

Written Submission 2.3

Mr Dennis Nursey

Reference: Environmental, Housing and Technical Services Scrutiny Panel – Public Call for Evidence – Environmental Policies

Submission

Subject: - Global warming and rising sea levels.

Background: - The Environmental Department invited policy advisors from the town and country planning association to report on the effects of global warming on Jersey sea water levels. They reported that sea water levels would rise by at least two metres in the next hundred years and that Jersey should start sea defence measures without delay.

Comment: - In the current climate it may be politically tempting to stall any action in the belief that rising sea levels are not an immediate problem, so it is important to emphasise that it is a present problem that becomes greater every year.

To relate the problem to the reality of island life, in fifty years' time (i.e. when present babies still have fifteen years to wait for retirement, and some are still paying mortgages on their property) sea levels will have risen by at least one metre (3ft 3 inches).

Currently there are about 50 high tides during a year when sea levels reach 11.5 metres (similar to the tides seen on the weekend of the 20th February this year). In 50 years' time there will be about 225 tides that reach or exceed these levels, of which at least 50 will be one meter higher than the recent 2015 high tides.

Many parts of Jersey have original sand dunes behind which communities have developed on land that is considerably below high tide level. For example, Gorey Village adjacent to the green; if the sea level rises about half a metre the sea will cross the road by the slipway and flood a vast area of housing. The sea already laps onto the road on Gorey pier, so a small rise will flood all the properties on the pier. Beaumont will, of course, suffer more frequent and deeper flooding.

Other obvious areas are La Mare, Harve de Pas, Commercial Buildings, The Esplanade, Victoria Avenue and Rozel.

What further actions should we be taking?

Has the environmental department been instructed to revise the Island Plan that schedules for development areas that will be prone to flooding as a result of rising sea levels?

How should environmental policy influence the strategic plan?

Have the States established a joint departments working party on sea defences and how to finance the enormous costs that will be incurred?

'Blue Sky thinking'

The solutions to the various problems will need the consideration (and in many cases the rejection) of imaginative ideas. For example the resurrection of the Noirmont to La Collette barrage with electricity generating potential.

The nature of the south east coast will change with the variations of sea levels so the protection of the status quo will become impossible. Perhaps the defensive sea barrier should be built beyond the present shoreline thereby creating potential building land to produce revenue.