



Keeping Jersey Special – Vision for a Greener Island

1.0 Aim

“Keeping Jersey Special” is a major initiative designed to deliver a sustainable Island community, at peace with itself and proud of its place on the planet, aspiring to use no more than its share of global resources and achieving a substantial reduction in carbon emissions by 2050.

2.0 Summary

Jersey is a small, independent jurisdiction with a highly skilled workforce and a small bureaucracy that is able to respond to challenges and opportunities relatively quickly. Its high quality natural environment makes it an attractive place to work and live, however, the Island has what can be seen as a single crop economy in the form of the finance industry, which arguably places it in a vulnerable position in the current economic climate. There needs to be diversity within the economy with measures in place to ensure, among others, that both agriculture and tourism are able to flourish. The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, and as such the quality of Jersey’s environment is a vital component of the Island’s future success.

In drawing together this environmental manifesto, the Advisory Group on Environmental Sustainability (AGES) seeks to encourage the Council of Ministers to put the environment at the core of the next Strategic Plan and at the heart of its ongoing agenda.

The key target areas are energy consumption, transport management, waste management, the built environment, and the countryside and marine environments. Each will require to be addressed in a coordinated way including funding by the Council of Ministers.

3.0 Environmental Manifesto

3.1 Introduction

1. The first three years of Ministerial Government have been characterised by an impressive focus on economic performance and planning for future economic stability. Tough new measures on taxation have been implemented, principally to maintain and grow the financial services sector on which the island economy and tax base currently depends.
2. Further challenges have been identified, in particular the changing demographics of the island and this has opened up a new public debate. It is apparent from the dialogue of this debate that the public have serious concerns about the price they think they may have to pay to ensure continued economic growth. In essence they are questioning what is important to them; what is it that defines their quality of life?

3.2 Public Perception

3. There is a growing concern about the balance of importance between economic and environmental goals. Some have questioned whether some aspects of Island life that are held dear could be sacrificed.
4. Protecting the environment and maintaining open green space have come through as key issues with high levels of support, coupled to a demonstrated public desire and willingness to adopt better behaviours on environmental issues; for example the very high use that is made of waste recycling facilities.

3.3 The Global Situation

5. On a global scale, it is internationally recognised that dramatic action is needed to reverse current trends that are destroying ecosystems and destabilising the climate. There is a window of opportunity for action of maybe 15 years, beyond which effects may become irreversible and massively damaging.
6. Although wealthy post-industrial societies have managed to decouple themselves from basic biological constraints imagine for example how many people Jersey could feed and clothe from its own resources, the fact remains that the entire global economy is underpinned by the continuation of the biological services, which provide our food, water, energy, materials, medicines and waste disposal.
7. Recent economic studies, such as the Stern Report on Climate Change, have shown that the impacts of these environmental issues will have massive, concurrent global economic impacts and defence analysts have concluded that the potential for conflict over environmental resources is one of the most significant threats faced in this century.
8. As the challenges become more obvious, rhetoric and grand plans have grown to match them. But what the public see is paralysis at the level of action: writing a strategy and setting targets is not the same as action.

9. Government departments are not good at doing what they preach; there is an opportunity for Government to put its own house in order at the same time as asking others to do more.

3.4 Opportunities for Jersey

10. The good news is that all this creates a perfect opportunity for a small and nimble society like Jersey to take action that will both deal with local issues and also generate major new business opportunities that will enhance and differentiate our reputation as an exemplar and a good place to do business in the global economy.
11. Environmental pace setters around the world are often small places that are brave enough and have the political vision, desire and agility run ahead of the pack; think of Modbury, Freiberg, Woking, California. So why not Jersey? Surely Jersey can rise to the challenge; think big, think strategic and think long term – beyond the electoral cycle. Let us harness the power of small places to do big things.
12. The City is beginning to assess the huge opportunities in global carbon markets. This is a perfect, low footprint economic development area for Jersey to be a part of, more so if we can establish ourselves as a zero carbon island, as proposed in the Energy green paper, 'Fuel for thought?'. To complement this, we have potentially large local renewable energy resources waiting to be developed that could attract the considerable sums which will in future be looking for carbon offsetting opportunities in which to invest.
13. Jersey therefore has the potential and the ability to establish and market itself as a world leader in environmental responsibility at the same time as being a great place to do business. Our new buildings can themselves be exemplars, even iconic; a 21st century statement of our adaptability and purpose. From the design of new buildings through to the refurbishment of town houses, to the new modular units for first time buyers, we have opportunities to set the pace for others to follow.
14. We already have Durrell, a major asset for the Island, with global recognition as a leading environmental agency assisting the survival of endangered species, the precursor of the looming global environmental crisis. We know there is a potential market in assisting developing countries to adapt to climate change, which is likely to be as big, if not bigger than carbon offsetting. The Durrell organisation is well placed to be able to offer this service, because of its outreach structure.

3.5 Delivering Action – Keeping Jersey Special

15. In summary therefore, AGES believes that the key target areas are energy consumption, transport management, waste management, the built environment, the countryside and coastal/sea environments. They combine to be our island environment; each will require to be addressed in a coordinated way including funding by the Council of Ministers.