



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel

Reducing Use of Plastics in Jersey

Witness: The Minister for the Environment

Tuesday, 2nd 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 the Environment

Director, Natural Environment

Director, Environmental Policy

Eco-active Programme Manager

[10:05]

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

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the members of the public who have chosen to come this morning. I am going to start off by just running through the terms of reference of this review. Actually, prior to that, I think what I ought to do is just whip round the table and say who we are. I am Mike Jackson, Constable of St. Brelade, Chairman of the panel.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

I am Kirsten Morel, Deputy of St. Lawrence and panel member.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

Constable John Le Maistre of Grouville, Vice Chairman of the panel.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

I am Jane Burns, Eco-active Programme Manager.

The Minister for the Environment:

I am John Young, Deputy for St. Brelade No. 1, happen to be the Minister for the Environment.

Director, Natural Environment:

I am William Peggie, Director for Natural Environment.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Louise Magris, Environmental Policy.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So the terms of reference for this review are: (1) 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 undertaken 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 businesses can play in the reduction of plastics and the benefits to the environment 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/or 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, if I may kick off, Minister, just by saying that in May this year it was announced that the E.U. (European Union) will be introducing bans on many avoidable single-use plastics. Are there any plans for Jersey to follow suit and, if not, why not?

The Minister for the Environment:

Thank you, Chairman. I wonder if I may, before I answer that specific question, just explain exactly where we are because the issue of waste and plastics in the marine system is particularly a work in progress. As you may know, we all know the Government is in a process of transition and the Environment Department does not exist in the form that it used to be. What we have is one Government now which is in the process of formation on the Executive side, and we have, for

example, Louise working on the policy side reportable into the common policy-setting work of the States, but equally during the period of preparation I have been able to get advice from all those officers across the States. But as we speak at the moment the policy relating to waste management is not a responsibility that sits within my particular ministry. As you know, we have a mismatch between the ministerial allocations and responsibilities and the Executive responsibilities. So, nonetheless we are all working towards this goal and there is no question in my mind that the development of a new waste strategy is a key one for the Island. I think the issue of plastics and marine plastics and the problems that have become increasingly identified is a major priority, and I think I am going to refer here to one of my first roles as Minister. I had to attend the British-Irish Council meeting of environment ministers, and central to that work was what is going to be done about plastics, and this issue arose. So we have all agreed to work together and, of course, Jersey is a jurisdiction that principally consumes plastics. We do not manufacture them; we import them. Of course, the question arises: what are other bigger jurisdictions doing about removing single-use plastics from the waste stream and so on? So we have agreed to co-operate and work together. A similar position was taken by Guernsey and the Isle of Man. So we will be meeting with the British-Irish Council back in early 2019 to develop common action plans, by which time it is my belief the Council of Ministers' work that it has been doing over the summer in setting our strategic priorities will be complete. I hope tomorrow you are all going to be attending the launch of the common strategic priorities, which I have been asked not to go into today but nonetheless all I can say is the work I have done with other Ministers, particularly the D.F.I. (Department for Infrastructure) Ministers, indicate that there is a lot of very, very big common ground about working together on that work. But wait and see what comes tomorrow and then obviously how that is adopted will be for the States.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can I just ask - I am sorry to interrupt - did you say at the outset you had not really got responsibility for this?

The Minister for the Environment:

No, I do not have waste management, no. What I have is regulation. Over the years ... once upon a time the waste management operation of what was T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) or public works and so on, they did their own regulation. Over the years there has been an independence of regulation and the environmental officers regulate that by issuing of waste licences under the various laws and, if you like, monitor emissions and so on. So, for example, the Energy From Waste plant operates under that regulation, same as the S.T.W. (Sewage Treatment Works) and so on and other waste activities. They are all licensed.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But surely you must have some responsibility for encouraging best advice and practice?

The Minister for the Environment:

Absolutely, yes. No question, you are absolutely right, so please do not interpret ... I have certainly set a strong lead because ... I mean, I am fairly inhibited with what I can say here because of this work that the Council of Ministers has asked me to be dealt with in the way it has. When we work together, the issue of waste has come strongly out of that work and I am very confident - very confident - that those issues will come forward to the States to give their backing on future work. There is major work to be done here. What we have done, as the Environment Department has always done, is worked through low-cost, practical initiatives; for example, the Eco-active scheme.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

John, I am going to interrupt you because I want to take it back to the regulation side. We spoke about the E.U. introducing bans on any avoidable single-use plastics. Now, that is going to be regulatory. Are you au fait with that? Has any work been done with regard to ...?

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, we know exactly ... we know ... I can ask for Willie's comment. I have a briefing note of what it does include. Personally, I would have no difficulty in following the principles of such a policy because in other areas of environmental regulation we always follow E.U. and U.K. (United Kingdom). For example, I signed an order on fishing issues, I have signed several, following the same principles. But, of course, there are practical implications for Jersey where we need to look at the impacts of those changes and, of course, you as a Scrutiny Panel would want to see those details as part of a strategy, I believe, when it came forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Has any work been done on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

Oh, lots of work. I am going to hand over to Willie now.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

On avoidable single-use plastics?

Director, Natural Environment:

I think it is an interesting question insofar as do we need legislation to deal with it or do we need behavioural change to deal with it that is effected by a better and more Island-appropriate means of delivering that behavioural change. Because, as the Minister has alluded to so far, we are a receiver

of plastics as opposed to a generator of plastics, we are going to be hugely affected by the decisions made in, for example, the reduction and impact of certain plastic products on the environment, the directive coming from Europe. That will obviously then impact the U.K. There should theoretically then be a reduction in plastics floating around Europe and the U.K. We should hopefully then see a reduction in plastics coming our way. We then need to try to influence the market in that respect, the requirement for those plastics, by generating a change in public behaviour. That is what we in the department are all about. We have our Eco-active element to the business, which is taking on more responsibility through ... has always had responsibility for changing business behaviour and States behaviour, reduction in waste, in water use, in energy use, but the current focus is very much on single-use plastics through its plastic-free Jersey initiative. Maybe I could perhaps point at Jane to just explain what plastic-free Jersey is all about. I think you may well all be aware of that, but in terms of the work that is on the go at the moment and the influencing of companies ... sorry.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Before we do that, sorry, could I ... because I am really unclear, I am really sorry. The E.U. is bringing in certain bans and I could not understand what you were saying. What is Jersey doing? You are saying that obviously we are going to be affected by that, but then you are talking about behavioural change.

[10:15]

But if the E.U. bans certain plastics, we almost certainly will not be importing them, will we? So it would not be necessarily behavioural change, it would be their legislation which is changing ...

Director, Natural Environment:

Indeed, yes, so that is the initial reduction in specific types of single-use plastic but we still need to have ... if you look at what the E.U. are looking to bring in, reductions in straws, plastic plates, plastic utensils, plastic coffee stirrers, cotton swabs and plastic stems, plastic balloon holders, for example, that is exactly the sort of thing we are going to be trying to influence through behavioural change, through an influencing scheme, which we have up and running now. So the question is: do we need EU legislation to deal with it or do we need internal legislation to deal with it? I would argue perhaps not.

Director, Environmental Policy:

If I could add I think what you are suggesting here is does Jersey want to follow a policy initiative that is being implemented elsewhere. I think that is the question here, is it not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes. I think in spirit what you have heard from the Minister and from the department is absolutely that we all sign up to reducing single-use plastics. We are all well aware of the problems that they cause and from an environmental impact perspective we want to play our part. Jersey is an international competitor and we have to be shown to be internationally responsible. So I think from that perspective there is no question. I think the reality is the point in Government that we are at at the moment is we have a new Government. We are in the first 100 days of the Council of Ministers still, and for them to officially make a statement to you as scrutiny today and say: "We are definitely going to sign up and we are definitely going to do this" is perhaps a little early. I think what the Minister was saying to you was that through the work that we have been doing over the summer and that you will be hearing about tomorrow at St. Paul's, the common strategic policy launch, is that the Council of Ministers take waste issues seriously. They are concerned about plastics and their impact on the environment and I think with luck you will be hopefully keen to hear that they want to take some collective responsibility for addressing that impact. Whether we can say to you today this is a new policy initiative that the States of Jersey can take we cannot say that to you yet because from a policy perspective we have not worked out exactly the resources that would be required for us to implement this, although we know what those are through the plastic-free Jersey initiative. That would have to go probably to the States, particularly if legislation was involved, to back up these objectives, and that would be a decision for the States to take. What we can say today, though, is that the spirit of it is absolutely where we are at and it is something that the new Council of Ministers is very keen to explore properly. Does that help?

The Connétable of Grouville:

So what initiatives are in place at the moment?

Director, Environmental Policy:

So this is the Eco-active story, so by all means I can hand over to Jane. Would that be helpful?

The Minister for the Environment:

Can I just say I think what my colleagues have done there is very effectively summed up the position. We are in transition. In many respects your review is premature. If we were having this discussion next week, the week after, I think we could make more ... be more concrete about it. But the work that has gone on in the summer is the work on identifying what those strategic priorities are, where the Council of Ministers is going to give its action plan, and because we cannot do everything setting those priorities is key because it would lead to where the resources go. There is no question there is a resource issue here. The Environment Department runs on a shoestring, and I can tell you now

I think the Eco-active project - which is represented here and they have done fantastic work and it is our main strategy - has funding to the tune at the moment of around £20,000 plus a part-time member of staff, who has been brilliant and probably achieved more than a bigger team would have achieved. But that is the level of inadequacy of the resource that the Environment Department has had over the years on past Councils of Ministers. I have taken the view I am determined that is going to be put right and I have argued strongly for these priorities in the Council of Ministers. Now, having been and sat there at the Ministers of the Environment table of the U.K., of Scotland, of the Republic of Ireland, of Ireland, of the Isle of Man, of Guernsey and us, we are all determined that the issue of plastics, particularly in the marine system, is going to have priority. We are doing our best. What I have been doing as new Minister is preparing for that work. We are well placed. In my view, the Eco-active work must continue because it is working in partnerships with businesses, with individuals and community. It is community initiatives and to feed off that energy, but in the background there is an issue about what is our big strategy on waste. What I would be arguing for is waste reduction, and waste reduction means doing something about sustainability and looking at the impact of a growing population on our mountain of waste and trying to do things of being able to reduce it. Yes, there are issues of recycling but waste reduction is key. In the very long term, what are we doing about a strategy for waste management, in particular long-term replacement for the Energy From Waste plant, because this issue is quite clear that new technologies will come along in 20 years' time. We need a strategy for that. We need to start working towards that, and that work is a big piece of work. That is where we are pushing for. We have a twin-track arrangement: pushing for the policy work, which I am saying to you I do not have the ability under my ministerial brief unilaterally to do that, but I am very encouraged with the work we are doing with the D.F.I. officers and with the Minister for D.F.I. I am very encouraged with that. During the last months we have had a lot of meetings and discussions.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think to cut through a lot of this, basically what the ... it is so easy to give, for the public generally, not only here but in the U.K., to give this whole thing lip service, but we want to see some action.

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, we all do.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am confident that things are going in that direction but, as you quite rightly say, it is easy for these things to be lost in ...

Director, Natural Environment:

I think we are seeing action, which is a good ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Can I just say something, please, Mike? I am the Minister for the Environment. I have been in it for 3 or 4 months. I can tell you now if I do not get the support from the Council of Ministers on these things and make sure that real priorities are set, real big environmental priorities ... and waste management is one, traffic is another, which I know we are not talking about today but there are urban issues. They are all priorities, and I am determined to drive through priorities and resource allocation to get that work done. I am not for sitting here playing for lip service. That is not my style.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was going to ask about Eco-active to some extent. Can you advise whether you have done the cost-benefit analysis or general analyses about the benefits of Eco-active on plastic waste and plastic use, so have you measured the kind of impact of Eco-active on plastic use?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Yes. We started working on plastic-free Jersey back in January and to date we are currently talking to or communicating with over 300 contacts. We have just around 70 businesses who have signed up and committed to what they are going to do as an organisation to reduce single-use plastics. That has taken quite a lot of time and effort but it has not really cost very much money because it is mostly about communicating and talking to people. The number of businesses who have succeeded in their actions are not as high, somewhere around 35 at the moment, and that is primarily because change takes time to implement. So, for example, we have been working very closely with organisations like the Channel Islands Co-operative Society. They announced on Friday last week the plans that they have put in place. We have been talking to them well before this year about what they can do and their impact, but a lot of the time these changes do take time to implement. So, lots of businesses know what they want to do and how to do it, but if they have old stock it makes sense for them to use that up before they then bring the difference. The key for us as Eco-active, it is about reducing our reliance on single use. So what we do not want to do is fall in the habit of replacing one single-use item that happens to be plastic with an alternative single-use item that we then inherit another problem from. So what we are looking at is more holistically about the general reduction in use of resources. So can we go for refillable, reusable, longer term options rather than just replacing something that is plastic with something that is an alternative plastic made out of a vegetable starch, which we might still ...?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Would there be benefit in that still?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Pardon?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Would there be benefit in replacing a plastic with a compostable material?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Absolutely, and lots of businesses are going down that route, but our long-term aim is to reduce the consumption of single-use items because that is what is really the problem. In terms of waste management, reduce is always the top of the hierarchy. So our key message has always been with businesses if we use less of that item, they are not paying for it, they are not having to buy it in the first place, but then we are not having to deal with how we get rid of it. So the reduction messages are the key for us with this campaign, and it is really about the community understanding the importance of reusing things. So the Co-op making a stand saying: "We are getting rid of the 5p carrier bags" is quite a big move for them because what it is saying to the customers is: "You have to have a reusable item" and that is the kind of message that is really important to us, but getting those messages does take a little bit of time.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I ask do you measure the amount of - I do not know if it is possible - plastic waste which is sent for incineration or, yes, which is not necessarily the recyclable stuff in order to know whether these campaigns are having an effect on the public?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

So that would be my colleague Emma, who I think came in yesterday ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

She did, yes.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

... who talks about the waste management side of it. So I am very much about public awareness and engagement and education.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But she would share that information with you? How can you know that you are succeeding if she does not tell you?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Well, we know that plastic is very light. So all of our waste measures tend to be by weight. If you weigh a plastic bag, it weighs very little, so it is quite difficult by weight to know whether we are succeeding or not. We have various measures in place. We know from our Eco-active business networks, for example, if we were to ask the Liberation Group how many straws they have managed to eliminate because they are now only using paper straws, we would be able to calculate that saving because we know what these businesses are doing and they are telling us what they are doing. I have not collated that information because it would be incredibly time consuming for me to do that. So from an Eco-active point of view we ask businesses to set targets and we challenge them on those targets. So we could find out some of that information but I think through weighing of rubbish it would be very difficult to ...

Director, Natural Environment:

That is through reporting by them against their own targets. Then that is how we are assessing success of the scheme, which as you said is quite ... it covers a panoply of businesses and organisations across the Island so far and with whom Jane is in contact.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is your department really concerned with ... Eco-active really concerned with business as opposed to the domestic plastic?

Director, Natural Environment:

Across the board.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Yes, so we have done a lot of work with schools. So the schools in the Island have really taken it on. They work to the International Eco Schools Programme, and we have a number of schools who are about to go for their green flag hopefully in January and another batch next summer. They are taking their environmental impacts really seriously. The vast majority of primary schools off the back of plastic-free Jersey have now signed up to waste-free Wednesdays, which takes the messages home to parents. So in their school lunchbox they cannot have anything that would need to go in a rubbish bin. A composter they can have and hopefully everything else they will eat, but the idea is that one day a week they have a fully sustainable lunch that takes messages home to the parents, who then get in the habit of using their reusable containers, thinking about reusing water bottles, thinking about what they put their sandwiches in. So it is kind of a gentle foot into the home as well as through the schools, so the schools are quite a key part for us in terms of broader public engagement.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So is the approach joint then? Do you go into schools together?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Yes, I work closely with Emma. We do a lot of work together. We do a lot of work separately. Eco-active's key messages across the board, as Willie said, are all about reducing, whether you are reducing your energy use or your water use or your waste. Our role is very much use less of stuff, that will be better for your business, your home, your school, because it will save you money but also it will have a better impact on the environment. So we are very much from the reduce side of it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I take you overseas? Have you explored what measures other countries have taken in terms of reducing or eliminating avoidable plastics?

The Minister for the Environment:

I think that probably sits as a policy issue, obviously. I think what you have heard is the Eco-active initiative, which incidentally I think it was started by Senator Cohen when he was Minister. It was carried on by Rob Duhamel and Steve and it has been a very successful initiative. But it is not really ... it is a practical, doing initiative and it is about achieving the buy-in. I am going to pay credit here publicly. The work has been phenomenal. I have seen bags of evidence of it, we all have, but obviously setting policy is the other side of the equation. I think at the moment we are revising Government structure. Louise is here from another part. She is not in William's department. Willie is the head of the natural environment team, which includes environmental regulation and also the marine environment, but Louise is reportable in the corporate structure and obviously advising. I am pleased to say - and I am going to put this on the record - notwithstanding this huge organisational change which potentially can be very disruptive, the team and everybody involved is working co-operatively within that arrangement. But my point is this. We need to come out of that and get into clarity before we bring regulatory measures and a final strategy through to the States. That is the ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I understand that but in terms of the here and now, has anyone got overseas ...?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes. Do you want me to help you with that?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

Director, Environmental Policy:

So the existing waste strategy was developed, as you know, a long time ago now. You were there the first time around; we all were. Obviously, it has now run its course and it needs redoing. So that is a priority for the new Minister for the Environment and the new Minister for Infrastructure as and when we get into the actual business of government.

[10:30]

As you know, the first 100 days we have been setting our common strategic priorities, which you will hear about tomorrow - I will say that again - and then we will get on to delivering what Government has signed up to deliver with the agreement of the Assembly, who will buy into that or amend accordingly. So the work policy development, as the Minister has alluded to, will now fall in the S.P.P.D. department but subject matter leads will be working with subject matter experts within the departments and closely with the officers. So while I used to sit in Environment, I now sit in S.P.P.D., but I will still be working on environmental policy hopefully in that role. So, clearly a priority is to look at new policy initiatives and a new waste strategy. So the very first part of any policy development process is scoping the problem, identifying the problem and looking at best practice. Your question relates to what other people are doing. Obviously, that is the very first thing we would look at. So as we go into the development phase of a new policy, we will be looking around the world at what other people are doing and what is transferable, appropriate and best practice for Jersey. Your question is: have we done that today, right here, right now? No, because we have not started the new policy development process, but when we do we will be doing that. That is not to say we are not aware of what is going on in the rest of the world because as part of our professional expertise that is the sort of thing we are looking at, which is why when Eco-active began to look at what might be appropriate from a campaigning perspective, Jane within the team and others undertook to look at the sorts of campaigns that are out there and what might chime and be appropriate for Jersey. That is why we went for plastic-free because that is the one that we felt made the most ... could bring the most benefit within the resource envelope that we had. So, that kind of explains how we ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you looked at Guernsey yet?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Yes, we talk to Guernsey a lot.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yesterday, yes.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Guernsey are also running plastic-free Guernsey. We are a lot further along that journey than they are, so at the moment they are more coming to us for us to share our ideas and our experiences. The same with the Isle of Man and quite a few other jurisdictions. We are quite a close-knit community, people trying to talk about these issues, so it is very nice for us in a way that we are kind of seen as leaders but also that means it is a bit more difficult for us to take advice and inspiration from others who are much earlier down that journey.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I can understand that. Just to keep it in our area, if you like, the adjacent coast of France, which is 20 or 30 miles away, we do not historically seem to have worked much in this vein with France. Do you think there is mileage in doing that?

The Minister for the Environment:

There is no question. I think that is also another issue that I certainly have been emphasising strongly at the work we have done on the common strategic priorities. It is not just environmental; it is a whole raft of areas where there is real common ground to be working with our French neighbours more closely. There is enthusiasm in the local neighbourhoods of France as well. I found that out with my meetings with the French on fishing issues, both in Brittany and Normandy. I think we have to recognise that progressing those initiatives while the whole big picture of Brexit is hanging over us and none of us know what the structure is going to be there and what scope there is for such agreement and so on, I think it is early days. I think that is a matter that it is absolutely right to have on the agenda, but I think that is going to have to follow once we know a little bit about Brexit. In terms of the work, I have seen a lot of work, which I do not know whether you have seen. Obviously, the policy, Louise and her colleagues have been looking at work elsewhere, and we are happy to release to you those papers of what we know about practice elsewhere, but this is work in progress. It is research work. So have we looked at things? Yes. Are there new policies formulated? Not yet, no. There is real work to do there and that will involve resources and expertise and finally States decisions.

Director, Environmental Policy:

And scrutiny, of course, because when the new waste strategy comes forward and is developed, it will be for you to scrutinise and examine whether you think we have done a good job on addressing the issues.

Director, Natural Environment:

Reflecting on what Jane was saying there in terms of the operational officers' ability and willingness to talk to each other about what is a common issue, it has been really quite well reflected in ... and the Minister alluded to the British-Irish Council discussions that we had more recently focusing on this. It allows the political leads but also the more senior civil service leads to get together to try to establish common programmes going forward. I think what Jane was politely alluding to in terms of Guernsey's position in terms of plastic-free Jersey, plastic-free Guernsey, came out of these discussions that we had initially at the ... or part of it came out of discussions that we had at a recent British-Irish Council conversation where we laid on the line very clearly what we were doing and the very good work that Jane and her team were doing. That has been adopted and then expanded by officers across there. I do not want to blow our own trumpets and say we in the lead here by any means because obviously there are initiatives going on globally, but from a local perspective we are doing a very good job, I think, in pushing this issue forward.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

What we are keen to see happen ... at the inter-island environment meeting a couple of weeks ago now we spoke ... we gave a presentation about plastic-free Jersey and one of the outcomes of that presentation is what we would collectively like to see ultimately is to have plastic-free Channel Islands, that we all come together when we have ... we are doing our local bits but together we will always be much stronger. So we are quite keen that when we are all at that point we take that next step as well.

The Minister for the Environment:

I mean, I think we are in a better place than our sister island of Guernsey. They have obviously a massive issue of waste policy we do not have. Whatever view you take about the Energy From Waste plant, because obviously that does generate carbon emissions, but whatever you think about that, we do not have a legacy of waste plastics in landfill in Jersey. Obviously, we have had the E.F.W. (Energy From Waste) plant, a new one which meets international standards. We had a previous plant that did not. We replaced it. But nonetheless since the late 1970s we have had that strategy, which has not involved the accumulation in landfill of plastics, which we know is toxic.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Including the reclamation site.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think the reclamation site is purely to do with the ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, there is the issue of what happens with the ... during the first incinerator that we had, the waste ... sorry, the ash from that incinerator, the first one, did go into the waterfront and we know there are serious problems with it, which if one reads the historical record were eventually addressed by the strategy of controlled management at La Collette. That was not Jersey's best period, but nonetheless I think in common with many places in the world we have all learnt a lot about waste through our mistakes. Nonetheless, those mistakes are not repeated. My point is this. We do not have a legacy of those plastics and we have all seen the recent programme about the legacy of that. So, Guernsey obviously has a different issue and they have that history of landfill and they are going to the U.K. Now they are talking to us about what lessons they learn and I think it is a case, exactly what was reflected at the British-Irish Council, all jurisdictions I think have now seen the importance of more effective waste management strategies as populations grow and our demands on the environment increase and having ways of reducing waste full stop and removing plastic as far as possible from the waste stream. The message I took back from the British-Irish Council was removing plastics in particular. There is no doubt about it, its impact on the marine system is absolutely devastating, we now know. All the science is just adding to that every day. But for us as a small Island consuming, to try and unilaterally pass laws to remove things without doing that in co-operation with other jurisdictions where these things are manufactured and distributed would give us a lot of practical problems.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You have mentioned the marine pollution a lot, but whether the plastic is recycled or taken to the Energy From Waste plant, none of that will end up in the sea.

The Minister for the Environment:

Sorry, the ...?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Whether the plastic goes to recycle or goes to Energy From Waste, none of that plastic is going to end up in the sea. You could almost argue that it was going in a dustbin straight to the Energy From Waste plant.

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It may not get there in a container but I suspect ...

The Minister for the Environment:

I think there are some things that we have learnt and I have been told about, in particular cigarette butts. Cigarette butts that are just thrown on the ground get washed into surface water drains. That surface water drain drains to the sea, marine ecosystems, and those cigarette butts contain micro plastics. So there is no question there is ... that is just now emerging, or at least the knowledge of this, and I think that is a very significant issue where there are sources of micro plastics. I think increasingly we find evidence that all sorts of materials are releasing this stuff into the marine system. At the moment I think ... or maybe on our agenda you have perhaps asked us about marine monitoring. That is an example where we need to do more. That is an example where we need more money. We need resources.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can I just ask you a question? You said in the States in answer to a question that you acknowledge that there was a need for greater co-operation between your department and the Department for Infrastructure. Can you demonstrate whether that is happening or not?

The Minister for the Environment:

I can feel ... I have been very ... yes, in fact ...

Director, Natural Environment:

We are now in the same department and operating under a new G.H.E. (Growth, Housing and Environment). Obviously, before we were the Department for the Environment and D.F.I., T.T.S. as it was. We are in a hugely advantageous place now, I think, insofar as we are bringing together D.F.I., the Department for the Environment and Economic Development under one banner, which makes policymaking from those perspectives perhaps and operational synergies much easier. We are able to talk to each other more and more. We always have done. Jane has been in regular discussion and operational symbiosis, as it were, with the recycling team in D.F.I. and there has always been good discussions there. There is also work with the historical D.F.I. that has gone on in fly tipping, for example, so we have worked hand in glove. There is an operator/regulator relationship between the departments of G.H.E. that were the regulatory function and the operational function, but there is also a proactive side of that relationship as well, which is what, as Jane has alluded to, has ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I wanted to pick up on your comment about the fly tipping. It seems to me, and I think there is a need for more departments to look at this, but I think sometimes the general public are not perhaps as well informed as they might be on where to dispose of things and hence fly tipping because they do not know the answer. Have you ever tried to get rid of a bit of asbestos? It is a nightmare. I understand the reasons for it and I should do and I do, but it is very, very difficult. Likewise, perhaps

if someone wants to get rid of a sofa or something like that, I think a lot of people just do not know how to do it. We have our recycling bags round and about. Maybe we need to work a little bit harder. What are your thoughts on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

I tend to agree.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

I think my colleagues in the recycling team are looking to do a lot of public awareness towards the end of the year about what you can recycle, where you can take it and when they are open. So I think they are aware that there have been questions around what you can take and where. They recently did a consultation about the opening times of the household reuse and recycling centre, so I think they are very keen to make this as easy for the consumer as possible because that is the first step, really.

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes. I think there is also a policy issue there that applies to all what we used to call enforcement processes; we now call compliance. Obviously, because to do that successfully needs co-operative working with people rather than a kind of over the top heavy hand. Unfortunately, there has to be prosecutions because some people are determined not to comply, but they are very few. The majority I think strategies to help people dispose of materials properly should reduce fly tipping. This is where I think obviously you see in this chart ... as I say, my colleagues have given you what is now ... we are now in this thing called ... sorry, they are all in this process called ... let us get it right, G.H.E. As Ministers we sit outside this. We see bits of it and eventually I assume this will be brought into light. So there is co-operation and it is encouraging, but in terms of hardnosed policy setting - I am sorry to keep going back to that - I think that is going to take that next step of when we get the clarity of what Government is going to do for the next 3 years.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It sounds to me as though this whole transition that you keep going on about is incredibly disruptive and has essentially stopped work for the last few months.

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, I do not want to be negative.

Director, Natural Environment:

No, not really.

Director, Environmental Policy:

No.

The Minister for the Environment:

No, I think there are ... I told the Chief Minister and I also made Charlie Parker aware that this transformation is such a huge change there are risks. There are risks and potentially gaps could open up, and there is a risk of losing key people, which I have expressed concern about, key people that have a lot of knowledge, many decades of knowledge and background. Nonetheless, I think everybody ... and it is a process in transition. There is no going back. We have to be positive and we have to make it work. What we have as Ministers is the particular issue that we still are yet to have to go through that process of change in our roles. As Ministers, our roles are defined in the law. When the previous Council of Ministers brought forward these changes, they did not change the law for the ministerial structure. That is something which was agreed would be examined by the new Chief Minister within the first 6 months and we are still not at that point yet. So, I am hopeful. I am very positive about it, but I think we can ... this should work.

[10:45]

For me on the environment, which is my priority, the issue is can we achieve for the first time a proper match between the importance of the role in looking after the environment and the resources available to do the job, which has not been there.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I pick up on what Mike was saying about fly tipping and litter management?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Sorry, could I just draw you back to a point that you made about the transition? Could I just give you ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, I would like to carry on, sorry.

Director, Environmental Policy:

No, it is okay.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not mean to but I really need to get back on to here. Do you work with the Infrastructure Department and the ... or, in fact, where does responsibility lie for litter management in the Island so far as littering in Jersey is concerned?

The Minister for the Environment:

You mean going around and finding litter?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Well, managing it, making sure that it is not in the environment, that it is not left ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, we have to ... eventually the enforcement team will have to deal with the fly tipping.

Director, Natural Environment:

Fly tipping is a different ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am talking about litter as well, not just large fly tipping.

Director, Natural Environment:

Yes, so litter being smaller scale disposal of ... as opposed to the wider scale disposal of waste, ie fly tipping, that would fall under the Waste Management (Jersey) Law 2005, which is the responsibility of the regulatory function of G.H.E. now. We are now split up into regulation and into the natural environment side of things as well. So that is now looked after by the waste team who are a separate unit to that which is represented by me. However, that is to do with large-scale disposal of waste. It is not necessarily a particularly pertinent piece of legislation for dealing with small-scale littering, which is much more of a parish issue.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Or parks and gardens.

Director, Natural Environment:

Or parks and gardens, yes.

Director, Environmental Policy:

So regulation on particular sites, so for example our sites of special interest, we have wardens out there who are looking at littering, dog fouling, those sorts of issues. So it is depending on the place that littering might be happening, the type of littering that might be going on. The responsibility would

be split across ... we do not have a litter officer who you would be able to go to and they would be able to give you the whole story.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If it was a major road it would be D.F.I.?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Correct, yes, exactly.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If it was a lane it would be ...?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes, that is right.

The Minister for the Environment:

Of course, also I think I should mention here not in this subject but I have had discussions with the Minister for Infrastructure about whether when certain work needs doing whether he has the flexibility of that workforce to do it. I am told the capacity to do that has now been dramatically reduced as a result of the previous Government's decision to outsource many manual workers. There is much less flexibility there to be able to deal with immediate hot spots.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is clearing up but what we want to do is to prevent it in the first place.

The Minister for the Environment:

Sorry, I thought that was the point of Kirsten's question.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Well, no, that was my question, litter management.

The Minister for the Environment:

My apologies, I thought that was about clearing up.

The Connétable of Grouville:

No, but ...

Director, Natural Environment:

It is also something that has been dealt with historically by our team in natural environment. As Jane has alluded to, we are proactive and we are trying to reduce materials going into particularly the marine environment but just general disposal full stop. So we ran a campaign a couple of years ago now which was called Blue Fish campaign. You may have seen drains around the town or drain covers around the town which have small blue fish painted beside them.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

They are mainly in schools.

Director, Natural Environment:

Mainly in schools, yes, and it is to try to reinforce to people that plastic waste, crisp packets, cigarette butts, et cetera, do not go down the drain because, as the Minister has alluded to, when it goes down the drain that goes to a surface water route straight into the marine environment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So picking up on the Blue Planet campaign or programme, if you like, have you done any work with the maritime industry in terms of trying to reduce their input into the plastic waste in our area?

The Minister for the Environment:

I am told we have. Do you want to deal with that, Willie?

Director, Natural Environment:

Yes, there are 2 elements there we have historically dealt with. I will take an older process called Fishing for Litter, which was a national initiative. It was not as successful as it could have been because the national initiative was designed to encourage fishermen to actively pick up large quantities of plastic waste, waste fishing nets, monofilament, bags, whatever they find when they are trawling their nets. They would have a tonne bag on board a very large fishing boat, which does not take up a great deal of space on the deck of a very large fishing boat, and they would bring that waste home and then dispose of it in a responsible and appropriate way. So, you imagine a Brixham fishing boat or an Aberdeen fishing boat taking that kind of waste home. Jersey's fishing fleet are not the same in terms of boat size as those boats, so any waste that is hauled on board is going to take up valuable deck space but also can become a bit of a weight issue and a health and safety issue. So that was not as successful as we might have liked it to be. The other issue of ensuring that we have the right bins in harbours; we have worked with the harbour authorities in the past to make sure that we have bins in appropriate places, so that boats coming into harbour do not just jettison their materials overboard but bring them in and put them in the right place. That was pretty successful. We are aware, though, through colleagues at what was known as D.F.I. that if you put bins in a place anywhere on the Island then it attracts people putting stuff in them and so it has to

be very closely managed. A public awareness campaign needs to be run at the same time to make sure that you are not fly tipping beside the bins.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

We have also got a trial ... sorry.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

On the regulatory side in the same vein, is there any regulatory framework for dealing with maritime littering in enforcement terms? Have you ...

Director, Natural Environment:

Water pollution law within our 12-mile boundary, you cannot actively go and throw jettison materials into our sea water. Yes, that is an appropriate piece of legislation to deal with. The issue, of course, is finding people who are doing it at the time. It is more about, I guess, the fishing community and the marine users' community being out there and finding stuff and then not just leaving it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How many enforcement officers have you got at the moment in the new structure, if you like?

Director, Natural Environment:

Dealing with waste particularly, I think we have 3 officers who deal on a full-time with waste matters, including fly tipping and including waste management licensing and including the regulation of waste crime, generally speaking.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Have there ever been convictions for fly tipping or ...?

Director, Natural Environment:

We have had one successful conviction for fly tipping. We have 3 or 4 case files sitting with the Attorney General's Office at the moment determining whether they are both satisfying the test for evidence and for public interest.

The Minister for the Environment:

I understand also that from what I am informed, because we need to confirm this, that we have had cases that went forward for prosecution which did not get prosecuted. Of course, from what I have been told, the effort involved in prosecution is extremely high. It requires people to go through the waste bins, looking at finding evidence, taking in statements, taking interviews, tracking it back; it is a huge amount of work. In a situation where those papers go forward and that it is decided there is

no prosecution, this, I think, does lead you to the conclusion that it is better to put our scarce resources into trying to find prevention and work with co-operation. I think this is a genuine issue about the regulatory functions that the environment has in a lot of areas, where we really are running on a shoestring. For example, you talked about marine. There is no question, I am told, we have lost manpower over the years. The budget of Environment has been cut 30 per cent in recent years, 30 per cent, and some functions are now running entirely on a self-financing basis. I think, in the end, there are choices for Government in Jersey: how much do we invest in our environment? I would like to feel we invest more in setting new policies, getting those right, working in co-operation with people, trying to do things by persuasion and agreement, rather than going in for heavy-handed on enforcement ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

But surely if people think they are going to get away with it they are not going to be too fussy ...?

The Minister for the Environment:

Absolutely, I think this is correct.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am interested in the conviction that happened. I did not read about it and I am sure that if it had been ...

Director, Natural Environment:

That was to do with a few oil cans that had been disposed of in St. Ouen, as I recall, in a car park in St. Ouen, and there were 2 charges associated with it. It was in the press. One was for the unlawful movement of that material because it was deemed a hazardous waste under the law and the other was for the unlawful disposal of it. The unlawful disposal of it was deemed insufficient evidence for the disposal element, but there was deemed sufficient evidence to prove unlawful carrying it because you need to have a waste carrier's licence in order to be able to carry hazardous waste through the Island, so that was in the press at the time.

The Connétable of Grouville:

One conviction in the paper with a significant fine will make people think, make irresponsible ...

Director, Natural Environment:

I think that is an interesting point.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You can educate people and most people will toe the line.

Director, Natural Environment:

I think it is an interesting point about the appropriate fine. I think if you were handing down a fine that was meaningful, a tariff that was meaningful, to an operational business, then that would indeed be a deterrent, I think, really to ensure that any fines that are passed down are appropriate in that respect.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I remember this discussion when I was not much younger. Do we have on-the-spot fines for littering and have you ever looked at whether that might ...

The Minister for the Environment:

No. I have asked the department generally because obviously who is not at the table, the group director of regulation, he is another one who sits over here. He has a number of these. I have asked him to enter into discussions with the Attorney General about alternatives to prosecutions on ... I am not too sure on-the-spot fines but fixed penalties and things of that nature, which work very, very well in other areas. I think there is scope there and I am very encouraged with the feedback I am getting from the group director that there is scope there in a whole raft of areas. I think that would, potentially, make life a lot easier for Honorary Police and others if they had those powers.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We have digressed a little bit. Going back to the fishing side of it and the marine side of it, obviously with the plastics in the water it is likely that the fish around our Island may have ingested the plastics. Are there any tests done on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

That is a good question. What we know about marine monitoring - and, again, it is resources - we do have shellfish monitoring particularly required, and to service, as it were, the fisheries, the Grouville Bay fisheries and so on, and that is required as part of that regime. I think we do some for radioactivity sampling as well and heavy metals. But in terms of sampling fish species for plastics, I think not.

Director, Natural Environment:

No, we are not doing that at the moment. The National Laboratory in the U.K. is unable to do that at the moment. It is something that we may well be able to look into in the future.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, France maybe ...

Director, Natural Environment:

As far as I see perhaps, very possible, but it is something that we are not doing now.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Did we ask them?

Director, Natural Environment:

No, we did not ask them. We have not dealt with that yet.

The Minister for the Environment:

It is certainly something I mentioned at the British-Irish Council, that we all need to do much more in marine monitoring. I think the television programmes have shown us about that, the impacts of these materials getting into the food chain, into fish and, ultimately, into us, scary.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

There is some research going on at the moment, which Willie probably knows a lot more about, but there is research going into the sediment to see where it got plastic settling.

Director, Natural Environment:

Waters and sediments; we have student projects on the go at the moment sampling that, which will determine the levels of plastics. It will be interesting to see what the results of those are because if you envisage the direction of travel of the Island's water flow, it would not be outside the bounds of possibility for the south of the Island presumably to be worse in terms of micro plastics than the north, east and west, but we will have to wait for the outcome of those results.

The Minister for the Environment:

A bit more money, more tests; there is no question. I support that, we need to do more.

Director, Environmental Policy:

I think we know the answer to that, do we not? I think the reality is that the evidence around the world will show that you do the sampling and we will probably find exactly what everyone else has found. It is not going to be a surprise or we are not going to be immune to it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

No, especially the level of ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes. No, absolutely, yes. But then you would have to consider a species distribution and where they are likely to have picked up the plastics from. But you are absolutely right, we will find it and there is no doubt. The easiest thing to do is to get policies in place to stop it from the start.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

From the perspective of burning plastic waste, we know that it creates obviously emissions, such as CO2 and other gases. Are you in dialogue with the Department for Infrastructure about the kind of emissions that burning plastic waste has?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes, we hold responsibility for emissions accounting in our department. It is something I have been leading up for a number of years now. From a greenhouse gas perspective, municipal solid waste is apportioned a carbon intensity factor as a result of the process, so that is applied to the tonnage of the municipal solid waste that goes through the E.F.W. You will be able to look at our accounting inventory, which is online. You will be able to see the time series right back to 1990 and you will see that our emissions from the E.F.W. are directly proportional to the amount of solid waste that has gone through the systems; there is no surprise there. The reality is that some of our carbon emissions from our electricity generation on Island are coming from the E.F.W. We are gaining energy back from those hydrocarbons that makes up the plastics. We are recovering some minor benefit from it, if you like. The reality is that is how we treat our waste on the Island. The way to reduce those emissions is to minimise the origin of those waste sources in the very first place. As we see globally, a reduction in the manufacturing of single-use plastics and move to compostable materials, you will see a differential carbon equation come in. The reality is the impact on our carbon accounting, not the other environmental impacts but the impact on our carbon accounting of our municipal solid waste is very low in comparison to our traffic use, our heating oil use, our air travel carbon.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But things like dioxins and things like this which have come up from burning plastics ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

No, of course, we have a work compliant in E.F.W., so those are extracted so that those are not being lost to the atmosphere.

[11:00]

But you are absolutely right, these are other environmental impacts but you asked about carbon, so ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes, that is the carbon but you are absolutely right, the other issues ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But am I right in saying that the fly ash is exported preferably but bottom ash remains, is that correct?

Director, Natural Environment:

Both are exported.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But bottom ash goes as well now, does it?

Director, Natural Environment:

As I understand it, yes.

The Minister for the Environment:

There have been historic problems, but I am sure it has now been resolved. This material is exported.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes. Do we know where the fly ash goes, the sort of the nasty bits?

Director, Environmental Policy:

We certainly do. I do not know off the top of my head.

Director, Natural Environment:

We, as Government, will ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

It is not with us but it is certainly dealt with ... we can find that out for you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

When we visited the plant they did say it was going to the U.K. and that they were recovering some metal from it.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Yes, that was the bottom ash, so that was the bottom ash, yes.

Director, Natural Environment:

Correct, that is the bottom ash, yes, yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is the bottom ash, I beg your pardon. I beg your pardon.

The Minister for the Environment:

I think with Willie's role there that you are the ones that license that plant, are you not? You regulate the ...

Director, Natural Environment:

I was ...

The Minister for the Environment:

It is now approved through regulations but, of course, you are the expert on that plant, so there we are.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask, and it is kind of linked with Eco-active, I guess, but have we ever assessed the amount of plastic, single-use plastic, which comes in via packaging from outside, so blister packs, non-optional packaging? If I buy something for my computer, it will come in some nasty plastic blister pack. What I am trying to get at is how do we know what we can effect because when I buy a printer cartridge I do not get a choice in the packaging, the importer does not get a choice in the packaging and, therefore, how effective we can be in reducing the use of plastics in Jersey. I want to understand what concept you have got.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Yes, you are absolutely right. As a consumer, sometimes you feel quite frustrated with what little choice you have, which is why we are working very closely with the retail sector about what they are sourcing, where they are sourcing it from, are there alternatives they can use, can they reduce the packaging down? But we are also through things like plastic-free Jersey encouraging consumers to use their voice, to contact a retailer and say: "I have just bought a bunch of bananas, they have got their own peel around them, I do not need them in a plastic bag." A lot of that is about the retailers meeting the demands of the consumer. Talking to the supermarkets, all the supermarkets

in Jersey will tell you if you put loose broccoli next to plastic-wrapped broccoli they will sell, I think, 10 times more the plastic-wrapped broccoli than they will the loose, even though the loose is generally cheaper and you can pick the bits out that you want. That is where we really are trying to affect customer behaviour because we do not have an understanding about what we are importing but, as consumers, like you said, you do not have a choice with the printer cartridge you are using. If you were to find an alternative printer company that were doing that, it is about shoppers using their voice, is it not? Retail will change to meet the needs of their consumers and that is quite a key point.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There almost needs to be an obligation to put a plastic content on the packaging.

Director, Environmental Policy:

That is absolutely right. I think your point there about the origins of these sorts of materials, we do not know but I do not think you would have any country in the world that could tell you their import status of plastics because you would have to have people crawling all over them and you understand it does not work. The reality is that is where the policy levers make sense, so you either hit the manufacturers or you hit the consumers. You can hit consumers through 5p levies on bags, through behaviour change campaigns, through moving people's behaviour. As we talked about, it is quite difficult to enumerate that and sometimes you do not even see that impact because of the measurement opportunities that you have. If you look at really effective policy levers, they are normally ones that are internationally based, which is why the E.U. directive is possibly a really good option because it comes from the source, it comes from the manufacturers. What made car engines more efficient was people getting cross about petrol prices and the manufacturers changing their practices. From policy perspective what we have to do is observe what is going on in the rest of the world because we are, essentially, consumers in Jersey; we do very little primary manufacturing, if any, ourselves. We need to encourage consumers to use their choices sensibly and we have to be fast followers of international legislation. What we absolutely cannot do, I believe and will be recommending to the Council of Ministers, is allowing important international pieces of policy to bypass us and not apply here. They have to be enforced in some way or another. The reality is, going back to the E.U. directive, that if we were going to take on full compliance we would be looking at bringing new legislation to the Island. You have asked in your scoping the cost-benefit analysis of doing a small piece of work like the Eco-active campaign. You are absolutely right; what would be the cost-benefit analysis of applying the directive locally and we would have to enumerate that? I am sure we would come out with the right answer but that piece of work would have to be done. You would have to look at enforceability as well as resourcing and, essentially, bring a new law to the States, which would be for them to decide. But I think we can get quite caught up in the local picture and we rightly should, but I think the reality is it is a global issue. Micro plastics in the

ecosystems are only going to change when globally we address this. We are seeing that happen and we want to be fast followers as part of that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am going to take this to Jane, the Eco-active programme, which clearly is working very well. But I think there is a bit of wooliness in terms of public awareness of what and how to recycle, particularly with regard to plastics. We know there are plastic bottles but then there is the rest of the plastics and there is a bit of uncertainty there. What is your view on that?

Director, Natural Environment:

In terms of the purpose of the Eco-active campaign it is about reduce; it is not necessarily about recycling and recovery.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

But that is where we work really, really closely with our colleagues in what is now the operations team, so we are now the same department. Their primary role is really about telling people what they can recycle and why and we fully support that. A lot of the work we do within the States, for example, is working with our own States departments to make sure that they know what they should be recycling, how to recycle it and making sure that they fulfil that. It is very much us working to support that team's messaging and us helping them get their messages out more effectively. The rationale of what they choose to recycle comes from their vast knowledge, experience, expertise, knowledge of the market, the values of these recyclates. Our role in Eco-active is to encourage that behaviour to be adopted.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is your view on different coloured bins, our public litter bins, and there is no intimation that things are recycled thereafter? But in a lot of other jurisdictions you will find streets with coloured bins.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

St. Helier Parish do have some separating bins on King Street. Speaking to them I think sometimes they are used well, sometimes they are not used as well. I think, as you will know, there are so many conspiracies about what happens with our recycling waste in Jersey that we need to focus on the messages that we are hoping to look at towards the end of this year, which is about telling people what happens to the recycling so that they are more inclined to do the right thing. We have excellent plastic bottle recycling but we know the uptake of that is not enormous and that is something we need to improve on. Really, I think before we start expanding to include new things into what we

recycle, so expanding the plastics we do, I think we need to be better at communicating what we do with it and why it is important to recycle before we start introducing new things.

The Minister for the Environment:

Perhaps more consistency across the Island as well. We do not have all the parishes doing that; in my own parish we do it. Obviously, people make their best efforts, I think, and they are supportive but I think universally there is ... I think personally the place to do this is in an Island waste strategy where the focus, I think personally, is on waste reduction rather than a waste substitution. Having spent some time in Alderney where people sort out their plastics into different colours and there is a number on the bottom of the thing, but one wonders at the end of the day whether that is a fact because some of those are not recyclable. Some of the plastics are not recyclable, some are, and this does confuse people. I think Deputy Le Hegarat raised a question in the States about the plastic pots that garden centres used; what happens about those? But I am told they are non-recyclable and when I say, "What can we do about that?" the answer is if the garden centres did not use those - because there are other alternatives, there are biodegradable alternatives for putting plants in - that would solve it. I think that is an example of working with businesses and others trying to find solutions. I think there is that debate and I accept it is confused. The States, of course, is not immune to this. Very shortly a proposition is going to be coming across the States desk for plastic-free at Parliament and I very much hope that colleagues will sign up to it. It may sound a token thing but it is not. It is about trying to help us achieve those statuses and standards which allow us, an Island, to be able to set standards for others and the other islands are doing the same.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Jane touched on ... and I know she is passionate about this subject, as I said, and they have been working incredibly hard and I am not sure what else they can do, but when you look at the level of recycling at 6 per cent of bottles, when you consider half the Island are in kerbside collection, that is a pretty dire statistic. As I say, I know how hard they have been working for the past 3 years, so it is ...

The Minister for the Environment:

I cannot give you an explanation, I do not know.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If the other 6 parishes joined the scheme we might double that to 12. Some of those parishioners are already recycling; they take to the recycle centres. There must be an answer here but that is ...

Director, Natural Environment:

You could reasonably expect that 12 per cent to be the case if you are not doing anything in the background, so you are doubling the number of parishes that are not doing it in the background. If you then couple that within your waste strategy and a working policy, that pushes much, much harder in that direction and then you would anticipate that there would be a greater uptake.

Director, Environmental Policy:

The existing waste strategy had a relatively benign recycling target, I would venture 32 per cent, which we kind of stuck at. We went from zero to that, which was not ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is it 32 per cent for plastic?

Director, Environmental Policy:

No, no, no, overall. The current targets, which are out of date and need revitalising, had a 32 per cent recycling target based on tonnage. What we need to do is a new strategy; we need to think more carefully about the streams and how we want to address our coping with plastics. I think the issue when we began the first waste strategy was we were starting from zero. We had to look at where we could make the most benefit quickly. I think one of the things that the strategy has failed to do over the course of time is unify collections, kerbside recycling and bring banks as well. We are seeing a differential opportunity for recycling, as you say, depending on what parish that you are in. The new strategy will have to crack that nut. It will have to consider how we either put more resources towards a unified recycling kerbside opportunity for across the Island or in parishes to continue to act as they do. I am not sure how that will pan out; that is part of the policy development process. But that does need to be addressed because you are right, at the moment we have ... it is going to sound derogatory but we cherry-picked the streams that we have been able to make progress in. I think now what we probably need to do is step back and look at newer evidence, look at the more hazardous waste streams and decide which ones we want to refocus possibly new resources towards. The other thing to remember is that D.F.I., as it was, had a very limited budget under which to apply to their recycling. If we bring forward a new waste strategy perhaps with new resource-raising opportunities, we might have more money to invest in our recycling programme, although we all agree recycling is not the only answer, it is just one of the answers. But we would need more money to do that and that money has to come from somewhere. New taxes are difficult; they are never popular; they are not always the right answer. We know we have also got a shortfall in revenue from the lack of the introduction of the waste charge. That is something else that this new Council of Ministers will have to consider. That was to fund growth in education and health admittedly, but we also have a hole in our ability to buy our way into wider recycling opportunities. We need to reprofile all of that in the new waste strategy and that is going to be difficult in a resource-constrained environment.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The target was 33 per cent for all recycling.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Presumably, it includes all the televisions and everything down at La Collette, as there is a scheme down there, so what is the figure? We are told it was 33 per cent. What have we got ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

We are at 33 per cent, I think it is 32 per cent, and I think we are at ... I would have to double check that but we are around there. It is between 30 per cent and 35 per cent. You look at other jurisdictions, they have much higher recycling rates. That was our target. The reality is to increase that figure we need to up our efforts on recycling and we need to up our waste streams that we collect and recycle but that has a resource implication. Recycling costs money; putting things through the E.F.W. is free.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Guernsey's figure is significantly higher, is it not?

Director, Environmental Policy:

That is right, yes.

Director, Natural Environment:

It is. I appreciate jurisdictional comparisons are very different. Some jurisdictions will include recycling and recovery of construction demolition waste in soils and green waste, et cetera. It very much depends ... you can make statistics to tell you anything and if you are comparing and can trust in globally you need to make sure you are comparing and contrasting the same ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes, the same. But I think the point is we set ourselves our first rate, if you like. We have achieved that target and we need to do better. There is no doubt the waste strategy is well out of date and it needs revisiting and that is going to happen. I think with that we need to be really careful about what we are looking at in terms of ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

You are doing that by weight, so plastics is quite a small proportion of that, even if we recovered all of it, which is still a proportion of ...

[11:15]

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes, but that is exactly right, so the question is, is that the right way to do it? It is the way we did it 10 years ago, 12 years ago, but is it the right way for today? It probably is not. The reality is we might choose to look at different waste streams and set ourselves different targets, different uptake rates. We might do it very differently but it is all up for grabs in the new policy.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because we are only recycling bottles, probably 70 per cent of the plastics are not bottles, which we are not recycling. Even what we are doing is quite a small proportion of everything and even the plastics, I have no idea what the figure is but there is a lot more plastic that is not bottle ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

Yes, that is absolutely right. But, of course, what we would have to then do is match the resources to the aspiration and that will be a political decision. If we had significantly larger resources, we could recycle a lot more. But Government, as you well know, the juggling act is to decide where resources go and that is where the policy development process will give options and will give consultation opportunities. It will give scrutiny opportunities to get us to a place for the most fit-for-purpose policy for the next 2 decades, as opposed to the one that we have had for the last decade.

The Minister for the Environment:

It needs to be said, 2 things, notwithstanding the fact that we have achieved that previous recycling target, which I accept is below Guernsey, our waste stream has increased with the growth in population. We are aiming here at a moving target. We have failed lamentably to meet our population targets and it is occurring in every walk of life. The importance of this whole question of a new waste management strategy is even more important. The other thing I would say, I think Louise touched upon the policy-setting process. I believe that the process that the Council of Ministers has been operating throughout the summer and, for the first time, has the potential, and I use the word potential, to be able to match the resources with the priorities, which, in my view, has never happened, which is why previous Council of Ministers' plans have come to nothing. Promises have been made and come to nothing. There is no question ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can we get back to plastic recycling because that is where we are meant to be, if you do not mind? I am sorry, Minister, I have to ask ... we are not here to explain the job for your incredible policy development processes but Eco-active is what I would like to talk about.

The Minister for the Environment:

But they are important in this era and, of course, by your having ... maybe you think I have overegged it but I think if we were having this review further down the track I think we would have a lot more actions to say, wherein this is for policy development in formulation ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Unfortunately, we had to get on with some work. We could not wait for you guys to get on with yours.

The Minister for the Environment:

No, I understand. Okay, there are ... all right, I am not being critical but there are ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can you tell me how you engage with businesses? I am personally particularly interested in going back to what I was saying about the importation of plastic goods. Obviously, that comes through businesses. You talked about consumer pressure but, as a consumer in Jersey, I often do not feel like I have a voice. I feel like I have to pick what is given to me on the shelves. Could you let us know how you engage with businesses through Eco-active in general but also then perhaps more specifically wholesalers and importers and that side of things?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

The way the scheme generally works is a business will apply to become an Eco-active business and part of their application is they have to set 2 environmental actions for their business. That comes from the belief that they know their business far better than I could know their business, so they know what their business's most important impacts on the environment are, and then we work to address those. For some businesses it might be about waste reduction. For a lot of businesses, it will be about energy use. What we will then do is look at the actions that we are presented with for the year and then plan a training programme around that. This year we have done quite a lot of training on reducing plastic use because that is our key issue. In other years we have done a lot of work around fleet management. If you are a business whose biggest environmental impact is your fleet, and we have a lot of businesses where that will be the case, we have done sessions on vehicle trackers, knowing how your vehicle is being driven, the environmental impact and all that kind of stuff. We also do physical training as well, so we might buy in a trainer who will run a course. Last year we did a tractor driver training because, funnily enough, I know nothing about driving a tractor.

The idea is that we are giving the right people the right skills to reduce the impacts in their role. It very much comes from the actions that the businesses set. Each year, at the end of the year, we go back out to those businesses and we tell them the actions they told us they were going to achieve and we ask for feedback on whether they have managed to do it. Generally speaking, people do or at least they make really good headway in that. Sometimes they do not achieve it, generally for legitimate reasons. It might be a business was going to do something in their place of work but they moved office, so that can negate it.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Are you able to reach all the businesses? Like every year are you ... and I appreciate resources?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

We do it as a mail-merge email. It is unbelievably time consuming because the businesses are all busy, so generally they need a few reminders. They feed back on their old actions but then they have to set their 2 new actions for the year ahead. That communication each year, we know or we believe we know what the environmental impacts for those businesses are. We also talk to trade associations and to others about the things that are concerning them. We are quite aware that we want to do lots of work with the hospitality sector around the green kitchen standard. It has not been the right time for them right now but that is something we are aware that there is a demand for, so that will be looking at food waste, energy use, water use, all the biggies within that sector. As flexible as we can be is how we are with Eco-active. Plastics has obviously been such a big topic in the media this year, it has made sense for us to focus on that this year.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Have you engaged with wholesalers and importers on plastics?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Wholesalers and importers, we have some that we talk to, we have some that do not particularly want to talk to us. Eco-active is a voluntary scheme and in terms of my capacity to go out and talk to everybody, I do my very best. But to be honest with you, no, there are people I have not spoken to.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I take you just to uPVC plastic windows, which seems to be an issue down at La Collette at the moment? I just wondered if you had had discussions with the window manufacturers?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

That is the one that Emma has been focusing on because we work really closely together, but what we are also really clear on is we do not want to duplicate our work because we are both quite limited in what we can achieve.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It has been done, yes.

Eco-active Programme Manager:

Emma has been talking to that sector, so I have left them alone. Then there will be people I am talking to that she will leave alone because I am having that communication.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Fair enough, yes. But are there any States subsidies available for businesses who switch to more eco-friendly packaging or products?

Eco-active Programme Manager:

No.

Director, Natural Environment:

No, it is a voluntary, as Jane has alluded to, the behavioural changes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think looking ahead in the policy you are developing there is room for considering that?

The Minister for the Environment:

My problem is that Government, we have a low-tax structure and yet we are promising everybody they can have unlimited services. It is an Alice in Wonderland world. We have to make choices, as a Government, about ... and those go together; the revenue-raising things that Louise mentioned about the waste tax. There is a philosophy that was developed before but has not yet progressed. The issue of waste management has a resource cost and, therefore, that needs to be recognised by the polluter; the person who generates the waste pays. There is an argument, I think, about whether it is the consumer or the importers and I think this whole ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was going to say because manufacturer pays ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, manufacturers and importers and this is what, to me, it makes a point, that at the macro level we need to work with the British Government and others about what they are doing to make sure that what we end up with is ... but having a system where we can be open-ended just pumping money, I just cannot see that happening.

Director, Environmental Policy:

It is not necessarily the best policy lever. Grants sometimes work really, really well but sometimes they absolutely do not. Again, you would have to do cost-benefit analyses as part of the development process.

The Connétable of Grouville:

One system that seemed to fuel the imagination of the general public is this concept of deposits, a deposit scheme for plastic bottles. I noticed on the television yesterday in Germany they have these machines you put your plastic bottles in and you get your 20 marks out or whatever you get out of there.

Director, Natural Environment:

That was a while ago.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That was a while ago. But it seems to me their recycling for bottles is 97 per cent, I think, and we are at 6 per cent. Is it something we should be looking at?

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, I heard that. My question is this - I cannot answer you - is could a small island operate that individually out of kilter with the whole manufacturing and supply chain? I would doubt it but I ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

It would have to be importers, where they tax the importer bottle and that would fund the return on the bottle ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, under the E.U. I read a note somewhere ... it says here that, I think, under the E.U. thing that each member state says you should use a deposit system in order to collect the plastic bottles. In the directive, I think, is an issue for member states. If Britain ... I mean we are still in the E.U. for 2 more years, are we not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Jersey is not in the E.U.

The Minister for the Environment:

Sorry, no, but ... yes, but environmental matters, as far as I am aware, and I stand corrected by my expert colleagues, Jersey has come out extremely well in following best practice environmentally the E.U. I attended a Brexit meeting the other day where obviously all the team now are keeping track on how Jersey is in a current place and I was told, we were all told, that Jersey has done extremely well in terms of following environmental regulation and is very compliant, very high-level compliant with E.U.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Brexit should not change that really. It still could be E.U. regulations.

The Minister for the Environment:

While I am Minister, not, so I certainly would not be buying into wholesale reduction of environmental standards. As far as I am concerned, those environmental standards are vital.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Some of the conventions are not European. Ramsar is not European at all.

The Minister for the Environment:

No, that is a U.N. (United Nations), I think U.N. But in terms the E.U., I was pleased to hear that because there are areas of Jersey life where we cannot make that claim. But here we are and, of course, again - I am sorry to keep coming back to the British - there was real strength of brain at that British Council meeting. Lord Gardiner ... we did not have Michael Gove, we had Lord Gardiner, one of his right-hand people. There was a real conviction that maintaining environmental standards in Britain, and that is brought in by the Scots and all the other jurisdictions, is absolutely paramount in the future, whatever happens with the E.U.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it takes us back to cost and you could go back to the bottle deposit return scheme saying that given there is potentially a cost to that should Government be introducing funding to that. Because we heard from the others in the global department, if I can refer to it as that, that there is a fluctuating cost depending on the market value of recyclates at the moment. There has to be a bit of introduction of funding from Government as obviously ...

Director, Natural Environment:

Is that the right place to be introducing funding where you may get better bang for your buck on consolidation of recycling and collection, et cetera, across parishes? Again, I think all these issues would come out in a wider discussion and consultation on the waste strategy into the future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. Minister, have you got anything else to contribute at this stage?

The Minister for the Environment:

No, only that I thank you and I think it has been a fascinating session. We have had a really, I think, very broad-ranging mix of policy stuff, policy work that is under development, a work in progress. Also, business as usual but not just business as usual, real action on the ground. I am delighted to be sitting here beside people who have ... and long may that continue. I think that is the kind of mix we have to get right in the future. I am hoping that we will come back again maybe in 6 months or whatever and have more positive to say about ... I am hopeful that we will see some good things from the Council of Ministers.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We look forward to seeing the policy in due course and thank you for your attendance this morning.

The Minister for the Environment:

Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you.

[11:28]