



## **Jersey in Transition submission to Scrutiny Office**

### **Preamble – Global issues, Jersey's place and direction**

Although many of these issues are mostly kept out of the mainstream political and economic debate, it is clear to many people that we are in a time of mounting crisis. There are many scientific and academic references for each of the items in the following list, which for brevity are not included here. For further details on any of them, the reader can use mainstream online resources such as the Google Scholar search engine, or visit the relevant Wikipedia articles and pay particular attention to the links provided in the 'References' section under the Wikipedia article text.

- **Peak oil**, the point in time when the maximum rate of extraction of petroleum is reached, after which the rate of production is expected to enter terminal decline; the point at which oil becomes increasingly uneconomic to extract as 'easy' sources dwindle and increasing amounts of energy and expense are necessary to find and extract new sources. This leads to the real cost of oil steadily increasing, causing all aspects of civilisation based on it to become increasingly uneconomic. Growth economics have always been based on an ever-increasing supply of fuel such as oil.
- **Climate change**, the observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system and its related effects, including rising sea levels. Climate change is being taken very seriously by military and civil planners, and by governments around the world.
- **Species extinction**: The Earth is currently in the early stages of a human-caused mass extinction, in which up to 20% of all living populations could become extinct within 30 years. The current rate of global species extinctions is estimated as being 100 to 1000 times higher than 'background' rates, while future rates are likely to be 10,000 times higher.
- **Fresh water**. Many areas of the world are experiencing stress on water availability, and it is expected that this situation will continue to get worse. A shortage of clean fresh water is detrimental to the human population, affecting everything from sanitation to health, from the economy to the production of food. Jersey's water supply currently does not meet EU requirements in regard to nitrate pollution.
- **Food security**. In 2009, the World Summit on Food Security stated that “the four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization, and stability”. As an island, Jersey is currently extremely dependent on external suppliers, commercial transport and supply networks, and almost daily importation, for access to food. The local population are becoming almost completely de-skilled in their ability to produce, to process, and even to prepare and cook fresh local foods.
- The continuing **acidification of the oceans** due to atmospheric pollution, and its further

pollution by discarded plastic and by other man-made and industrially extracted chemical pollutants, is, and will continue to be, highly detrimental to the health of the marine environment, upon which an island community such as Jersey's is always dependent.

- **Mental and physical health.** As the island's economy continues to require cuts in public services of all kinds, it is very worrying that current 'health' policies seem actually still to revolve around pharmaceutical provision for widespread public *illness*. We worry that these provisions are likely to continue to fail increasing proportions of the island's population. There are many ways that reducing stress at work, increasing healthy outdoor exercise, and building stronger local community can help with improving the mental and physical *health* of many in the population.
- **Financial instability.** Despite continuing efforts to diversify the island's economic base, and to encourage growth in the 'real' economy, Jersey's employment base and economic structure is still heavily dependent on the offshore financial services industry. There are many long-term indications that, with peak oil, climate change, worldwide political change, and other major disruptions, the long-term future stability, let alone growth, of offshore financial services may not be sustained. Economists agree that a raft of industries provides economic resilience; the island is vulnerable as it stands with offshore finance as its one main industry.
- **Global political instability.** In the light of the planet's physical limits to continued economic growth it is hard to see the effects of the Great Recession of 2008-09 either as finished and in the past, or as an isolated event from which a complete recovery is even possible. The after-effects of that economic crisis can be seen in a context that includes continuing wars and unrest; increasing wealth inequality and its effects on the dispossessed including migrants and refugees; and resource depletion, shortage and suffering due overexploitation, misappropriation, or large scale pollution of natural resources. Once again, having such a dependence on offshore finance is a critical vulnerability in the island, implying as it does such a paucity of other skills and capacities in the island, including food sovereignty.
- **A duty of care** to the interests and to the rights of young people today and to future generations. It is highly likely that in the medium and longer term future, people will grow up to find that they live in a catastrophically depleted biosphere, on a catastrophically depleted planet, and that they will demand and require redress from those who oversaw the destruction, especially those who did so knowingly and without due regard for future generations.
- **Soil degradation,** depletion, run-off, flooding and erosion. The composition and compaction of soil are major factors in determining the erosivity due to rainfall, and the ability of surface water to percolate down into the aquifer below. Soils containing higher levels of organic materials are more resistant to erosion because organic materials form soil colloids that create a stronger, more stable soil structure. Jersey's soils are increasingly in a very poor state due to their lack of healthy organic food-webs. They are therefore increasingly dependent on the regular addition of expensive, imported agrochemicals to

provide artificial fertility and to mimic disease resistance. They are also increasingly susceptible to erosion and soil run-off, and soil is essentially a vital non-renewable resource lying upon the infertile bedrock of the island. Local soils are also increasingly susceptible to surface flooding, which encourages the run-off and loss of the fresh water that would otherwise replenish our freshwater aquifer.

## 1. Agriculture

It has been clear from the local news that Jersey is losing farming businesses at the moment. There has been a distinctive move away from growing food for local consumption and towards the growth of cash crops for export. It seems to us that this represents an irresponsible loss of local food sovereignty and a worrying loss of control of the vital matter of food security for the island's population.

To us, the future is in

- Organic, permaculture and community-supported growing
- Smaller holdings, run by and for local people with an inherent interest in the island's future
- Young people working on the land – which has implications for Highlands College and other aspects of local education
- Capturing local skills, knowledge and know-how, from older generations who remember when all farming was small, local, mixed and organic, and when everyone depended on it
- Animals on smaller farms – pigs, cows, horses, chickens, ducks, etc...

Soil is capable of carbon sequestration on a large scale, and there is a requirement to reduce atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, as set out in the Future Energy Policy. It is possible to monitor and to set targets for the carbon content in agricultural fields, which obviously improves significantly due to natural and organic farming methods. Maybe such monitoring could be funded through corporate social responsibility funds?

## 2. Transport

The major problem with transport in the island lies in the sheer volume of private car traffic on the roads at any one time. Secondary to this is the associated problem of providing car parking space, wherever people live and especially all over town, which is very expensive when built above or below ground level, and is a wasteful use of valuable land when built on the surface.

In response to these issues, we would like to see:

- Completely re-planned and diversified bus routes all over the island. The existing bus routes are based on a plan and a vision that essentially has not changed in 50 years.
- Many new routes should be created, that do not all start and stop in town.
- Minibuses should be introduced to service many of the new routes, especially in off-peak

times

- Many of the new minibuses and buses that will be required should be electric powered
- The goal of the new bus plan should be that most people should be able to turn up at a bus stop and expect a bus within 5 minutes or less. (As on the London Underground, where the trains do run to a timetable, but most travelling passengers have no need to know what it is: they just turn up on a platform and a train usually appears in 2-3 minutes.)
- Fares should be clearly in the passengers' favour, compared to the cost of running a car and paying car parking for it. Perhaps 50p per trip anywhere in the island to begin with.
- Clearly, a plan like this will require investment and temporary subsidy to increase usage. This should be seen, and publicised, as an investment in a much more sustainable future for the island. Some of it can be reallocated from the present money spent on, and planned for, road maintenance and car park building (both public and private).
- Clearly there will be a backlash from the island's extensive motor industry, which presumably represents a powerful and moneyed lobby as well. This should be foreseen and allowed for.
- Research should be put into the latest advances and possibilities in mobile electronics and computerised flexible bus routing. It must be possible for someone at a little-used bus stop to use mobile technology to inform a nearby, en-route, bus driver of their presence and to request a pick-up, and for the driver to be notified and have their route modified in real time.
- Bicycles. There need to be more bicycle paths, lanes and routes, as well as secure and well designed bike stands at all major population points
- Bike riding has been shown to lead to major improvements in public health and fitness, and so to commensurate savings in national health provision
- 'Boris' bikes. Credit card controlled, short-term hire bikes would allow people to get off a bus and complete their journey without having to bring their own bicycle all the way from home. Low charges for use of a few hours, with severe penalties for missing, lost or damaged bikes, would make the system self-policing and sustainable
- Advanced stop-lines for bicycles at road junctions allow cyclists to make safer and faster progress in traffic. Private-car motorists might find having cyclists in front of them frustrating, but once sat on a bus and engrossed in a book, a conversation, or other personal entertainment, they will hardly notice
- Many more police officers on bikes. This is more efficient in many ways, puts the officers – paid and honorary – into closer contact with the public, and sets a very good example and role model
- Pedestrianisation, traffic calming, and the introduction of 'shared space' on most of the roads inside St Helier's ring road. Some existing roads can be turned into 'linear parks'.

### 3. Housing

No more green land, including farmland, woodland, heath and so on, should be rezoned for anything other than agricultural, horticultural, arboricultural, wildlife or leisure use. This, of course, implies that the human population of the island should not be allowed to continue to increase indefinitely.

- Agricultural buildings should be allowed on agricultural or horticultural land, but their existence should not, under any circumstances be taken as a stepping-stone towards developing the land for general-purpose housing.
- Housing development should be allowed only in town or upon existing built up land.
- Priority should be given to the conversion of all existing buildings, and of course any new ones, to very high insulation and very low energy specifications.

Often the provision of low-impact housing adjacent to agricultural and horticultural land is an important step in the development of new smallholdings and family farms. Clearly law-makers might have to distinguish carefully between a few people living in a simple, low-impact way in the corner of their permaculture garden, and someone else filling an inadequate shed with farm workers on very low wages on the corner of an industrial potato field.

### 4. Population

Financially oriented operations that already have full penetration of the island's population can only continue to grow by increasing the size of the population, and such growth benefits those who benefit from the operation's activities. On the other hand, population growth presents obvious challenges including the impacts on infrastructure, schools, housing, community facilities, hospitals, emergency services, utility services, roads, maintenance of roads, car population (already the highest in the western world), and not least on the quality of life in the island.

The kind of operations in this dilemma include the large businesses that supply the basic needs of islanders – food, water, energy, fuel, distribution, industrial and household goods etc. as well as departments and operations that supply other services like pensions, health, insurance, education, social services, and so on. Businesses have duties to their on- and off-island shareholders, and sometimes many local people are also beneficiaries.

There is always, however, a dependence on externalities. By-products can include chemical and plastic waste, degradation of the land, the shoreline and wildlife, and so on, which are then, if possible, cleaned up using taxpayers' money. Less tangible externalised costs also exist such as that increasing the working and tax-paying population today directly implies even more pensioners in the future. More housing built on green fields makes a profit for the landowner and developer, and for the businesses that will employ and supply the new householders, but it leaves us all with reduced agricultural and wildlife resources, tourist attraction, and social amenity forever afterwards.

## 5. Community

An island with a strong sense of local community, one with an infinitely complex internal network of business, social and family relationships, is far more resilient, far more supportive of individual members of the community, and far more capable of looking after itself. This form of internal networking, and the building of such interdependent relationships among neighbours and friends, costs nothing, yet it can lead to enormous savings in terms of social care, policing, mental and physical health, and in many other areas. David Cameron came into UK government talking about a 'Big Society', but cynics have found little that came of that – maybe a librarian was sacked and replaced by a volunteer worker somewhere?

In this case, we imagine that first by stabilising the island population to some extent, then by openly encouraging very local community-led activities among neighbours, steady progress could be made in this area that could pay untold dividends later. Examples could include street-parties, pick-your-own vegetable and fruit growing in public parks, and communal gardening, outdoor eating, musical and partying activities based around streets, farms, smallholdings, parish halls and community centres. If these became established, widespread and regular, the effects could be surprising.

In our experience, people are much more inclined to be involved if they understand that the event is not a money-making activity in which they are expected to put their hands in their pockets as the 'consumers', while someone else (some organisation or individual) is profiting and removing the profits, out of the common good of those present, for their own use. Rather it must be clear that the event or activity is a combined effort in community building where everyone will benefit from medium and long-term goals that represent clear benefits to everyone involved.

## 6. Energy

We would like to see renewable energy become significant in Jersey (per the document “Energy Pathway 2050”)

To this end, there are practical measures that can be put into place now.

- The introduction of zero or negative standing charges on domestic electricity, and maybe gas. (A negative standing charge is exemplified by some mobile phone contracts where the subscriber gets a certain number of texts or calls 'for free' with their contract. In this case it would be a number of units of electricity 'for free' each quarter, without a contract charge at all). This would provide a huge relief and incentive for those who have invested in low-energy high-insulation homes to make back their investments, and for everyone to continue to try to live very frugally in their energy consumption.
- Zero or negative standing charges could be combined with another price for higher, more profligate users (in a manner analogous to high earner income tax rates). In other words, there could be three prices for electricity on potentially any bill: the first  $x$  units are free, the next  $y$  units are charged at a rate similar to the current one, and any usage over and above that is charged at a higher rate, designed to discourage such high consumption. Clearly, using existing usage statistics, it would be possible to design the pricing so that it is revenue-

neutral, where the premium paid by profligate users pays for the free units that everyone is entitled to.

- Feed-in tariffs (FITs) must be introduced to encourage domestic and commercial micro-generation of electricity all over the island, on existing roofs, using solar panels and small wind generators. When one of our members asked at B&Q why the home wind turbine display had been dismantled, we were told that although dozens of local people had enquired and been told to begin the purchasing process by submitting a planning request, every single one of them had been refused permission by the authorities. This kind of non-joined-up thinking must be tackled, and renewable energy made an explicit policy and priority by the government. The high-end usage tariff mentioned above can be adjusted to finance the costs of the FIT initially, until savings in other ways are felt.

## 7. Waste and pollution

Potentially polluting imports (PPIs) are items and materials that are brought into the island, but which have the capacity to harm the local environment including terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the waters, the soil, or the air. These include farm chemicals, pharmaceuticals, building materials, fuels, oils, plastics of all kinds including plastic products, plastic packaging, plastic sheeting and so on, as well as all products containing batteries and electronic circuitry and any other items that contain toxins. We feel that businesses and States departments who propose to import such items in any quantity have a duty of care to the island and its community that they should only do so if they have thought the matter through. To this end we propose, in a way analogous to the idea of a 'risk assessment', that importers of PPIs should have to prepare documentation declaring that they have understood the risks, enumerating them, and also stating the plan they have put in place to ensure that these items will be cleaned up, contained, transported and recycled, or disposed of again off-island, at the end of their useful lives.

It would be within the powers of an overseeing body – maybe somewhere between Customs and Excise and TTS – either to refuse the importation because the importer's plan is insufficiently detailed or thought through, or to make a charge or a surcharge on behalf of the taxpayer if, for example, too much of the clean-up and recycling cost is to be left upon the public purse.

These PPI importation documents, once approved, should be made available to the public somewhere, for example via the gov.je website, so that we can all see (a) who is responsible for bringing potentially harmful goods into the island for their own purposes and profit and (b) what plans they have put in place to mitigate the harm and protect us from them.

Clearly the increased costs of creating these documents, and of paying for the cleanup where appropriate, would have to be reflected in the resale price of the goods that depend upon the PPIs in the first place, and the importers would have to calculate that on a business basis and balance their books. This is appropriate in terms of a 'polluter pays' philosophy that we completely endorse, especially as in this case the object of the exercise is actually to prevent pollution by planning for containment, clean up and recycling in advance.

This is an example of where the fact that Jersey, being an island, a 'closed system', is a distinct advantage that allows us to be in the vanguard of far-sighted and progressive thinking, in ways that currently would be more difficult for, for example, a UK or French town of similar size, where trucks and containers can get into the region by dozens of unregulated routes on any particular day.

In addition to this proposal, we endorse:

- That composting should be encouraged on every scale and across all sectors of business, including private home and garden scale, to smallholdings, parks, golf courses and farms, but also to include supermarkets, shops, restaurants and cafés that prepare and sell food, as well as office blocks and other places of work where people eat, and where they peel fruit, make teas and coffees and so on. At each such place, compost separation and collection should become commonplace, in the same way that smoking outdoors was made commonplace in recent years. Centralised municipal composting as at La Collette could handle the excess, but we expect that farmers and growers will also be keen to help with the collection of good quality compostable waste once they realise its value on their land.
- Green waste, cardboard, all grades of plastic, metals, batteries, electronics and so on should be collected from every household and business for suitable recycling island-wide

## 8. Fishing

No-take zones are essential in local waters if fish stocks are to be allowed to become sustainable again. We understand how there are informal agreements between fishermen as to which of them 'owns' each part of the local seabed, but this matter needs to be tackled, and since it appears that they have been incapable, or have lacked the will, to sort out this 'ownership' issue among themselves, we feel that they need to be encouraged and helped to reorganise their thinking about the local seabed, to allow for the establishment of permanent and properly enforced no-take zones for the benefit of the local marine ecosystem as a whole.

It is another example, to our thinking, of a win-win situation that offshore renewable energy plant – whether it harvests wind, wave or tidal energy – all comes with an automatic fishing exclusion zone around it. If plant is installed close enough together that the zones are contiguous, then quite a reasonable no-take zone can be established at the same time as an offshore energy facility.

## 9. Media and tourism

There are a number of ways that taking initiatives in the ways described above can be used to boost the international image of Jersey, as well as hopefully to dilute the adverse media images that have developed recently due to the ongoing historic abuse scandals, and due to people's perceptions of the purpose and nature of an offshore tax island.

Tourists would be attracted to see an island that is taking significant steps with regard to organic growing, food security, sustainable transport policies and so on. There are a variety of high profile gardening, countryside, nature and cookery programs on national television and radio. If significant initiatives were taking place in Jersey, it would be easy to encourage these program makers to visit

the island and produce editions of their series that focus on Jersey's real problems, progress and successes. Such coverage by prime time personalities would be invaluable in boosting Jersey's tourism profile. 'Jersey Organic Island' could become a brand, and a buzz-word for Jersey's forward-thinking and diverse aspirations.

## 10. Ethical investment and divestment

Many individuals, bodies and organisations around the world are asking about, and rethinking their position on, the use that funds are put to by investors on their behalf. Partly this is good business sense: what is the sense in investing in long-term oil and gas extraction when international bodies such as the UN's IPCC have made it clear that a large proportion of the known fossil fuels reserves will have to remain under the ground: if they remain undug then there is no profit to be made; if they are dug and burned, then there will be no meaningful biosphere left within which to enjoy the profits. Similarly people take a more simply ethical view of investments that reap a profit only due to the continued suffering of others – in less developed countries, in sweatshops, under military regimes etc. Again, Jersey has an opportunity to develop a new image that is not based on greed and selfishness. First the States and local institutions should divest themselves of harmful, worthless, and unethical investments and money-making schemes, and second, the local finance industry should be encouraged – using financial carrots and sticks if that is what it takes – to offer increasing numbers and ranges of ethical investment products to local and offshore customers alike.

### Community-generated

Some of the suggestions above may be more realistic, more palatable or more thought out than others. *Jersey in Transition* (JiT) is very grateful for the opportunity to submit ideas in this way. It must be remembered that this is a community-generated response put together in about a week. JiT has over 700 members in a Facebook group, and about 300 on an email list. Individual members of JiT have contributed to this document in different ways – in person, by email, by meeting, and via social media.

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We do not face  
a choice between protecting  
our environment  
or protecting our economy.

We face  
a choice between protecting  
our economy  
by protecting our environment --  
or allowing environmental havoc  
to create economic havoc.

-Robert E. Rubin