



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel

Reducing Use of Plastics in Jersey

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Monday, 1st October 2018

Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chairman)

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence

Witnesses:

The Minister for Infrastructure

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure

Director General

Group Director, Operations and Transport

Recycling Manager

[10:02]

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chairman):

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. I will start off by asking everyone on the table to just announce their names for the sake of the record. I will start off myself: Constable Mike Jackson, Chairman.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Deputy Kirsten Morel, panel member.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

Constable John Le Maistre, Vice Chairman.

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Hugh Raymond, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.

Recycling Manager:

Emma Richardson-Calladine, Recycling Manager.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Kevin Lewis, Minister for Infrastructure.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, Group Director for Operations and Transport.

Director General:

John Rogers, Director General for Growth, Housing and Environment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you very much. We have scrutiny officers present and the recording expert in the corner there making sure the system works. Thank you very much. I am going to kick off, ladies and gentlemen, by just whizzing through the terms of reference that this particular panel is using for the reducing use of plastics in Jersey subject. One is just to consider what work the Department of the Environment is currently undertaking to help reduce the use of plastics in Jersey and to address the threat they pose to pollution for the environment and its wildlife; (2) to determine whether a suitable cost-benefit analysis has been taken by the Department of the Environment in relation to the cost of public awareness initiatives campaigns and any resulting benefits this has in reducing plastic waste; (3) to consider the role that business can play in the reduction of plastics and the benefits to the environment that this could bring; (4) to consider Jersey's importation of plastic materials and the potential limitations and/or challenges this may pose for Jersey's ability to significantly reduce plastic waste; (5) to assess whether recycling initiatives in Jersey are fit for purpose, specifically plastics, and to identify what improvements, if any, can be made and what other initiatives could be introduced; (6) to explore how plastic waste is treated and assess what environmental benefit this has; and lastly (7) to explore what other countries practise in terms of reducing or eliminating use of plastics and identify what lessons Jersey could learn from this. So, I am going to kick off our questions, and excuse me if I have my phone on the table, it is really just for the stopwatch to keep some sort of control over our limited time. In July this year in response to an oral question in the States, the Minister for Environment acknowledged the need for greater collaboration between both

your departments regarding waste management. Can you advise whether this collaboration is happening and, if not, why not?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Good morning, Chairman. Sorry, collaboration with ...?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

With Environment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. We have a very good working relationship with Environment now, which has greatly improved. I do not know, Emma, would you like to come back ...

Director General:

Well, is it worth me just mentioning with my new role the environment team and the transport and op team are in the same department now, so collaboration is our middle word that we use for everything.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a greater synergy now with the departments.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think semantics have been a bit difficult for the public generally with the recent changes, so perhaps that will evolve as time goes on. Perhaps you can just give examples of where you are working together, particularly with regard to plastic waste.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are working directly with the regulator now, which is very useful because we get direct input into exactly what we are doing.

Recycling Manager:

Yes, I can expand on that, certainly. Notably with the environment teams, we are working notably with the Eco Active team and, as the Minister has said, with the regulation team. So we are and have been for a number of years since the Eco Active programme started part of that core group as waste is an element of Eco Active. So, we are working with the environment team that manage the Eco Active programme on advising and sharing best practice, with other States departments as part of the Eco Active States programme, and then with the wider community and with businesses as well, working in collaboration. A couple of examples are we have delivered some joint talks at the

Jersey library and held some joint workshops with the business community. We are also working closely and joint working on the plastic-free Jersey programme. So, when that was launched earlier this year, businesses have ... sorry, Ministers of both departments, as they were then, were outward in their support of launching that programme to achieve plastic-free Jersey status. Officers from both departments are part of that plastic-free Jersey sort of core committee and working with the wider community on delivering that programme.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask for clarification? You say working with the regulator. Who is the regulator?

Recycling Manager:

Yes. So, the final point was working with notably the waste regulator from the Environment Department with our waste and recycling hats on. That is ensuring compliance not only that our sites are governed and our waste management licences but also to ensure best practice and to focus on common issues. Fly tipping at our mini recycling centres is a hot topic at the moment. So we have a number of mini recycling centres around the Island which we refer to as “bring banks”. Some of those have very frequent fly-tipping occurrences. We are meeting with the regulation team to work together to try and move forward any prosecutions. An example of this is looking at what signage we need on those mini recycling centres and display of that signage so that if we did find somebody actively fly tipping we are all on the same page trying to gather as much evidence and support. So if a photograph was taken of somebody fly tipping but there is a “no fly tipping” sign in the background, which was a recent occurrence, even if there potentially was a language barrier, if those signs have the right visuals on them, then we can work with that team to ensure that that member of the public knew that that was not the appropriate activity for that site.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Carrying on with fly tipping and littering, how many convictions have there been for people fly tipping?

Recycling Manager:

Unfortunately, I do not know that off the top of my head because that is not an area that I manage. Very few if that is a good enough answer.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is down to regulation, is it not?

Recycling Manager:

I know finding the right evidence and having the right proof to move that forward to a conviction is extremely difficult. Also, incidents that are potential pollution incidents or of a hazardous nature would be prioritised rather than the general frequent - almost every day unfortunately - occurrences. One of the most recent and horrible ones we had was children's party waste dumped in one of our bins, but it was old food waste. It was awful and very unpleasant for our contractor to be cleaning up and trying to separate out from the recyclables. So instances like that, although hugely unpleasant, would be sort of ... instances of paint pots or oils left on site would be prioritised above that.

The Connétable of Grouville:

A conviction would help encourage other people not to be dropping litter or fly tipping.

Director General:

I think there is some in train. They are in the legal process.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think there are a few being pursued at the moment and there is absolutely no excuse. We have a wonderful recycling facility now at La Collette that everything is signposted, from woods, metals, plastics, even paint pots and suchlike, so there is no excuse for fly tipping whatsoever. There is no fee involved so I do not know why people do it. You are never more than 15 minutes from any point on the Island.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you work with the Environment Department about these fly-tipping incidents? Because presumably it is reported to you in the first instance?

Recycling Manager:

Absolutely. The reporting chain will depend on where the incidence has happened. So with our bring banks, absolutely, as that is a service that we provide. So where our Minister said, you know, everything is collected at the house or the reuse and recycling centre at La Collette, it is important that everybody knows that. We can use potentially new signage on these mini recycling centres to communicate that and also be very visual in our signage as well. So, whether it is a picture of some paint pots and a washing machine with big crosses through it, so even if potentially you may not understand the wording underneath of saying use the free facilities at La Collette, whatever the wording may be, the visual on its own will communicate the behaviour expected at the site.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We have also done a lot of work with our Love Jersey app. So, members of the public now, if they see an incident where some waste has been fly tipped, they can take a picture of it. We automatically have the G.P.S. (Global Positioning System) point and then, you know, whichever department or parish can react to that as quickly as possible.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Which helps anybody having to clear up the mess, too, because it gives a complete G.P.S. reading to the exact metre exactly where the debris is or whatever.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Looking at the way plastic waste is treated in the Island, how much does it cost to export plastic bottles off Island to the processors in the U.K. (United Kingdom)?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we just have the tonnage, have we not? We do not give any commercial ...

Recycling Manager:

Yes, unfortunately because the tonnage of plastic bottles that we export is already in the public domain, we have taken advice that it would be commercially sensitive to tell you the price. While we are perfectly willing to share that with you privately, we are not able to put the cost into the public domain because linking that with the tonnage would be commercially sensitive and could affect further tenders as we move forward.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was just going to ask whether that cost that you do share would include the actual shipping charge as well as the commercial tender bit.

Director General:

Yes. The gate fee generally on plastic bottles is a positive number. So recycling plastic bottles particularly, because it is a very high-value product which can be used for many other applications, it tends to be a positive thing. Then it is just whether that works on the shipping. It depends on the market and various other things, but we can give you that information.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Broadly, is there a need for your department to inject finance into that process?

Recycling Manager:

What we can say is the current contract includes a financial mechanism which has a cap and collar pricing mechanism. So if the market price exceeds an agreed value for plastic bottles, then there is a profit share between our department and our chosen contractor. If the market price drops below the collar pricing, then again there is a sharing of the cost of exporting Jersey plastic bottles for recycling.

Director General:

Plastic bottles tend to be linked to oil price because it is an oil-based product. It tends to be, and also what the global market conditions are. So it is sort of beyond our control, is it not?

Recycling Manager:

It is, and what we have seen this year, there has been huge external market pricing changes because as of 1st January this year China closed its doors to importing any recyclables from the U.K. and they sort of ... their rationale was that it was adding to their pollution problem. So, lots of plastics from the U.K. were being sent to China for recycling and you may have seen lots of national newspapers having front pages and lots of stories about local councils having to either stockpile plastics that they have collected in the name of recycling or sending them to landfill or to energy recovery.

[10:15]

What we have seen in recent months - it hit the pages again in August - was this is sort of spreading now throughout Asia. So we have seen Vietnam and Malaysia revoke plastic importation licences. I think where this has had a massive impact on the cost, so less places to receive plastic means that the market price has dropped considerably, and I think what we will see in time is the U.K. will pick this up. They will be developing their infrastructure to be able to recycle a broader range of plastics on the mainland, but this will take some time and also take some time to be able to build up capacity so that their infrastructure is not limited to the surrounding catchment area but is open for the likes of Jersey to be able to be sending their plastics.

Director General:

One of the key things that we have tried to promote in our recycling strategy is to have a very high quality of recyclate. So that is why we focus on kerbside and that gives us your highest quality. In doing so, what that means is in turbulent markets the recyclers still want our products. So paper was a good example, Emma, was it not ...

Recycling Manager:

Yes.

Director General:

... where when the market bombed on that and the prices dropped to nothing, they still wanted our product so we could still export it for recycling because of the quality. Now, any sort of mixed merged stock solution has a lesser quality and then it becomes less beneficial in the marketplace, so we try and get that single source.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that you have a fluctuating market situation, do you think there is sufficient funding within the present departmental budget to accommodate that and do you anticipate having to put more funding into it?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think with lots of the different types of waste streams that we deal with it fluctuates year on year. We can always have more money to be able to develop some of our recycling. At the moment with the recycling schemes we do have sufficient budget to be able to deal with what we currently receive with regards to plastics, cardboards, and all the other materials that we recycle.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was going to save this one, but yes, also looking at the way we dispose of plastics, obviously we burn a lot in the incinerator and it gives off various gases, carbon dioxide and various dioxins. How are these mitigated or ...?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The gases ... well, that is the beauty of the Energy from Waste plant is the gas-cleaning process that it takes all the nasties out of the air before it goes into ... as you know, we share the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) chimney, but the gases are cleaned before it goes up the chimney. That is all reclaimed.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But some gases do come out. Do we know what kind of levels? Are they regularly monitored?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Do we have ...?

Director General:

We have online monitoring that we have had for the last few years. The plant performs exceptionally well and it is as good as any plant in Western Europe.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I presume that is still available publicly, is it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, that is online. It is online, plus we have just had E.U. (European Union) certification, have we not?

Director General:

Yes.

Recycling Manager:

It has just received ISO40001 so it makes sure again that E.F.W. (Energy from Waste) operates to the best environmental practices.

Director General:

CO₂ is a function of burning things and our Energy from Waste plant replacement may not be an Energy from Waste plant in the longer term but at the moment all the other gases and the issue of particularly the dioxins and the issues of a particulate are all dealt with in the plant.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

What we hope to have in the future is things like uPVC plastics, which we currently burn within the Energy from Waste plant, we would love to look at separating that in the future. Again, that would mean that we are spending less chemicals in the Energy from Waste plant and, again, would be a benefit, I think, for the Island as a whole.

The Connétable of Grouville:

One of the reasons I understand Guernsey did not send its waste here was because it did not consider that the Energy from Waste plant is as environmentally friendly as it should be. Is there any justification for them saying that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As we said, we just had E.U. certification. Even though we are not members of the E.U. we have just been certified, so it is top notch.

Director General:

No, the only difference between our plant and a plant in Scandinavia, as a more general position, is they intend to use the Energy from Waste plants for district heating, which gives you a significant overall energy balance efficiency. We do not have district heating here for a few reasons, but one, that it is a bit too warm, and the cost benefit of it really ... we really struggle to do it. It is something I would really like to have done but we have not done it so ... but all the other ... that is the only difference.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Had it been a new town development on a completely open or brand new site, we probably could have done that, but to retrofit steam pipes now would be quite horrendously expensive. I had thought of it some time ago, actually, when I was first Minister for T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services). I thought it would be great to capture all the hot water from the Energy from Waste plant, also passing by the Jersey Electricity station, taking their hot water, but now they are obviously taking most of their electricity from France. They do not self-generate locally, so they do not run their boilers up very often.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Taking you sort of down underground, if I may, it has recently been publicised that the U.K. is tackling a significant epidemic of fatbergs clogging the sewers. One of the main culprits leading to these blockages is the dreaded non-biodegradable wipes containing plastics. What is the condition of Jersey's sewage network and are we facing a similar epidemic?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we are more than happy to take you down at any time, Chairman, and show you these. It can be quite nasty. Also we get the fatbergs when people have their Sunday roast or we could have a kitchen somewhere, people have been very naughty and poured hot fat down the drain. It is liquid, it is hot, it goes straight down the drain, goes right down the system, but when it hits the sewers it cools rapidly and then solidifies again with whatever is around it. Hence the fatberg. I think Ellen might be an authority on this.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I do not know if I can claim that. We do have issues with fatbergs, obviously, within our sewers but we do have a drainage team that carries out regular maintenance. So not only are we doing regular maintenance on our pumping stations through doing jet vacuum and doing the general cleaning, we know where our hotspots are and obviously we deal with that and monitor that. We also have a compliance team within the drainage department that works closely with the hotels. So if we know that we have a particular problem area, say, for example, in St. Brelade, we do letter drops, we do education of hotels, we make sure that they have all their grease traps in and suchlike. Every year

again we try to have a campaign as well for householders to try and make sure that they are not putting their oils or sanitary things down the toilet and they are putting it in the bin. So, there is lots going on.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Just as a matter of interest, with oils what do you suggest householders do with them? How do you suggest they dispose of them?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Oils generally it is to put in the bin, so not to put it down the sink but put it into the bin.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If the refuse collectors get a lot of fat it is problematic to them because obviously once they are inside the dustbin lorry, they crush it up and that oil is going to go everywhere. So it can be problematic for them.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

But if it is small amounts that are coming from cooking and suchlike, then that is fine for the bin. If people have large amounts and quantities of oil, then they can take that down to our H.R.R.C. (Household Reuse and Recycling Centre). For big hoteliers and industrial type of waste, there is a company that goes and collects oil and, again, that gets recycled.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The average Sunday roast is not going to cause anybody any problem but ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, it is surprising, though, if every household is putting a bit of oil into the dustbin there is going to be quite a bit in a dustbin.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, but as Ellen said, if ... it is done in Bellozanne, is it not? The oil is recovered and recycled. They can be handed in there.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The plastic wipes seem to be a problem. I think generally the public do not accept or understand the problems they can cause. I am sure your staff ...

Director General:

They provide a sort of media for the fat to then grip on. Once it is cleaned up and it arrives at the sewage treatment works, whether it is through our jet vacs or ... then the screening process and the process prior to treatment takes them out and then all of that material goes to the Energy From Waste plant for incineration. So we solve it but it would be a lot easier to solve it by putting those wipes in the bin in the first place. It will save the Island a lot of money and a lot of risk in terms of flooding because the problem here is not ... the fatberg can sit there for ages and it has a certain novelty value. The papers seem to love it. **[Laughter]** It seems to be ... it gets people's attention, but the problem is it can form a lot of issues in terms of flooding and nuisance upstream.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you do any work on communication with the public of the issues that ...?

Director General:

Yes. The main work is behind the scenes with predominantly restaurants and hotels and people who have a lot of fat. Sometimes the kitchen partner changes or the chef changes and it is that level of detail where they are just not aware of the issues. So we keep a level of education going on that and we can pinpoint them quite easily.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We have leaflets and things like that and we do run a campaign for householders as well, again trying to remind them what they should not be putting down ... effectively down the pipes.

Director General:

But people seem to love the concept of fatbergs so when we find one we do lots of promotion on it **[Laughter]** and it is the most popular thing we do.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But unlike icebergs there is nothing in the least romantic about fatbergs.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Are there any plans for the department to introduce any more bins around the countryside so you can separate your waste there? If you go to a typical car park out in Gorey, you have one bin so people are putting everything in together so that has to go straight down to the Energy from Waste plant. But if you had 2 bins that they could put the plastic bottles in one and then other rubbish in the other, it would be helpful. Are there any plans to have more?

Recycling Manager:

I think we need to prioritise the accessibility and convenience of recycling. I completely agree with you that there is a need and an opportunity to be increasing the convenience of what we would call on-the-go recycling, which could be, as you said, in the parks, in convenient car parks, on beach slipways and things like that. But where our priority lies currently is increasing the accessibility of household recycling, and by this really we mean the introduction and then the maintenance of parish household recycling collections. Any surveys that we have done in the past shows that this is the one factor that is more likely to change people's behaviour and increase their likelihood and participation in recycling. The beauty of this, as you know, is that this brings recycling on to your doorstep almost. At the moment, there is an unfairness about recycling on the Island because it does depend on where you live and if you have access to private transport are huge factors in how easy it is for you to recycle. For some people who do not have a household recycling collection in their parish, do not have private transport, may not have easy access to others to rely on with transport, then it is extremely difficult. So while I totally agree that there is a need for on the go recycling, what we would like to firstly establish is a foundation of an easy access for everybody to recycle from their home, and then from there we will build on ... we are already working with lots of businesses and providing advice on an ad hoc but almost daily basis on establishing workplace recycling schemes, but we need to have all of the parishes really providing household recycling collections and then build from there. Once we can, then we have workplace recycling, household recycling, on-the-go recycling, and all of those things combined mean that recycling then becomes the norm of your day-to-day behaviour and your day-to-day routine.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Only 6 per cent of plastic is recycled at the moment I think is the figure. If half the parishes are on, why is it not higher, half the parishes are on collection of plastics?

Recycling Manager:

Yes, so it is a small amount of plastic bottles that are currently being recycled at present, but there is a lot of the Island that does not have easy access to recycling schemes. What we have also found, which we have been working on in our public engagement campaigns, is there is a lack of knowledge about what types of plastic bottles can be recycled. I think lots of people see a clear water bottle and some people think that is the only type of plastic bottles that can be recycled. So we have tried to and we will continually be engaging the public that it is all types of plastic bottles, so shampoo bottles, detergent bottles, clear, opaque. As long as it is a plastic bottle we will recycle it. But I also think that there is not almost easy access to everybody for recycling facilities.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, you see my point. If half the Island is on collection you would expect that to be higher, so there must be a lot of people in those parishes who are not recycling properly.

Recycling Manager:

Where we have looked at recycling, certainly in the more rural parishes there is a good level of participation. You would expect participation to be lower in St. Helier's scheme, as in any urban area always the participation drops. But with parish recycling you are looking at the plastic bottles that are generated within the home or, if they are used outside of the home, people are returning them to the home to be able to put them in their recycling collections. While that might work well for your very liquid bottle and your shampoo bottle, more of your drinking bottles potentially may be consumed outside of the home and so may not find their way back to the household collection. Here we would like to focus on reducing that plastic waste.

[10:30]

We will always be wanting to increase the capture rate for our recycling collections, but when we are looking at single use plastic bottles for water or other beverages, we would be looking at one of your other areas that has come up in topic, is water refill stations and encouraging the use of refillable bottles so that you are reducing that waste stream completely. Then we can work on recycling that limited waste that is generated.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will just take you back a little bit on plastic marine litter and we have seen ... I know there is ... my daughter's school is doing beach collections at the moment and the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* has, but how are you working with the industry, that is the fishing industry, on measures to incentivise the correct disposal of marine litter? Not just the fishing industry but marine users' industries?

Recycling Manager:

I have done limited work with the fishing industry. I know my colleagues in Environment and in Fisheries have done more work. So rather than our general awareness and working in collaboration with Eco Active on general waste topics, I know that certain schemes that happen in the U.K. have been providing boats with a bulk bag and incentivising them to fill that with litter and things as they are going about their business. But other than that I am unable to comment.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is principally the Environment Department?

Recycling Manager:

Yes.

Director General:

The majority of where the fishermen are based there is areas there that can dispose of their waste so it is easy access, but I think the challenge is the sea-borne litter, where it comes from. If you are putting pots and nets out and all those things, when they break they are lost and I think ... I am not sure how much of it they can get back on board but it is an issue which I think ... well, we know it is a global issue and one which is causing problems. I think that awareness ... the team keep that up but I do not think ... I would guess a lot of the waste in Jersey perhaps has not come from Jersey fishermen, it will come from a global position and ships going past, unfortunately.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just to pick up a quick one on the parish issue, Emma, that you spoke of, clearly while the Constables facilitate the kerbside collection it is down to parishioners to decide whether they want to spend the money on instigating that because there is a cost. Is the department able to get that message across to Islanders, to parishioners, that there is a cost to a kerbside collection and perhaps encourage them to go to their Constables and say: "This is what we want"? Because that will be translated into a rates bill at the end of the day.

Recycling Manager:

Yes, and yes to both parts of that, absolutely. The last scheme that we supported the implementation of was St. Brelade's and we did exactly that. The parish had their costings, which were obviously discussed at a parish assembly that was voted on, but we supported the communication of that notably on social media by being very open about the additional cost that that would have for parishioners. Certainly, when we receive enquiries, and we do on a daily basis, we do refer those people to their parish hall and ask them to contact the parish hall so that that can be logged. What happens to that information once it has been I do not know, but certainly all ... as I said, we receive enquiries about this on a daily basis. We do a lot of work on maintaining public awareness on social media and anything vaguely relevant to parish household collections we receive a flood of support.

Director General:

From our perspective, it seems illogical that doing the right thing costs more money and we have to find a mechanism of changing that. I know it is historic and I know that it is illogical that it is free to put an item of waste into an Energy from Waste plant, which we know is obviously not free because the cost of that is enormous, but then there is a cost of collecting that for recycling. I think realigning that thought process is something we have to do, but it is a ... as anybody with any political history knows, it is very challenging.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You mentioned the cost of running the plant. That is pretty much a fixed cost so if you put in another 100 tonnes of plastic through it, it would not really be that much more expensive.

Director General:

No, there are fixed and variable costs. The variable costs ... if you put 100 tonnes of hard uPVC in there, that will cost you an additional about £500 a tonne because of the acid gases it produces, how much lime we have to put in there. Yes, it depends on the waste, the sort of waste.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, but bottles, for example?

Director General:

Bottles is not so bad because it is mainly an oil-based product but it just seems ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry, you are talking about plastic bottles?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes.

Director General:

Yes, it just seems very illogical and I think we are transparent and open about all our costs, very happy to show you the costs of running an Energy from Waste plant and the costs of running recycling. Recycling is generally a better thing to do and generally cheaper but we do not seem to get that message across. It is very unfortunate that the parishes have to pay slightly more money to recycle, to set up a recycling system, than they do to put it all in the bin and take it down to the Energy from Waste plant. But we have to start moving forward into this century because if you look at the sophistication in northern Europe and Scandinavia and stuff, it is part of people's lives. People who visit here are surprised about how we do not do these things, and I think we are out of line.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

To some extent would you say that Jersey's plastic recycling scheme has in a sense kind of reached a peak without extra parish participation, if you know what I mean? We have 6 parishes on board. Can we do much more unless the other 6 ...?

Director General:

Let us let Emma answer that.

Recycling Manager:

I would agree with that because of answering the previous question about where priorities lie. I think where the ... you are not seeing huge tonnages of material being collected from parish household recycling schemes, but that has a long-term impact in regard to behaviour change and that is what we want to see. We want recycling to be the norm of everyday behaviour on the Island, and bringing it into the home, making it accessible and fair for everybody, is a brilliant first step. From that first step then we can build on to other steps. Certainly, workplace recycling, yes; on-the-go recycling that we talked about a moment ago where people are using disposable plastics and hopefully we can do more public awareness, the demand for single use plastics hopefully will reduce over time. Certainly there we can be collecting more plastic bottles, but it is the mind-set of bringing recycling as part of the norm every day, as John said, as is in lots of other places in the world. So without moving forward with that behaviour change, I think it is very difficult to move plastic recycling forward.

The Connétable of Grouville:

One of the reasons this subject has come up is because of the pollution in the sea. Which method is more likely to pollute, the recycling doorstep collection or burning from Energy from Waste?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, there will not be any sea pollution from the Energy from Waste because obviously that is incinerated. As John said, it is an oil-based product and that is a fuel in that respect. So there is no pollution from the E.F.W. (Energy from Waste).

Recycling Manager:

No, and no pollution risk from collecting plastic bottles and exporting those for recycling.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because people do make the link between having plastic and it getting into the sea but, of course, either of those 2 methods makes sure that the plastic does not enter the sea.

Recycling Manager:

Absolutely. Pollution comes mainly from litter and people doing the wrong thing with their materials at the end of their useful life. Sending them for energy recovery, so putting them in the general waste bin, putting them in one of our recycling bins, both of those are positive choices. One I would argue is more positive than the other but certainly ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

But strictly from a polluting point of view there is ...?

Recycling Manager:

No.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They do have things in other jurisdictions whose sewage systems are not up to the same standard as ours where you have lots of pollutants get literally flushed out to sea. We were discussing earlier about some of the products you get now for the bathroom with plastic microbeads, which are pretty awful things. They are washed straight into the sea and obviously consumed by fish and suchlike, which is pretty awful. There are lots of bags and whatnot get blown overboard from boats and ships and other people are not as careful as we are. Sadly, this is consumed by sea life and we have all seen the horrible pictures on Blue Planet and suchlike, which is dreadful.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was just going to ask more about the recycling rates. I am a bit concerned about this parish/Island dichotomy, this problem we have between the 2. John mentioned we have 6 per cent plastic recycling rate in Jersey; 31 per cent is the comparison in the U.K. What can be done? We have talked about the peak potentially having been reached, but what can be done? I could ask the Minister: do you speak to the Comité des Connétables to encourage them to adopt plastic recycling?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The team is constantly speaking ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

How do you work as a department to encourage the parishes?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The team is constantly speaking to the Connétables. Was there a big report that was in 2015, was it?

Recycling Manager:

Yes. In 2015 we delivered a report to the States Assembly in response to a proposition, which was looking at Island-wide kerbside in the respect of centralising it, centralising that service. Although on the face of it, it looks like it would move things forward quicker to centralise and deliver an Island-wide household recycling scheme, that was not the finding of the report. As we know, 6 parishes

are already delivering household recycling schemes and they are delivering them very well. There was a concern from those parishes that it would be a backwards step because if anything changed it would confuse parishioners. Lots of parishes thought that they had already made lots of efficiencies within their administration and the services that they provide and centralising that service with centralised resources may end up costing Islanders more. What we found was that moving recycling forward at a parish by parish approach but with the support of our department so that new parishes delivered a kerbside recycling scheme that was consistent with the other parishes would be far more progressive and move things forward quicker than unpicking what had already been done and causing potentially other issues and other concerns within other parishes, that we should ... we were able to move forward. The general consensus was positive in regard to recycling so it was viewed that we should just move forward on that basis. The dream from our department is still that we can run publicity that says this week is plastic bottle recycling week and everybody in any parish would be putting out their plastic bottle recycling container, but behind the scenes that would be delivered by the specific parishes that have made all the efficiencies in delivering that to serve their parishioners in the best way. But to expand your question a little bit on plastic recycling, we have touched upon uPVC and I do not know the exact tonnage but we receive just visually a significant amount of high-grade uPVC. By that we mean door frames, window frames. Currently, we do not have a mechanism to be separating that material for recycling, but we would like to be moving forward with that in the very near future. When we come to think about Jersey's plastics, I think it is important to remember that there is a huge proportion of commercial plastics that are not just food packaging and plastic bottles but are things like door frames, window frames, that, as John has already mentioned, would have an impact if we removed them or removed a lot of them from the Energy from Waste plant and we are ... we will be in a position to be able to separate those and export them for recycling.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So picking up from that, what sort of additional infrastructure would be required if Jersey wanted to do its own plastic recycling, perhaps just a lower grade but still recyclable plastics?

Recycling Manager:

Like lots of other recyclables, we are reliant on exporting them off Island, whether that is into the U.K. or whether into Europe. As an Island, we produce a tiny proportion of the tonnage that the partners that we work with into Europe and into the U.K. handle. I always joke with school parties when they say: "Why do we not have our own paper mill and recycle our own paper?" and we joke that it would run one Tuesday afternoon a year just because of the small tonnage and the economies of scale that we have as an Island. So I do not think we will be in a position where we are self-sufficient in recycling Jersey's own plastics. There will be some small-scale recycling and reuse, and I believe Le Rocquier School already have a mechanism to be melting down some waste

plastics they receive, using them across the curriculum in D.T. (design technology) linked projects. So there will be elements of that but if we were to look further at broadening our range of plastic recycling, the technology and infrastructure we would need ... when you see in the U.K. plastics are separated by lasers, they are separated by air pressures, there is lots of different mechanisms that are involved and I do not think that would ever be viable for Jersey to do locally.

[10:45]

Equally, when we look at working with new partners and recycling different materials, we always go out for tender for those opportunities and local companies would be able to bid to work with us in that capacity if somebody wanted to.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is encouraging. So it is really down to any enterprising individual to set up a business. We look forward to seeing it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Currently, we are only doing bottles. What is the likelihood of going to other plastics? I know you have talked about PVC but I mean other household plastic, if you like.

Recycling Manager:

Other household plastics? I think it is always the department's intention, and we know that there is huge public appetite, to be recycling a broader range of plastics but where we started off this morning, John talking about the market forces and market pricing, unfortunately when we look at mixed sort of household packaging it is extremely complicated. While we are collecting plastic bottles for recycling, we are asking for specific grades of plastic and they are the higher grades. They are more desirable and easier to recycle in the plastic recycling market. Plastic bottles are consistently made from high grades of plastic. When you look at broader plastic packaging - yoghurt pots, food trays - they are inconsistently made from a broader range of plastics. So just because your yoghurt pot has a little triangle with a grade 2 in it when you have done this week's shop, it does not mean in future shops it will be a grade 2. It could be anything from a grade 2 to a grade 7. The lower grades of plastic are recycled separately to the higher grades and if we did collect those specific grades of plastic for recycling now, they would not be processed in the U.K. They would be processed further afield and this is where the link back to China closing its doors on U.K. imports of recyclables has an impact because potentially we could have nowhere to send them at present. Finding a sustainable outlet is one complication. Also we work very hard on our contracts to know where our recycling is going and exactly what is happening to it. So when I stand up at a school assembly and explain about plastic bottles, that is exactly what is happening with Jersey's plastic

bottles today. Sending any recycling further afield means that that is much harder to keep a tight handle on and certainly if we were sending Jersey's mixed plastics into Asia through lots of different handling agents, that becomes a very different process to manage. The health and safety and ethical standards that we have may not be replicated as you get further afield, so it has to be sustainable and it also has to be safe, and I think we have all seen horrific pictures of young children working barefoot on these sort of tips.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you know where Guernsey sends its other plastic waste?

Recycling Manager:

No, I do not. What we also have to think about is we receive 6 per cent of Jersey's plastic bottles at the moment and if we were ... I would like us to be seeing 50 per cent-plus before ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Is that 6 per cent of all the waste or just the bottles?

Recycling Manager:

Plastic bottles.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So it is only 6 per cent of the bottles.

Recycling Manager:

That is what we estimate from ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I apologise because I thought it was 6 per cent of all plastic waste.

Recycling Manager:

No, it is 6 per cent of plastic bottles.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That would be an achievement, 6 per cent of all waste.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you know what proportion of other plastics is in typical household waste? There are bottles. What proportion of the plastic in a typical dustbin where there is not recycling ... how many would

be bottles and how much would be all the other yoghurt pots? One would assume there is more other plastics than bottles.

Recycling Manager:

There is more and we do have a number of calls, because if people are separating out their cardboard, their paper, their plastic bottles, all the things that you can easily recycle here, quite often you are left with a bin of plastics, which is extremely frustrating for people. But this also brings us back to commercially generated waste plastics, like the uPVC, and I think that we would have a bigger impact in focusing on separating out that waste stream for recycling than putting yoghurt pots and mixed plastic packaging higher up our priority list.

Director General:

You mentioned Guernsey. I have been round their recycling facility for commercial waste. It is an incredible facility. They are required to recycle over I think about 85 per cent of their waste and a lot of it is exported and then they export on a commercial R.D.F. (refuse-derived fuel) norm. This is not government. This is the private sector doing it. The reason they can do that is their gate fee at Mont Cuet is over £200 a tonne, rising up to, I think, £300 a tonne this year.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Mont Cuet being the land infill site presumably?

Director General:

Their land infill site. So what that does is it sets the market in a different position so that incentivises somebody to recycle hard uPVC plastic which has a gate fee of £60 to £90 a tonne, depending on the market, and you have got the value of the material plus that anything less than £200 is going to be a saving to you as a business or a saving to you as a householder. It is a very different market to compare to and there are some interesting things in Guernsey because of what they do and their recycling rates are far higher, but I think it is hard to compare one with the other when if you look at their fiscal mechanism it is a very ... I think their waste rates are higher than anywhere else I am aware of in terms of their landfill site.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because they have not got a landfill anymore.

Director General:

Exactly, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think that having a M.R.F. (materials recycling facility), the separation stream, is something we should be aspiring to?

Director General:

I have been round many M.R.F.s and I have never gone round a M.R.F. and not felt a certain ... that it is wrong in terms of the people and the jobs they do. I think you can automate a M.R.F. It is very expensive but I think it needs to happen. But there is a lot of manual intervention on M.R.F.s and I think for a society of our ... when we are trying to upskill people, we are trying to get our community involved in doing things, I am not sure if anybody would want our children to work in a M.R.F. I think some people round this table have been to see M.R.F.s and it is a job that people do and people get paid for but it is not aspirational and not one that I think is ... I think there is technology solutions. A M.R.F. again is counterproductive to just sorting it out at source, which I think is the right thing to do.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The sense of taking responsibility for your own waste?

Director General:

Yes, absolutely.

Recycling Manager:

It does when we are taking account that we have to export most of the things that we receive or separate for recycling. Things that are generated, recycling that is collected mixed with other things and then separated are less desirable. You were talking, John, about either the cost, the gate fee, or any income that can be generated from those recyclables. If they have been sourced separately, so a plastic bottle has only been with other plastic bottles along the recycling supply chain, you would be able to command a better price for that recyclable material rather than if it has been received mixed with papers and cans and other things like that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just taking it back a little bit to your comment about business and commercial involvement, do you have an engagement strategy to encourage businesses to recycle their plastic waste, to get rid of the canvas and window frame issue?

Recycling Manager:

As part of our ongoing engagement with businesses to reduce their waste and also our involvement with Eco Active in the Plastic Free Jersey programme, we have had a number of conversations with businesses this year, which is extremely positive, and we know of other businesses that are trying

to look at national standards and work towards that. But one of the examples with reducing plastic waste up the supply chain is we have had a number of meetings with local businesses that supply what I would call catering products. At events you have disposable packaging for convenience foods and in the past lots of those foods would be provided in polystyrene containers. Local suppliers are now moving away from those and there is a number of different manufacturers on the market that provide vegetable starch-based products and on the face of it as a consumer you may not even realise that it is different to polystyrene but it does not contain any plastic. Those suppliers are now providing those products into the local market and when their stock of polystyrene runs out, if it has not already, they will not be reordering that product. So there are lots of small positive steps that are happening locally.

Director General:

Some of the bigger businesses like Marks & Spencer, they have a strategy in terms of minimising waste so a lot of their packaging is recycled back and goes back north when the products have come south. So there is a lot of really good things happening, perhaps not transparent for the public to see. It is at very different levels in different organisations depending on their maturity.

The Connétable of Grouville:

A number of people have spoken to us about the bottle deposit return scheme. Is that something that you have looked at or is there a way you can get that started?

Recycling Manager:

In fact, if you do not mind, what I will read to you is the rationale behind these schemes that D.E.F.R.A. (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) has published and that is: "Increasing the collection of high quality recyclable material from drinks containers consumed outside of the home to complement that currently being collected through kerbside and other bring-back systems." Why I believe that is relevant is back to our priorities and the bottle deposit return schemes work exceedingly well and we know that there is public enthusiasm for them but they work very well in managing the residual elements of plastic bottles that are left behind. There have been lots of videos on social media about different parts of society making a small income from delvaging in litter bins and things and picking up these recyclable materials but they work very well complementing existing schemes. So, where they were first introduced in northern Europe they have had household recycling systems in place for 20-plus years and that is the norm.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You say where they were introduced in northern Europe. We used to have it in Jersey. It is not something strange from northern Europe. It is something we used to have.

Recycling Manager:

Yes, absolutely, and perhaps that is forgotten.

Male Speaker:

Was that glass?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, glass. Perhaps we should stop plastic bottles coming over and only allow glass bottles in.

Recycling Manager:

The concern is of having ... jumping towards the plastic bottle return schemes before we have implemented accessible recycling for everybody in the home is that the foundation of establishing positive sustainable waste management practice in the home is forgotten because all of the attention and resources will be focused on plastic bottle return machines outside supermarkets or convenience stores or wherever they might be. What we need to do is get the foundations right, collect as much as we can and back to that long-term behaviour change, bringing it into the home, making it the norm, making it fair, accessible for everybody. Then there are lots of other initiatives, and bottle deposit return schemes are one of them, which are really exciting but we do believe that we have to get the foundations right first before we can start those.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just a little bit of a supplementary about encouraging recycling in the home. Do you think there is enough liaison between the Planning Department when it comes to new builds for accommodation for recyclables?

Recycling Manager:

Our department is involved in that process and we do comment on planning applications both from a waste plan point of view for that development on the materials that are being used and how they are being disposed of, whether that be recycling or waste.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I was thinking more about how the individual householder deals with it.

Recycling Manager:

Also in regard to bin stores, but ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I have not seen it coming through yet but I think it is an area that we should work on because a lot of people in small units of accommodation just have not got room and it is not helpful.

Recycling Manager:

No, I think there is potential for that area, definitely.

Director General:

I think that is a piece of work that I will take on board in terms of we can advise the planning officers but the developers are ... obviously this is not money that is making them money in terms of the sale of the development, so it is making sure that it is not compromised. In the past I have seen that compromised.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It could be used as a selling point.

Director General:

It could be, yes. But certainly what I have seen in the past is those areas being squeezed and squeezed and squeezed. We certainly need the facilities for people and they are not as good as they could be.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It also makes it difficult, if I can just chip in, for the contractors to get in there, which is all part of the same thing.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Just to go back to the deposit scheme, what you are saying is it would compromise the doorstep collection because people would be trying to reclaim money only on bottles?

Recycling Manager:

I think it would ... I think resources need to be focused on getting a foundation right and a core system of recycling that is accessible for everybody on the Island and then we can look at all these other fantastic initiatives that are add-ons.

The Connétable of Grouville:

My point is if you had a deposit scheme, people would not put their bottles in the collection. It would go ...

Recycling Manager:

Some people may not, but again it comes back to accessibility to recycling is very unfair at the moment in Jersey.

[11:00]

If you do not have a parish recycling collection, you do not have private transport, all of those things, it may be people are having shopping delivered, they are not able to take their plastic bottles back and whoever is delivering the shopping may not be willing to do that. There are all sorts of different barriers that could be in place in that scenario, whereas bringing recycling to the doorstep is fair and accessible to everybody and then we can look at all of these add-ons which will help collect the residual.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask, and this comes in response ... this question arises because of submissions we have been receiving. People are concerned that one of the reasons recycling is not perhaps doing so well in Jersey with only 6 per cent is that there is a need to feed the Energy from Waste plant. If we were to take the plastic, paper, cardboard out of that then it would be less efficient. Is that correct and, if so, at what point would it be viable to use the Energy from Waste plant?

Director General:

I have answered that for the last how many years?

Recycling Manager:

A few.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is triggered by the fact that in the submissions we are receiving it is a question people are raising.

Director General:

It is one of those folklores that people talk about in a pub that does not have any factual element whatsoever but it still is a good story. The Energy from Waste plant operates at 38,000 tonne very efficiently. It was designed to be able to do that. It was designed so that we would move forward as an Island into the 21st century where we recycle more. We currently have waste going through the Energy from Waste plant that has too much energy in it, it has too much plastic in it and it causes huge amounts of problems. The Energy from Waste plant has been built at great expense to Islanders to have 2 streams so you can turn it down and you can adjust what it does at keeping it as efficient as possible. The turbine has been designed to run on one stream as opposed to 2

streams. So I can answer that question but it is just not as exciting as the answer that we need to keep feeding it with stuff. So the truth is not really that exciting and sexy but the truth is it can run down to very little waste and be very efficient for our Island. It will just last longer.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So there is a reason to stop putting waste through it in the sense it would extend the lifetime of it?

Director General:

Absolutely, it would extend the lifetime and putting the wrong waste through it. The uPVC hard plastic is the worst possible waste you can put through an Energy from Waste plant but we get deliveries every day.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I suppose one of the focuses and the initial reasons why this panel was set up is as a result of The Blue Planet T.V. (television) report. I am going to ask in your view which methods of waste disposal are more likely to reduce the inclusion of incinerating in recycling. We have seen the fish tangled up in all bits of plastic.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think that is on-Island waste. I think that is off-Island waste and where it comes from your guess is as good as ours. But there is obviously marine waste from deep sea fishing and there are all sorts floating round in the sea, but whether it is 100 per cent recycled or incinerated, that does not go into the marine environment. If you went out to sea with a bucket and evaporated the water you are going to find bits of plastic in it because once it is in the sea it just breaks up into finer and finer particles.

Director General:

It is worth saying that one of the great beauties of our Island is the lack of waste and litter and yet I think that is getting worse. I see more litter chucked out of cars, people wandering on ... I think there seems to be a drift towards a more, dare I say, U.K. ... I am from the U.K. and I go back and I am very disappointed at the amount of litter there and I come back to Jersey thinking this is a lot better, but there are still a lot of people who disregard the fact that ... it is the small amounts of litter. If someone chucks it out of a car window, someone drops it out of their pocket on the beach, that is going to finish up in the sea on a strong wind. We also have problems with if you put a black bag out and you are not aware, a seagull is going to rip it apart and spread it everywhere. Those are the issues we need to resolve but it is awareness to the public that this is one Island full of ... and a magnificent and beautiful Island, which is why we want to be here and we have got to look after it,

and that message in some parts of the community, some parts of age groups, is lost. I think that is where the problem lies, not perhaps whether it is recycled or incinerated.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I agree entirely. When I drive round the Island I see more litter than I have seen in a long time. Do you have plans to tackle that?

Director General:

One of the schemes which I sadly adopt ... and I think there is running clubs now that do a litter pick when they run and you can adopt your street and I have done that and I walk up and down and pick stuff out of the hedge. Just after Branchage is probably the best time to do it. So I think we have got to have that pride back in and I think that is something we have got to think about moving forward consistently.

Recycling Manager:

The ongoing work across the community with our education programme is also hugely important and we do this across all age groups, but obviously educating within schools to really embed these values in the young learners so that they are enjoying their environment, they are caring for it, they are respecting it so they want to protect it, and we will continue to be investing in that going forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think that is a good note to close on. Thank you very much and for the record I am going to just ask a quick one about public water fountains. What is the department's view on that? I know we have got them on the slipways to wash feet off but what about drinking fountains in streets?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They are now back in vogue again. Obviously for reasons of hygiene no one uses the commercial ... the old metal cups anymore and what used to be provided but refillable bottles now.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think it is something we, as a department, would really support. So, again, if there are more water fountains within town, on the slipways ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To refill the bottles obviously.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Who would put them in? Which department? Would it be fed by the waterworks? Would it be your department that installs them?

The Minister for Infrastructure

It would be partially ours, yes. It is infrastructure.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You would have to pay for the water as well.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not sure what it was ...

Director General:

I think that is something we can discuss. It is for the greater good. It is not a matter of the amount of water. I am sure we can work with the parishes and ourselves and Jersey Water and have a partnership approach. All our offices have water dispensers now.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It will be people carrying water bottles around as a prime example as opposed to people wandering round with plastic coffee cups all day, which is a shame. Anything that helps, we are more than happy to support that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Minister. I am going to conclude the meeting. We have another one to run into. Thank you to your team for giving evidence today. It is much appreciated.

[11:07]