



4<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Connétable Mike Jackson  
Chairman  
Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel  
Scrutiny Office  
States Greffe  
Morier House  
St Helier  
JE1 1DD

Dear Chairman

Thank you for considering our views in your scrutiny of the Minister for Planning's proposal of a 3 year Bridging Plan. The fundamental question that we have tried to answer is what aspects of the current Island Plan are so outdated they cannot wait for an extra 18 months for a new 10 year Plan. We further believe that without a new migration policy any proposals in the Bridging Plan will be uninformed.

Of course, the topic of land use is by far the most important for our industry. In the current Plan agricultural land is reasonably protected and we are adamant that this should continue. However, Government needs to review land use regulations to ensure that land that is zoned as agricultural, is being used for farming. The 1974 Law may also need tweaking as it can be difficult for new small agri-businesses to start up. It is accepted that, with a growing population, there is a need for some first time buyer homes in the rural parishes, however we believe that each Parish should work with its farmers to ensure that where possible land of least economic value is built on. We would of course like to see the migration policy approved so that the minimum area of land is taken.

Two other issues that we would be highlighting in any new Plan, are the current position where staff quarters are supposed to be built, in the Built Up Area. Over the last few years the Jersey Farmers' Union has had to support growers in Planning appeals to object to this policy. In all cases the applicant has won their case so the policy is an unnecessary and costly hurdle.

There is also, we believe, a need to look at the use of older buildings on farms. Just this week the Head of Visit Jersey suggested it should be made easier for farmers to convert old buildings into self-catering. It is also perhaps time to review the use of "old" agricultural buildings generally. Many buildings over 30 or 40 years old are no longer fit for use in 21<sup>st</sup>

century farming. There perhaps should be opportunities for growers to subsidise themselves by being able to let these buildings.

The final point which we wish to make is urgent because it concerns renewable energy, where the key issues will be:

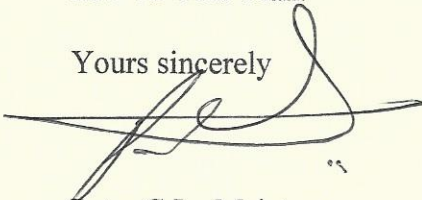
- sustainable development meeting the needs of the community
- balancing economic needs
- balancing environmental needs

Our thoughts are that the policy written must be suitably enabled by the regulatory departments and that Government must implement the regulations in a pragmatic manner. There appears to be a direct conflict between what is being verbally encouraged and what actually then emerges as tangible actions.

In our view, this is discouraging local expertise, industry disruptors, pioneers and investors to develop energy solutions in line with the policy due to the high risk, high entry costs to satisfy Government regulatory process and ultimately the Island may take a further 10 to 15 years to develop these essential projects which we need yesterday. These projects bring employment, training and development opportunities for our future engineers, as well as real local economical growth which naturally occurs alongside this.

In summary, all the points raised above need fairly urgent action. If, however, they can be dealt with by Ministerial decision or in the case of re-zoned land, a Proposition to the States, it might be prudent to forget the Bridging Plan and proceed, albeit behind schedule, with a new 10 Year Plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter C Le Maistre', written over a horizontal line.

Peter C Le Maistre  
**President**