

STATES OF JERSEY



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES REVIEW (S.R.1/2015): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Presented to the States on 10th June 2015
by the Minister for Planning and Environment

STATES GREFFE

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES REVIEW (S.R.1/2015):
RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

Ministerial Response to: S.R.1/2015

Review title: Environmental Policies Review

Scrutiny Panel: Environment, Housing and Technical Services

INTRODUCTION

I welcome the Environment, Housing and Technical Services Scrutiny Panel review of Environmental Policies and thank the Panel for the opportunity to comment and respond to the report findings and recommendations.

FINDINGS

	Findings	Comments
1	Progress has been made since the publication of <i>Jersey into the Millennium: A Sustainable Future</i> in the development and implementation of environmental policy and strategy. This is reflective of the significant amount of time and effort that has gone into considering and planning in respect of environmental issues in Jersey.	The Panel's comments are noted and the Minister is grateful that the significant improvement in the environmental strategy and policy framework that has developed since the <i>Jersey into the Millennium</i> report has been recognised.
2	There are a number of environmental challenges facing the Island, both at global and local levels, that need to be understood and addressed.	The Panel's comments are noted and in accordance with the Minister's own thoughts as submitted in evidence. The global scale environmental challenges (<i>inter alia</i>) were well summarised to a wide audience at the recent Enterprise Week opening session (12.05.15). Will Day, Sustainability Adviser to PwC talk addressed 'The Future of Enterprise', outlining the global megatrends that are profoundly disrupting and reshaping the economic and commercial landscape ¹ . Climate change and resource scarcity are identified as one of the 5 megatrends, and are of particular interest to me given the potential for their impacts on the Island. Importantly, the speaker

¹ <http://www.pwc.co.uk/issues/megatrends/>

	Findings	Comments
		<p>identified that with these significant challenges come opportunities. As my Department continues to understand and address these environmental challenges both locally and globally, I intend to use lessons and best practice elsewhere to maximise these opportunities. For example, we are currently working across all Departments to co-ordinate a framework for the development of a climate change adaptation plan which will also closely tie in with the Future of St. Helier master-planning work. Once in place, Jersey will be in a position to differentiate itself from other offshore centres as not only fiscally responsible, but also climate-resilient.</p>
3	<p>Although references to environmental issues may be found in the Draft Strategic Plan, insufficient allowance for such issues is made within the 4 key priorities proposed by the Council of Ministers.</p>	<p>The Panel's comments are accepted and the Minister is grateful for the amendments suggested by the Panel to the Draft Strategic Plan. Both the Minister and the Council of Ministers supported these additions that more clearly emphasized environmental issues, and ultimately these were incorporated into the agreed version of the Plan.</p>
4	<p>Sustainability and environmental matters will form a significant part of the Island Vision to be developed later in 2015.</p>	<p>As the Minister said in evidence, the Strategic Plan represented a priority action plan for the next 4 years. However, a more coherent and longer-term document should be developed to transcend political terms and provide a more strategic direction for Jersey. This document, 'The Island Vision', will more roundly present the 3 pillars of community, economy and environment, and recognise and attempt to balance potential trade-offs. Officers continue to work with the Head of Strategic Planning and the Director of Corporate Policy and the Policy Network (a group of senior policy officers from across all States Departments) in the development of the Island Vision, and is considered critical work for the policy team.</p>

	Findings	Comments
5	The development of the Sustainability Assessment Framework will assist the delivery of integrated strategic thinking to guide policy development and implementation and procurement. Further clarity is required on the principles to be embodied in the Framework: how the Framework will be structured and how it will operate.	The development of the Sustainability Assessment Framework has yet to begin in earnest, but the Minister would be pleased to share progress with the Panel at scheduled quarterly meetings.
6	To achieve the goal of sustainable integrated policy and strategic development, specific sustainability and environmental training should be delivered at all levels of the public sector.	I recognise that many organisations have sustainability objectives embedded as core values across all levels of the organisation and, in particular, these objectives are fundamental to their policy and strategy development. However, the States of Jersey is starting to embark upon this journey beginning with the eco-active States programme, the development of the Island Vision and subsequent development of the Sustainability Assessment Framework.
7	There is a significant and worrying situation in respect of nitrate levels in Jersey's water where, on occasions, levels can exceed World Health Organisation limits. This problem has arisen from the usage of agricultural fertilisers which has led to nitrate levels in water at times exceeding the limits.	The recent status assessment carried out by Departmental officers and Atkins Ltd. as part of the Water Strategy (in preparation, 2015) underlined that the nitrate in both ground and surface waters in Jersey are key challenges that need to be addressed. They also highlighted issues with other diffuse pollutants such as pesticides and phosphates that need further investigation. The high nitrate level in Jersey's surface and groundwater comes predominantly from intensive agriculture, but is also exacerbated by other population pressures, such as domestic and amenity sources of nitrogen (septic tanks or golf courses/gardens). Although average nitrate levels have reduced somewhat in both ground and surface water, there are continued concerns about episodic seasonal spikes of nitrate in the mains water supply. There is a need to introduce additional measures to address the diffuse pollution problem in Jersey, particularly from nitrate, and ensure all sources are below 50mg/l NO ₃ .

	Findings	Comments
8	Effective and sustainable soil management is of vital importance and is a matter which should be included in the vision, strategy and plans for the Island's future well-being and prosperity.	The Minister agrees that soil health is important and will ensure the Department continues to work with farmers to promote best practice in respect of soil husbandry. This matter will also be represented within the upcoming Rural Economy Strategy, and I will ensure it is appropriately included in the development of the Island Vision, as it represents a key resource for our agricultural sector.
9	By the Executive's own admission, there has been insufficient progress in delivering the Sustainable Transport Policy.	The Minister shares the Panel's concern and, whilst he does not hold direct responsibility for delivering the Sustainable Transport Policy, he offers his support to the Minister for Transport and Technical Services in ensuring that progress is made in this key area.
10	A focus on energy reduction could have considerable benefits; it could improve efficiency, productivity and deliver financial savings.	The Minister agrees with these sentiments, which are the cornerstone of Policy 1 in Pathway 2050: An Energy Plan for Jersey. Policy 1 Demand Management states 'The Minister for Planning and Environment, working with other relevant Ministers and the Energy Partnership, will develop and implement the actions and work streams that will reduce energy demand through a series of interventions across all emissions sectors according to identified targets'. Action statements 2 to 8 and 11 to 16 in the Plan propose measures to reduce both demand and emissions.
11	In respect of resource use, explicit incorporation of the principles of demand management within future financial planning could have significant benefits in terms of productivity. This would assist in the delivery of efficiency and savings and thereby have a positive economic impact. Resource use, demand management and low impact living are particularly vital in the light of current population policy that expects an ongoing increase in the Island's population.	Again the Minister concurs with the statement. Demand management is particularly important in our small Island and rising population given the negative environmental impacts of some high-demand behaviour and resource use. I will continue to explore policies that manage demand, recognising that a combination of both 'carrots' and 'sticks' is often most effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendations	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	The Draft Strategic Plan should be amended to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated within the delivery of each of the four key priorities.	Accept	Scrutiny proposed numerous amendments to the wording of the Draft Strategic Plan in the Ninth Amendment to P.27/2015, which were supported by the Council of Ministers (see published comments) and adopted by the States Assembly.	Complete
2	The Minister for Planning and Environment should pursue the development of a Sustainability Assessment Framework and report to this Panel with progress by July 2015.	Accept	The Minister is fully supportive of the development of a Sustainability Assessment Framework and has instructed his officers to support the Head of Strategic Planning and the Director of Corporate Policy in the forwarding of this work-stream. A progress report will be provided in July 2015.	Ongoing work led by the Chief Minister's Department
3	The Minister for Planning and Environment should request his Department to liaise with the Human Resources Section to ensure that specific sustainability and environmental training is delivered at all levels of the public sector and that, subsequently, there is appropriate inclusion of environmental principles in the delivery of public sector management training.	Partly accept	Staff awareness and participation in the organisation's environmental policy, commitments and behaviour change programme is a key part of the eco-active States programme to which the Corporate Management Board has committed. Information is regularly posted on MyStates and cascaded through the ECO (Environmental Cascade Officer) network across all Departments. ECOs are invited to participate in eco-active 'lunch and learn' Continuing Professional Development sessions (begun in 2015) which focus on different aspects of resource efficiency. Good resource efficiency and demand management not only has environmental benefits, but also increases productivity and lowers bottom-line costs. As such, it is a key part of the modernisation programme and consistent with Lean principles. The eco-active States programme could be further strengthened by integration into	

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			<p>staff Performance, Review and Appraisal processes (PRA), development plans and the induction process.</p> <p>Once the sustainability appraisal process has been agreed, the ECO network could form a helpful role in rolling this out to staff.</p> <p>However, ‘environmental training’ is currently limited to the eco-active programme. Any further sustainability training is not resourced within existing budgets. I am willing to open discussions with the Human Resources Section on this matter, but I suspect that any new organisation-wide initiatives will need very careful consideration and novel approaches to overcome the resourcing challenges. I would welcome the Panel’s thoughts on the matter.</p>	
4	The Minister for Planning and Environment should ensure that the prospective Water Strategy will provide a definitive explanation of how the problem of high nitrate levels in Jersey’s water will be resolved, with targets for delivering specified reductions in nitrate levels.	Accept	The Minister agrees that the level of nitrate in local waters needs to reduce. Reducing the levels of nitrate in surface and groundwater will be the priority issue in the Water Strategy (under preparation 2015). The Water Strategy will set water quality objectives and appraise and propose a range of measures to best achieve the objectives in a cost-effective way over the 5 year time period to 2020. The recent Nitrate Working Group recommendations will be incorporated into this process for assessment. Rural Economy Strategy policies (also currently in preparation) will also incentivise good practice in terms of reducing diffuse pollution from agriculture.	Consultation on the Water Strategy is expected by the end of 2015

	Recommendations	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
5	The Minister for Planning and Environment should correspond with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and ensure that the States Assembly is provided with an update by July 2015 on progress, or lack thereof, against the measures adopted in the Sustainable Transport Policy.	Accept	The Minister is eager to see progress on the aims and objectives of the Sustainable Transport Policy, especially given the reform of transport that will ultimately need to take place if we are to achieve our aspirations within the Energy Plan. The Minister will follow up with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and request that the Assembly is provided with an update of progress by July 2015.	Progress report in July 2015
6	The Minister for Planning and Environment should ensure that the principles of demand management in respect of energy and resources are explicitly incorporated within the development of the new Medium Term Financial Plan.	Accept	The Minister acknowledges that the proper use of energy and resources (i.e. demand management) is entirely consistent with positive environmental outcomes <i>and</i> makes good business sense, ultimately saving the organisation money by avoiding any waste. Indeed, Pathway 2050 sets the Public Sector challenging energy reduction targets in addition to the savings that have already been made. The eco-active States programme is committed to identifying and improving the environmental performance and resource use (energy, water, water, transport and procurement). Thus, I would argue that the principles of demand management are already agreed and embedded within the organisation. Therefore, I believe it would be duplication to explicitly incorporate them within the new MTFP.	

CONCLUSION

The Minister thanks the Panel for a constructive and helpful review, and looks to the Panel for continued support in their role as a 'critical friend' to the Department as we go forward with key pieces of work, including the Island Vision and Sustainability Appraisal work and the Water Strategy.