieving net zero in the road transport and heating sectors.

For example, in the transport sector, initiatives investigated include:

- facilitating the uptake of electric vehicles by escalating existing fuel taxes to discourage the use of petrol and diesel vehicles and providing financial incentive(s) for the purchase of EVs, either in the form of a purchase grant, and/or in the form of a scrappage payment for owners of fossil fuel vehicles
- imposing a ban on the registration of new or second-hand petrol and diesel vehicles, so that they are gradually replaced by EVs over time
- facilitating the use of second-generation biodiesel (HVO) for all diesel vehicles, subject to further technical due diligence of the feasibility of such a transition in Jersey. This could involve fuel taxation concessions for HVO

Examples considered in the heating sector include:

- facilitating the replacement of oil and LPG41 heating systems in both domestic and commercial properties with electric heating systems
- upgrading the insulation of the domestic housing stock constructed prior to the 2001 Building Bye Laws which introduced energy efficiency requirements.

¹ [https://statesassembly.gov.je/assemblypropositions/2019/p.127-2019\(re-issue\).pdf](https://statesassembly.gov.je/assemblypropositions/2019/p.127-2019(re-issue).pdf)

This work did not recommend solutions but provided evidence on carbon reduction policies for consideration by a citizens' assembly (see below).

A key finding in the CNS was that there will likely be emissions that cannot be abated at the time of neutrality. This particularly true if the target date is 2030 where we do not see a scenario of full decarbonisation no matter how aggressive and successful our carbon reduction policies are. For example, air and sea travel is highly unlikely to be decarbonised by 2030. Similarly, it is extremely ambitious to assume our public transport system will be so improved as to replace all personal vehicle movements or that all the remaining vehicles have transitioned to low carbon alternatives like electricity, no matter how desirable that might be.

2. Carbon offsets

The above being the case, in order to fulfil the agreed definition of carbon neutrality, we will need to abate any unavoidable residual carbon emissions by using 'offsets'. Offsets are a certified way of quantifying activity carried out globally that captures, absorbs, or reduces global emissions.

Principle 3 of the CNS relates directly to offsets (extract below). Please refer to the text below and note **'offsets on their own are not a route to carbon neutral and should only be used where they are accompanied by robust and ambitious measures to reduce emissions'**.

3.3 Principle 3

We will require high standards in the use of carbon offsetting

- A. It is appropriate to use carbon offsetting where emissions cannot be abated, but offsets on their own are not a route to carbon neutral and should only be used where they are accompanied by a robust and ambitious measures to reduce emissions.
- B. As a responsible and ambitious jurisdiction any offset arrangements that Jersey enters into will be of the highest recognised standards.

The work of the citizens assembly and the production of a carbon neutral roadmap

Chapter 4 of the CNS laid out a people-powered approach to tackling the climate emergency. This included a community engagement programme (ran from Feb to mid-March 2021) and a citizens' assembly which is currently underway (running between mid-March and mid-May).

'A citizens' assembly will; be convened that will:

- be tasked to respond to the question "How should we work together to become carbon neutral?";
- and to produce a report including recommendations, that will be shared with the States Assembly and the Government.

Pg. 39 of the CNS outlines that the citizens' assembly should consider:

- the implications and trade-offs of a range of scenarios for achieving carbon neutrality and
- when and how a full transition to zero (or almost zero) emissions in key sectors might be achieved.

This includes considering alternative deadlines for carbon neutrality, and for zero carbon, that might fall before or after 2030'.

The recommendations from the citizens' assembly will be used to develop a Carbon Neutral Roadmap containing the detailed policy for reaching carbon neutrality. This will be lodged States Assembly by the end of 2021.

The exact policy recommendations made by the citizens' assembly may or may not align with those outlined in the carbon neutral strategy and detailed above. Participants of the citizens' assembly are primarily considering carbon reduction policies but have heard evidence on the potential use of offsets to reach carbon neutrality for unavoidable emissions in their deliberations. All the evidence given to the Citizens Assembly is available online at www.climateconversation.je.