Natural environment

This chapter provides an overview of the characteristics and quality of Jersey's natural environment, covering its biodiversity and geodiversity, both terrestrial and marine, and the intrinsic natural beauty and landscape and seascape character of the entire Bailiwick, out to its territorial limits. It sets out the policy framework for assessing change that affects it.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

The Bailiwick of Jersey – consisting of 120 sqkm of land and 2,455 sqkm of marine waters - is an ecosystem of interconnected habitats, species and processes. Biodiversity is the variety and diversity of life and species that exist within this ecosystem and is present everywhere in the Bailiwick – from the centre of Town out to the island's territorial limits. Geodiversity is the variety of geological, geomorphological and soil features, which play a fundamental role in sustaining biodiversity.

Despite its relatively small size, Jersey has rich and diverse habitats. The island's terrestrial and marine environments support a myriad of wildlife and the particular mix of species is unique. Jersey has a responsibility to protect and promote its unique biological heritage. The island also has a responsibility beyond its shores. The inter-dependence of ecosystems knows no political boundaries. Some migratory birds, for example, depend on habitats in Jersey to overwinter or breed. Their valued and intermittent presence here, as migrants, is dependent on the continued existence of suitable ecosystems thus demonstrating the island's shared responsibility on a global scale. Likewise, the natural environment is also important in national and international contexts, in terms of the role it plays with regards to climate change and achieving the island's net zero carbon goal. Jersey's wetlands are, for example, an important resource in terms of carbon sequestration.

Jersey's key sites and areas of biodiversity and geodiversity value are identified through a variety of different defined areas and designations, each of which has different regulatory or management objectives and requirements. Their importance, and relevance to the Island Plan and the planning process, is that they serve to identify the biodiversity value and significance of these sites and areas. Areas currently defined and designated are identified on figures NE1 and NE2. The new Wildlife (Jersey) Law 202-[1] also enables the designation of areas of special protection (ASP) which may be applied temporarily, such as during the breeding season for a particular species. It is, however, important to remain conscious that biodiversity value is to be found throughout the island – both within and outside of identified sites - and is a consideration in the assessment of all development proposals.

Sites of Special Interest (SSI) are formally designated under Planning and Building (Jersey) Law for their special ecological, zoological, botanical, scientific or geological value, or a combination of these[2]. Their designation allows greater regulation of activities, which might harm the special interest of these sites, through the planning system, even where the works may not amount to development.

[1] Wildlife (Jersey) Law 202-

[2] Article 51 Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002

The identification and designation of SSIs for the natural environment is based on the criteria set out in the Biodiversity Strategy[3]. There are currently 30 nature conservation SSIs and 22 geological SSIs[4] in Jersey, although research[5] suggests that there may be potential for more:
Environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) do not enjoy any form of statutory designation or tighter regulation of development activity but serve to identify the island's key terrestrial habitat areas and the corridors linking them[6]. These valued areas are:

- Les Landes heathland;
- St Ouen's Bay habitats;
- North Coast habitats; especially heathlands, coastal grassland, maritime cliff vegetation and interconnecting habitats;
- Rozel area – predominantly coastal habitats and woodland, including St. Catherine's Valley;
- Grouville habitats;
- South-West Coast heathlands;
- Ouaisné to Noirmont coastal habitats;
- Valley woodlands and wet grasslands; and
- Rue des Près wet grasslands.

Jersey's marine environment has an incredibly rich biodiversity value of international significance which is represented by four designated Ramsar sites and three marine protection areas (MPA).

The purpose of Ramsar sites is the conservation of wetlands considered to be of international importance and for the wise sustainable use of their resources. Jersey's designated Ramsar sites cover a total of around 190 sqkm of the island's most valuable wetlands[7] at:

- South East Coast of Jersey;
- Les Écréhous and Les Dirouilles;
- Les Minquiers; and
- Les Pierres de Lecq (the Paternosters).

The purpose of MPAs is to protect marine species and habitats considered to be of international importance from potentially destructive fishing practices. There are three MPAs in Jersey waters, covering an area of around 150 sqkm, where such practices are prohibited under Sea Fisheries Law[8] at:

- Les Minquiers;
- Les Écréhous; and
- Inshore waters.

[3] Biodiversity A Strategy for Jersey (2010)
[4] See list of Sites of Special Interest (natural sites)
[5] Geodiversity Audit for Jersey (2020)
[6] Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas Project (2010)
[7] Jersey's Ramsar sites
[8] MPAs designated under the OPSAR convention. The OPSAR is the mechanism by which 15 Governments and the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic.

These areas were identified in order to protect key habitats, such as seagrass, maerl and kelp[9]. Although the purpose of these areas is to regulate fishing practices, it is important to recognise the biodiversity value of these areas where they are affected by development proposals.

Work has also been undertaken, and is ongoing, to identify and better understand the value of other key habitats in the marine environment. This is to ensure that there is a sound understanding of the island's key marine habitat areas, and that this information can be used to inform decisions about new development or uses within the marine environment. These habitat areas are shown in figure NE3.

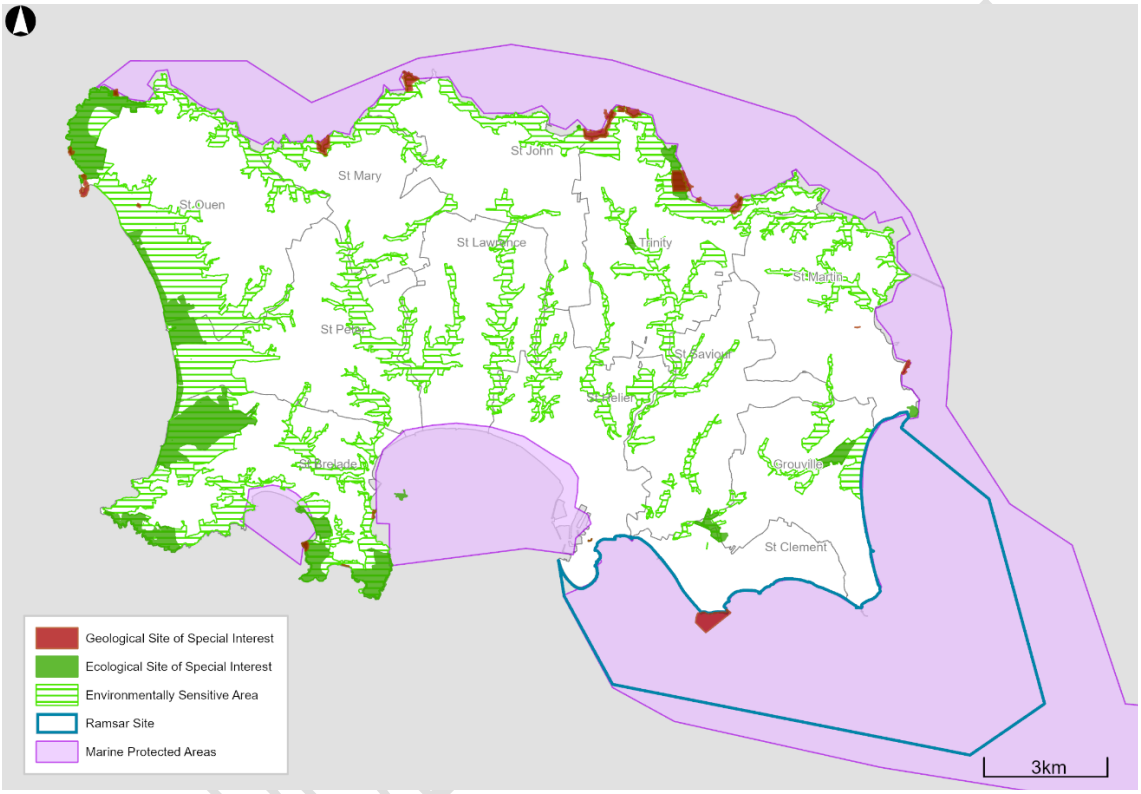

Figure NE1: Biodiversity and geodiversity designations and defined areas (terrestrial)

[9] Marine Resources Annual Report (2019)

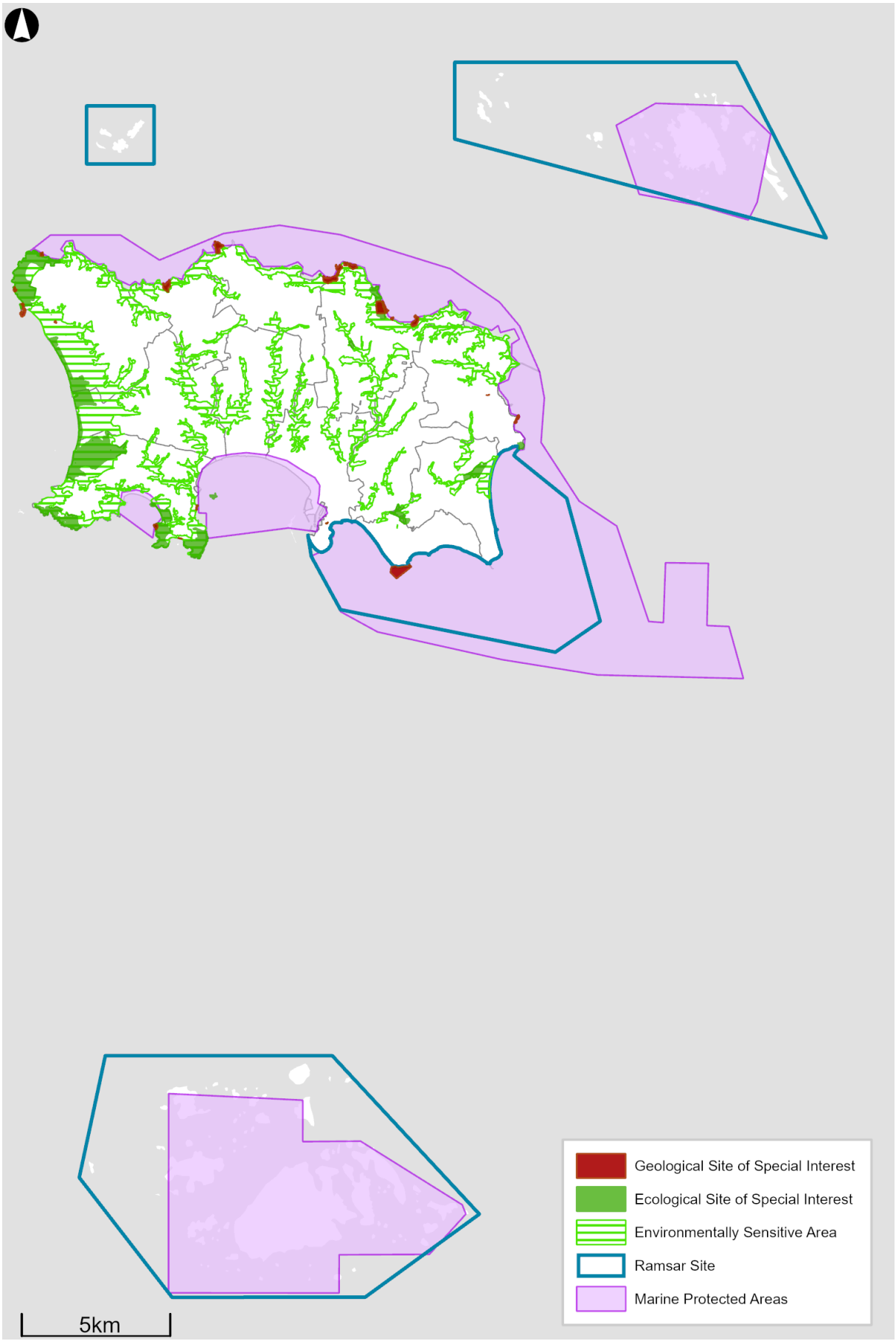

Figure NE2: Biodiversity and geodiversity designations and defined areas (marine)

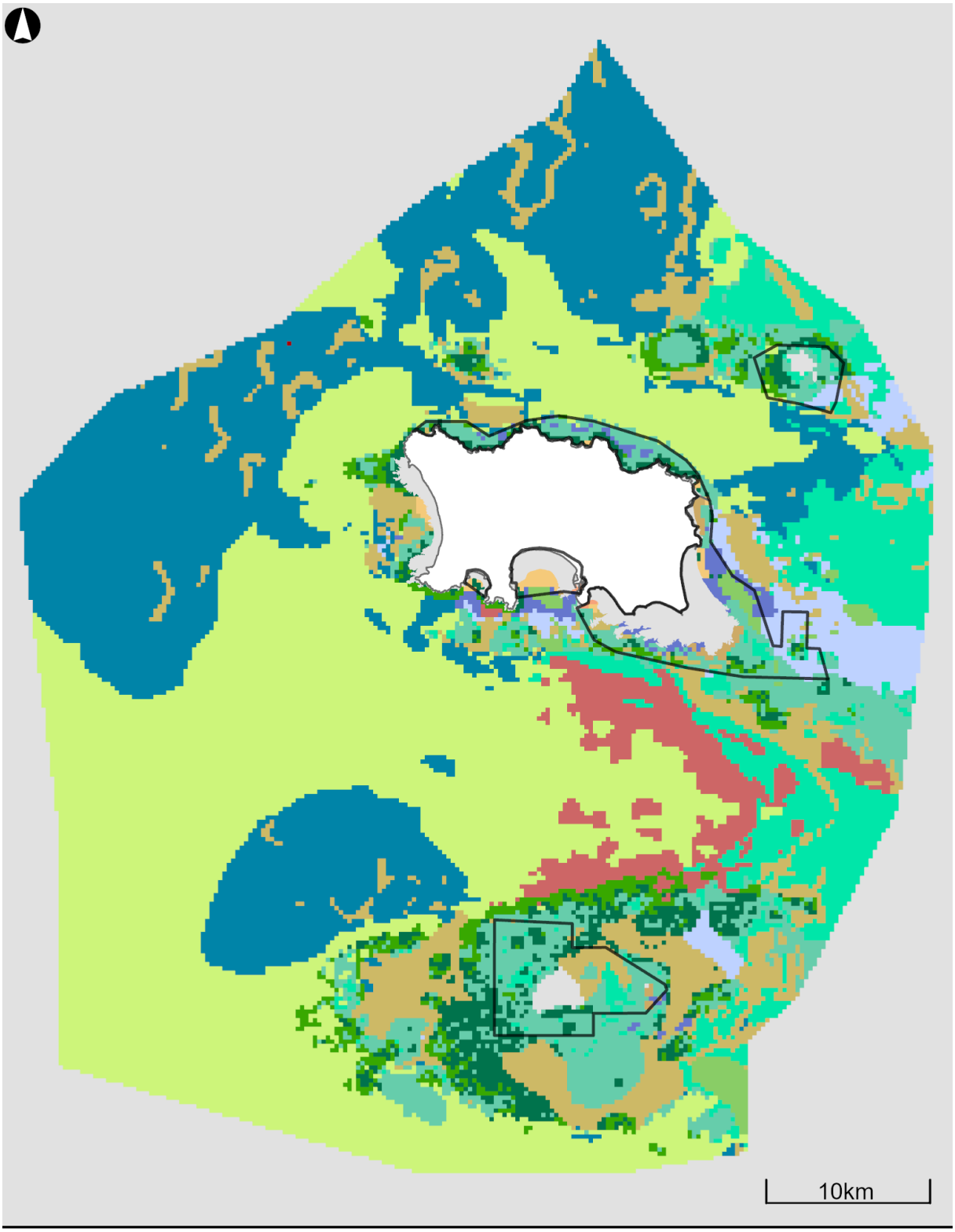

Figure NE3: High value marine habitats

Protection and improvement of biodiversity and geodiversity

The impact of development on biodiversity and geodiversity is an important consideration in the determination of planning applications. This includes development both within and outside of protected sites. The wider countryside, along with the buildings and gardens of the island's built-up areas, provide increasingly important habitats, roosting and nesting places for animals and birds, including protected species as identified in the Wildlife (Jersey) Law (202-).

To enable an understanding of the impact of a proposal on biodiversity and geodiversity, an appropriate level of supporting information will be required with all planning applications that have the potential to impact upon biodiversity or geodiversity, even where they might lie outside of a designated or defined site or area. This is required in order to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of biodiversity and geodiversity (such as the impacts of development activity, improper management of invasive non-native species or disturbance through, for example, noise, lighting or recreational pressure).

The detail and content of this supporting information will be proportional to the scale of the proposal and its location, relative to sites and areas of biodiversity and geodiversity interest. The supporting information must show that features of biodiversity and geological interest, including habitats and protected species, will be protected.

Where proposals would result in the harm to, loss or partial loss of sites and areas of biodiversity and geodiversity interest, evidence will be required as part of the application to demonstrate that there are overriding public benefits or needs to justify, and outweigh, any adverse impact on the natural environment; or that there are no other mechanisms for supporting the retention of its environmental value. Where justification is sought on the basis of viability, viability assessments will be required to be published and subject to independent review, as part of the planning application process.

For all proposals, a mitigation hierarchy will be applied: this requires harm to biodiversity or geodiversity resulting from development to be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, or not allowed.

To promote more sustainable forms of development, and to enhance the island's green infrastructure and green networks, development proposals which can make a positive contribution and improve the island's biodiversity will be encouraged. Public bodies, in particular, have a duty to have regard to the promotion of biodiversity and should seek to aim for and demonstrate that their development leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand.

Policy NE1 – Protection and improvement of biodiversity and geodiversity
Development must protect or improve biodiversity and geodiversity.

All development must ensure that the importance of habitats, designated sites and species is taken into account and should seek to improve biodiversity and geodiversity value and, where possible, to deliver biodiversity net gain.

The highest level of protection will be given to sites of special interest; marine protected areas and Ramsar sites.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that a proposal will neither directly nor indirectly; singularly or cumulatively; cause harm to biodiversity or geodiversity value.

Proposals that could affect biodiversity or geodiversity, but which do not protect or improve it, will not be supported unless, and with regard to its status and environmental value, and the impact of the proposed development on that status and environmental value:

a. the changes are demonstrably necessary either to meet an overriding public policy objective or need; and
b. there is no reasonably practicable alternative means of doing so without harm; and
c. harm is reduced to the minimum through appropriate avoidance, minimisation, mitigation and/or compensation measures; and
d. it has been demonstrated that the predicted public benefit outweighs the harm and where the nature of that benefit to the public is clear, direct and evidenced.

Where development proposals may lead to an impact on biodiversity and geodiversity they must be accompanied by adequate information which demonstrates how biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected, and adverse impact avoided, minimised, mitigated or compensated for. Where the supporting information is insufficient to demonstrate the above, applications will not be supported.

Biodiversity net gain

Given the threats facing biodiversity and the rate at which biodiversity is being lost, the concept of biodiversity net gain is becoming increasingly important internationally. Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity it should provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected in such a way that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted and ecological networks can be restored.

The concept of 'biodiversity net gain' is not currently applied to the assessment of development proposals in Jersey, and its adoption and use here is at an earlier stage than in other countries. In England, the Environment Bill[10] has introduced the concept of mandatory net gain and set out the metrics by which this gain would be calculated. Prior to this, many local development plans included a policy requiring biodiversity net gain, but evidence has shown that this policy alone was insufficient and that a wider legislative

[10] Environment Bill

framework was required to achieve tangible outcomes. Specifically, without a legally binding obligation to achieve biodiversity net gain, it was often displaced by the weight of other material considerations in the planning balance. Without an established metric by which to measure gains, there was also a lack of consistency and transparency.
To be able to apply and deliver biodiversity net gain in Jersey, a comprehensive approach to policies, frameworks and regulatory tools is needed. Detailed guidance and metrics are required, underpinned by a clear duty in legislation, so that the approach to measuring biodiversity is transparent and consistent. This will provide certainty to developers and will allow for biodiversity net gain to be properly considered at the point of land purchase. Without this robust legislative framework and guidance, the introduction of biodiversity net gain in planning policy would lack transparency, could create uncertainty and could have a negative impact on the viability of development in the island.

It is also considered appropriate to explore the introduction of an urban greening factor for Jersey. An urban greening factor[11] is a tool that evaluates and quantifies the amount and quality of urban greening that a scheme provides to inform decisions about appropriate levels of greening in new developments. Such an approach might be particularly appropriate for urban or smaller sites, which are more difficult to deliver biodiversity net gains on, but where a contribution to enhance green infrastructure and networks might still be delivered.

Further work is therefore needed in Jersey to define the biodiversity net gain and urban greening concepts and to consider how they would operate, including their inter-relationship with existing designations. This work will inform the next iteration of the Island Plan.

The island's new Wildlife (Jersey) Law 202- imposes a duty upon public bodies to have regard to promoting the conservation of biodiversity. In order to support the delivery of this objective the Minister for the Environment will engage with, and strongly encourage, government-sponsored development schemes, including those to be delivered by arms-length agencies, to actively explore how the concept of biodiversity net gain might be delivered in Jersey during the plan period, in advance of its proposed adoption as part of the next Island Plan Review.

This will form part of the Minister for the Environment's obligation to designate and publish strategies for the conservation of biodiversity and to report on actions taken in pursuance of that duty, and will help inform the mandatory application of biodiversity net gain in the next Island Plan.

[11] Urban greening factor

Proposal – Biodiversity net gain

The Minister for the Environment will undertake further studies to determine how the concept of biodiversity net gain and an urban greening factor could be developed and implemented as part of the legal framework in Jersey, and how it could be measured and monitored to ensure its application through the planning process.

To further this work, Minister for the Environment will strongly encourage government-sponsored development schemes to actively explore how the concept of biodiversity net gain might be delivered in Jersey during the plan period of this Island Plan.

This work will inform the policies of the next iteration of the Island Plan.

Green infrastructure and green networks

The term 'green infrastructure' refers to assets including open spaces such as parks and gardens, playing fields, allotments, woodlands, fields, trees, hedgerows, banques and ponds, as well as footpaths, cycle routes and streams. Assets involving water are sometimes called 'blue infrastructure', but these are all included within the overarching term of 'green infrastructure' within this Island Plan. Together, these green infrastructure assets form the island's green infrastructure network.

Green infrastructure assets are valued for their multi-functional benefits. These are wide-ranging and include adaptation to climate change, improved resilience to extreme weather events, enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem services, improved visual amenity and landscape quality, sustainable travel opportunities and improved public health and wellbeing. These assets are often more capable of meeting social, environmental and economic objectives than man-made 'grey infrastructure'[12] and should, therefore, be considered as an essential part of the infrastructure that enables society to successfully function. Taking a green infrastructure approach allows for socio-economic and health benefits to be integrated with environmental objectives, ensuring maximum benefit when planning, delivering and managing green infrastructure assets.

Jersey's key identified sites and areas of biodiversity and geodiversity value are important 'nodes' in the green network. The coverage of existing protected sites alone is, however, unlikely to be sufficient to conserve Jersey's biodiversity. Enhancing the green network to provide greater connectivity between these protected areas is important to ensure that they do not simply become isolated islands rich in biodiversity. By creating habitat between protected areas, the overall biodiversity of the island will increase. A green network allows animals, birds, plants, seeds, nutrients and water the opportunity to spread and move across the island, providing the island's biodiversity with greater resilience in the face of a changing climate.

Work has been undertaken to identify priority corridors, which should be enhanced to create a better-connected network of habitats.[13] The areas of the island with the greatest potential to create wildlife corridors lie in the west and southwest of the island and among the wooded valleys and opportunity, through development, should be taken to enhance these, as well as to develop green networks throughout the island (see figure NE4).

[12] Landscape Institute Position Statement (2013)

[13] Jersey multi-species distribution, habitat suitability and connectivity modelling research report (2018)

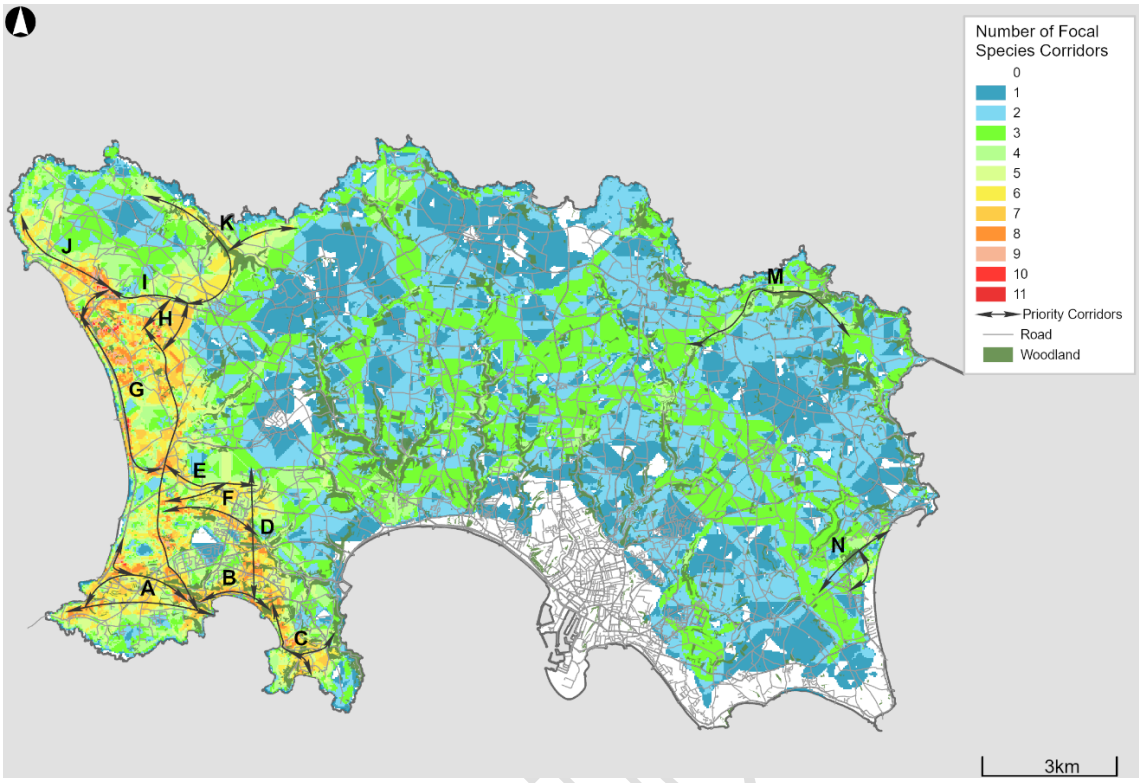

Figure NE4: Jersey multi-species distribution, habitat suitability and connectivity modelling

Green infrastructure is present at all scales and requires careful consideration on a site-by-site basis. Some assets will be common to most sites – such as trees and hedgerows - which contribute significantly to the island's biodiversity, landscape character and sense of place. Development proposals must show how these important existing green infrastructure assets – and others that may be present – will be protected and 'designed in' as an integral part of development proposals and, where possible, improved.

The island's existing trees are of importance and should be retained. This is particularly important in the island's built-up areas, especially in Town, where trees are relatively scarce. Where a proposed development impacts on trees or hedgerows, a tree survey will be required. This will need to detail the location, genus, species, canopy size, root protection zone[14] to and ground level data at the base of the trunk, together with an assessment of the condition of existing trees, in order to properly assess and consider the implications of development for these important features.

Whilst designated on the basis of their amenity value, trees that feature on the list of protected trees should be retained, their loss only being permitted in exceptional circumstances. The same considerations should apply to the island's ancient, veteran and champion trees.

New development must also incorporate new green infrastructure assets. Green infrastructure can be incorporated into development in a number of ways, for example, through the incorporation of open space and recreational areas, planting of new trees and landscaping, sustainable green walls[15] green roofs and sustainable drainage (SuDS)

[14] See BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

[15] "a sustainable living wall or green wall is defined as one comprised of permanently planted community of:'

features[16]. This is particularly important in the island's built-up areas, where green infrastructure is less prevalent, and where its introduction can be impactful and deliver multiple benefits for town residents and the urban environment. New green infrastructure should be appropriately designed to positively contribute to the visual character of the area, as defined in the Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment.

Opportunities to visually screen development should be considered, particularly in more rural settings. Landscaping must form an integral part of the development, and selection of new species should be appropriate to the site-specific context and be beneficial to the creation of the wider green network, with careful planning to avoid the introduction of non-native and invasive species.

This Island Plan, therefore, requires that all development protects, maintains and improves the island's green infrastructure networks. In particular, development within or near priority wildlife corridors will be required to protect and improve existing habitats by avoiding their fragmentation and creating new routes of continuous habitat or stepping-stone habitats. The contribution to green infrastructure should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and the rural or urban context. By using and enhancing existing green infrastructure assets, as part of a sensitively designed development, the quality of the development can be improved, whilst simultaneously strengthening the island-wide green network and resulting in a greater level of benefit. The impact of development proposals on green infrastructure networks; and proposals for their improvement, must be informed by a biodiversity impact statement, to be submitted as part of a planning application.

a) plants naturally adapted to growing up vertical surfaces by adhesion (e.g. *Parthenocissus* spp., *Hedera* spp. or *Ficus pumila* or *Hydrangea petiolaris*) or
b) xerophytic or other plants that can root into a fixed vertical substrate capable of sustaining plant growth without the use of circulation pumps (e.g. *Aeonium* spp., *Sedum* spp., *Campanula* spp. and hardier members of the genus *Philodendron*) or
c) plants that can self-twine around a supporting framework fixed proud of a wall such as jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*), clematis, *Trachelospurnum jasminoides*, *Solanum jasminoides* and all climbing *Lonicera* spp*)*."

[16] These features include green roofs, and more natural features such as ponds, wetlands and shallow ditches called swales. Hard engineered elements, often used in high density developments, include permeable paving, attenuation storage and soakaways.

Policy NE2 – Green infrastructure and networks

Development must protect and improve existing green infrastructure assets, and contribute towards the delivery of new green infrastructure assets and wider green infrastructure networks by:

a. retaining and improving existing green infrastructure, including trees, hedgerows, wetlands, ponds and watercourses, as far as is practicable;
b. incorporating the provision of new green infrastructure assets, which contribute to the creation of the island's green infrastructure network and are appropriate in nature and scale, taking into account the site-specific context and proposed use;
c. ensuring that new trees are planted in the ground if at all possible, with the re-routing of any underground services and other measures that may be necessary to achieve this being undertaken as part of the development;
d. ensuring that, where appropriate, lost watercourses are restored and new water features provided in the public realm, especially in urban areas; and ensuring green infrastructure assets, including tree root zones, are adequately protected during construction works.

The loss of protected, veteran, ancient and champion trees will not be supported except for where it can be demonstrated that they are dead, dying or dangerous.

Any development that would have an adverse impact on existing green infrastructure assets will be required to demonstrate that the benefit will outweigh the harm and provide details of how the features will be protected as far as practicable, and that measures are in place to minimise and/or mitigate their loss on-site, or will be otherwise compensated for.

Proposals affecting green infrastructure assets which do not provide sufficient information to enable the likely impact of the proposals to be considered, understood and evaluated, will be not be supported.

Green infrastructure and network strategy

To realise the full extent of benefits, a green infrastructure network should be strategically planned, designed and managed as a multi-functional resource. To support the policies of the Island Plan, the Minister for Environment commits to preparing a wider green infrastructure and network strategy, to identify and map the existing strategic network of green infrastructure across the island, along with an assessment of the interrelationships between these spaces.

The strategy will identify priorities for addressing deficiencies and should set out positive measures and opportunities for the design and management of all forms of green infrastructure. It will provide a coherent strategy for the delivery of green networks, across a range of initiatives.

Proposal – Green infrastructure and network strategy

The Minister for Environment commits to preparing a wider green infrastructure and network strategy, to identify the existing strategic network of green infrastructure and to outline priorities for addressing deficiencies through positive design and management.

Protection of landscape and seascape character

Jersey encompasses an extraordinary diversity of landscapes and seascapes, from patchwork fields to deep wooded valleys; from rugged coastal cliffs to sweeping flat sandy bays, and extensive intertidal reefs. The high scenic value of the landscape and seascape helps define Jersey's unique identity and character; contributes significantly to the quality of life, health and wellbeing of islanders; and is also important for the island's economic prosperity making it an attractive and distinct place to live and visit.

The diversity of landscape results from the underlying geology of the island and changes in topography, together with the interactions between the natural environment and historical and current uses, including human occupation, farming, fishing and travel. There is a dramatic and distinctive coastline, 90 km in length, much of which remains entirely natural. The coast is the area where landscapes and seascapes meet, resulting in attractive compositions and long, panoramic views of land, sea and sky. Beyond the land, Jersey's aesthetic richness continues: it has one of the largest tidal ranges in the world, at over 12 metres, meaning that up to 54 sqkm of intertidal reefs and flats[17] are diurnally exposed and make a significant and dynamic contribution to the natural character and identity of the island.

The Jersey Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (ILSCA)[18] provides an objective assessment of the island's landscapes and seascapes and identifies ten distinctive character types covering the terrestrial, intertidal and marine environments of the entire Bailiwick of Jersey, which are subdivided into 34 character areas (figures NE5 and NE6).

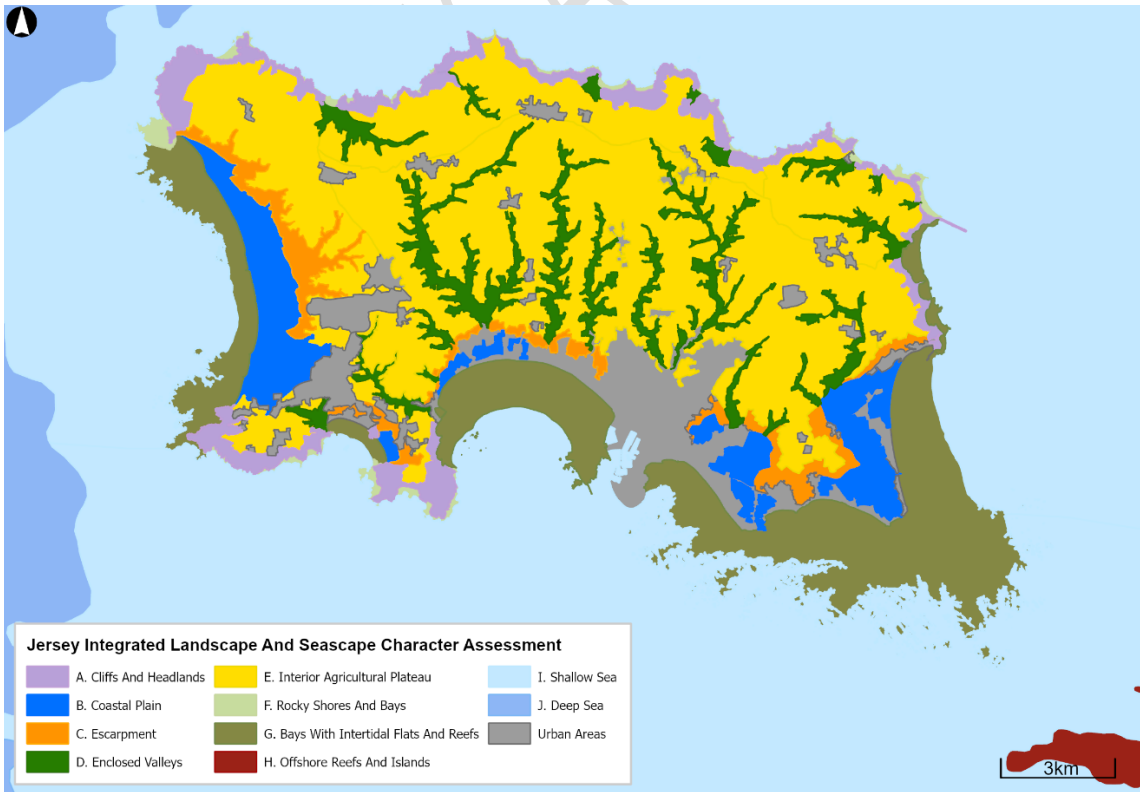

Figure NE5 – Terrestrial character areas (ILSCA)

[17] Jersey intertidal 32 sqkm; Les Ecrehous/Dirouilles 3.4 sqkm; Les Minquiers 19.3 sqkm; Paternosters 0.1 sqkm.
[18] Jersey Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (2020)

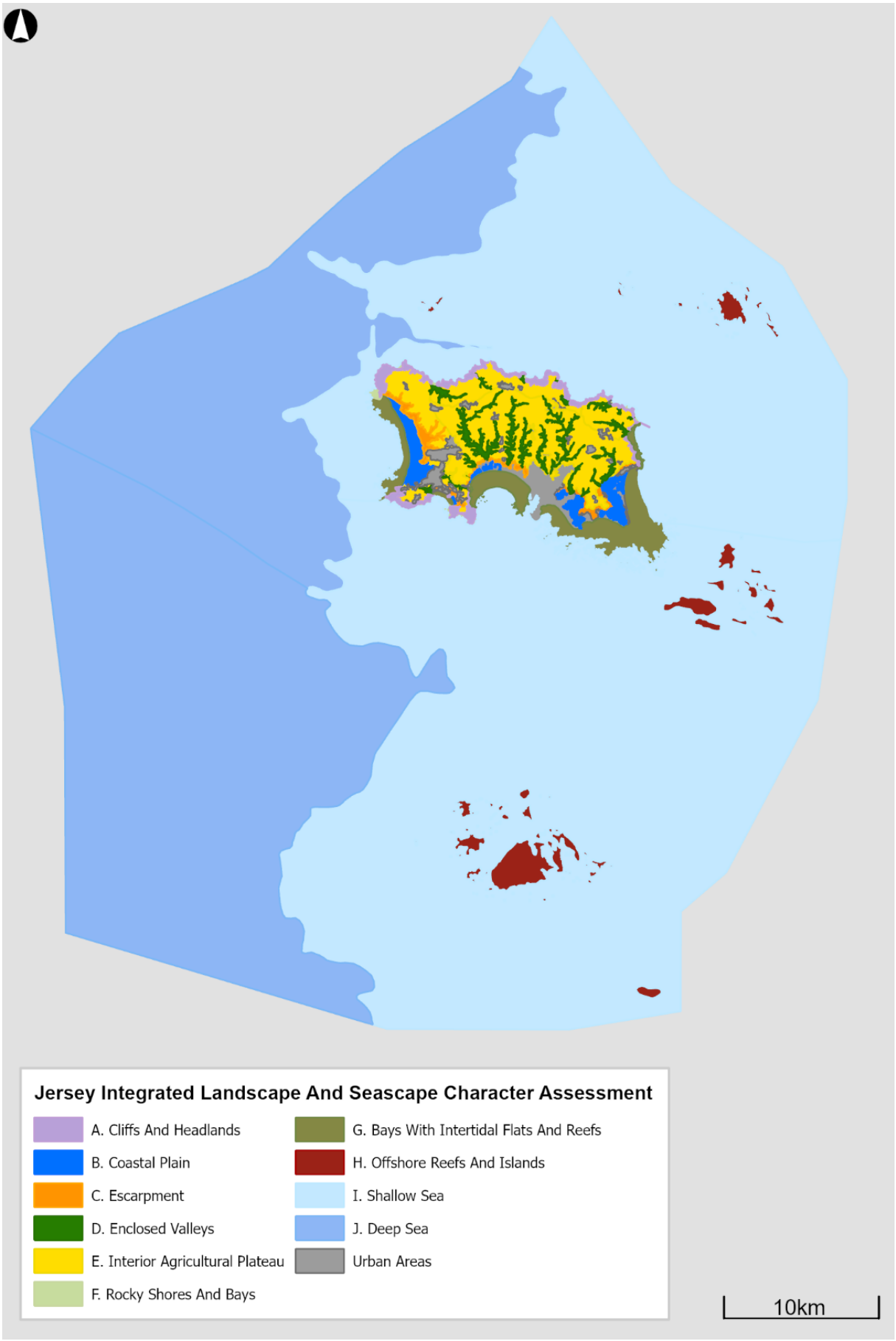

Figure NE6 – Marine character areas (ILSCA)

The ILSCA also identifies 14 coastal units, typically relating to bays with headlands dividing them, where terrestrial, intertidal and marine character types and areas intersect (Figure NE7). The coastal units provide an additional layer of assessment focusing on the most complex area of the island's natural environment where many different character types and character areas meet and/or are inter-visible.

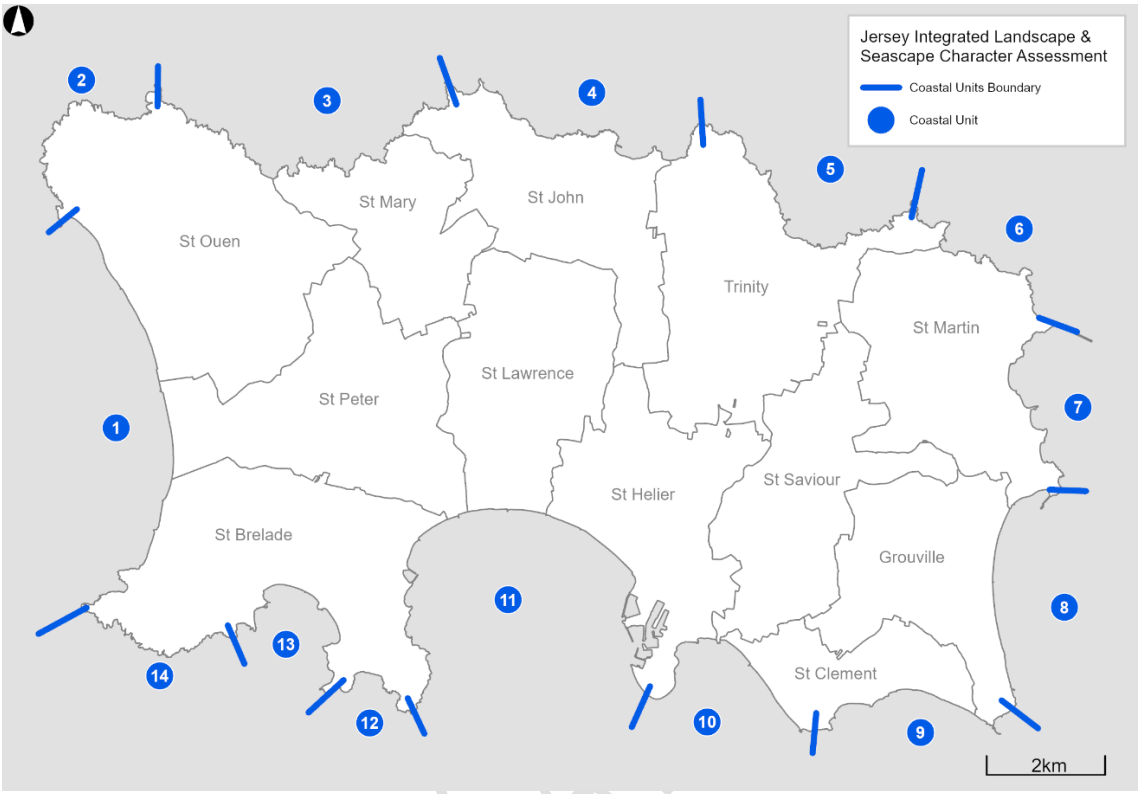

Figure NE7 – Coastal units (ILSCA)

Number	Coastal unit name
1	St Ouen's Bay
2	Grosnez
3	Grève de Lecq
4	Bonne Nuit
5	Bouley Bay
6	Rozel
7	St Catherine's Bay
8	Royal Bay of Grouville
9	St Clement's Bay
10	Grève D'Azette
11	St Aubin's Bay
12	Portelet
13	St Brélade's Bay
14	Corbière

Jersey Coastal National Park

Jersey's Coastal National Park is primarily a designation that is designed to protect its outstanding landscape and seascape character, along with its special heritage and biodiversity value. The purposes of the national park include:

a. the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park, and
b. the public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

The inherent scenic quality of the park is an asset and a resource of benefit to islanders and visitors alike, and the purpose of the park which seeks to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park is always the primary consideration[19].

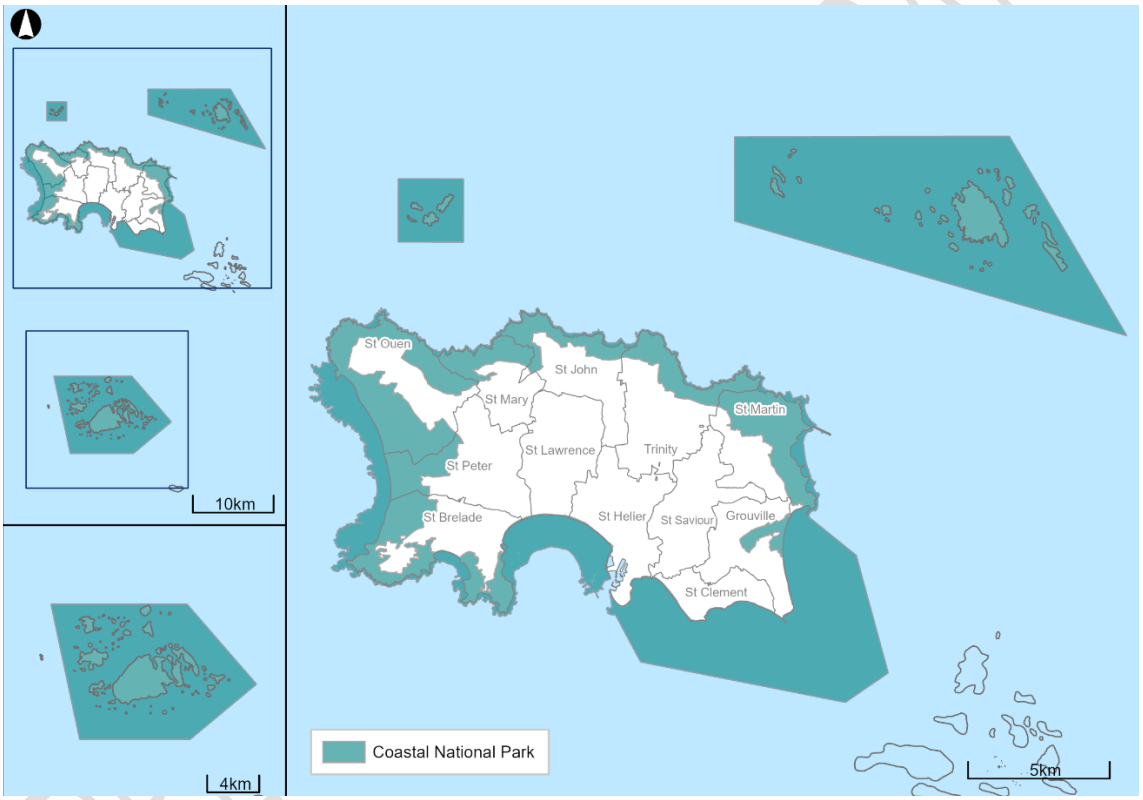

Figure NE8 – Coastal National Park

Development within the Coastal National Park should be compatible with the purposes of the park, in order to protect its special qualities[20]. It will need to accord with other policies throughout the plan in terms of the forms of development that may be acceptable within the park, and applicants will need to, in particular, justify the need for development to be located here. It is essential that development in the Coastal National Park protects or improves the landscape and seascape character of the park and ensures that these special qualities can continue to be enjoyed.

[19] The purposes of the national park are underpinned by the Sandford Principle which asserts the primacy of the first purpose over the second in cases of obvious conflict.
[20] See description of Coastal National Park special qualities in Volume Two, Places, Countryside, coast and marine environment section.

Minor development

Development of any scale can adversely affect the qualities of the Coastal National Park because of its sensitive, fragile landscape. Buildings in the park presently have the same permitted development rights as those in other parts of the island, including the built-up area.

This means that minor changes - such as alterations and small extensions to dwellings, ancillary domestic buildings, swimming pools, driveways and other forms of hard landscaping, accesses, walls and fences, flags, satellite dishes and other antennae; as well as some changes to the public realm – can be made here without the need for planning permission.

Because of the special quality of the landscape in the Coastal National Park, the Minister wants to undertake further work to explore whether changes should be made to the rules which govern whether planning permission is required for minor works to buildings and places in the park. This will involve consultation with people who live and work in the Coastal National Park, as well as those who visit and use it, or have an interest in its protection.

Any change to the rules would not be intended to prohibit all forms of minor development, which would be unreasonable and unrealistic, but simply to make a greater range of them subject to individual assessment to ensure that they do not harm the special landscape character of the Coastal National Park.

Proposal – Change permitted development rights in the Protected Coastal Area

The Minister for the Environment will explore changes to permitted development rights in the Protected Coastal Area in order to better protect its fragile and sensitive landscape character. This will include consultation with stakeholders on any proposed changes to the Planning and Building (General Development) Order.

The green zone

Development in the green zone should protect or improve the landscape character. Specific consideration needs to be given to the impact of development proposals on those landscape character types and areas within the green zone (as identified in the ILSCA) to determine their sensitivity and capacity to accommodate new development in accord with other policies throughout the plan in terms of the forms of development that may be acceptable here.

Protection of landscape and seascape character

This Island Plan seeks to protect (keep safe from harm) and improve the quality, character and appearance of all of the island's landscapes and seascapes which contribute to Jersey's natural environment. When considering proposals for development significant weight will be afforded to the island's landscape and seascape character and to the character type- and coastal unit-specific strategy and management guidelines set out in the ILSCA. As part of the assessment of development proposals, consideration will be given to the sensitivity of each of the island's existing character types and areas in terms of how vulnerable or robust the landscape or seascape character is; and to its capacity to accommodate change.

It is recognised that, as a small island, the coast and the countryside – including the Coastal National Park and the green zone - covers an environment where people live and work, and which is important for the island's economic and social well-being. Consideration of the need for and the management of development in these areas is addressed in other thematic policies throughout the plan: the impact of any development on landscape and seascape character here will, however, be a primary consideration in determining its acceptability.

To enable an understanding of the impact of a proposal on the character in which a site is located, an appropriate level of supporting information will be required with all planning applications that have the potential to impact upon landscape and seascape character, even where they might be located within the built-up area; and/or where they may have an impact on the landscape or seascape setting of the Coastal National Park. This is required in order to understand the potential impact of the proposed development on the landscape and seascape character and its sensitivity.

Determining the impact of development upon wider landscape and seascape character requires a thorough understanding and analysis of a site's context and its relationship with the wider area. The Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Appraisal[21] provides guidance about how to understand the implications of a proposal on views and visibility. It also defines a series of coastal units setting out how terrestrial, intertidal and marine character types are related to one another to help to provide a framework for the proper assessment of development that might take place around the island's coastline, both within and outside the built-up area.

The detail and content of this supporting information will be proportional to the scale of the proposal and its location, relative to the landscape and seascape context. The supporting information must demonstrate that features of landscape and seascape character will be protected, by avoiding and minimising impact through good design and outlining any mitigation measures, as may be required. This should include the steps expressly taken to make a positive contribution to landscape and seascape character.

[21] See Part 4: Coastal units; and Part 5.4: Views and visibility Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Appraisal

Policy NE3 – Landscape and seascape character

Development must protect or improve landscape and seascape character.

The highest level of protection will be given to the Protected Coastal Area, and its setting.

The highest level of protection will also be given to the Coastal National Park, and its setting, and additionally development within it should protect or improve its special qualities and be compatible with the purposes of the park including:

a. the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park, and
b. the public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities[20].

Applicants will need to demonstrate that a proposal will neither directly nor indirectly, singularly or cumulatively, cause harm to Jersey's landscape and seascape character and will protect or improve the distinctive character, quality, and sensitivity of the landscape and seascape character area or coastal unit as identified in the Integrated Landscape and Seascape Assessment.

Proposals that could affect the island's landscape and seascape character, but which do not protect or improve it, will not be supported unless, and with regard to the special qualities of the landscape and seascape character area or coastal unit, and the impact of the proposed development on those qualities:

a. the changes are demonstrably necessary either to meet an overriding public policy objective or need; and
b. there is no reasonably practicable alternative means of delivering those proposals without harm to landscape and seascape character; and
c. that harm has been avoided, mitigated and reduced as far as reasonably practicable; and
d. it has been demonstrated that the predicted public benefit outweighs the harm to the landscape and seascape character and where the nature of that benefit to the public is clear, direct and evidenced.

Proposals which result in the improvement of landscape and seascape character will be supported.

Where development proposals impact upon landscape or seascape character, even where they might not be situated within a landscape or seascape character area (including a location within the built-up area) they must be accompanied by adequate information which sets out how the proposal protects or improves landscape and seascape character. Where the supporting information is insufficient to demonstrate the above, applications will not be supported.