



Jersey in Transition's submission to the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change

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Contents

Introduction.....	2
Transport.....	2
Buildings and homes.....	3
Taxation and funding.....	3
Divestment.....	3
Agriculture and food.....	4
The sea and fishing.....	4
Waste.....	5
And finally.....	5

Key subject areas

- Transport
- Buildings and homes
- Taxation and funding
- Divestment
- Agriculture and food
- The sea and fishing
- Waste

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Introduction

Climate change and biodiversity loss caused by human activity can be traced back over thousands of years but have become particularly severe since the start of the industrial revolution. These problems have been greatly magnified in recent decades. Human industry, business, extraction, consumerism and waste have set terrible trends in motion.

These matters now threaten not only our own prosperity, but our existence as a civilisation. The extinction of millions of species, and the ability of large tracts of the Earth's land and sea to support life at all have become a reality. We are in the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth, and this one is being caused by humans.

There is still time to act. The general public is now much more aware than we were about the need to act.

In order to reduce our carbon emissions to net zero, and to leave alone and set aside enough of the land and sea for them to begin to recover, we need to make changes in almost every aspect of our lives. In a crowded, wasteful and generally affluent society like ours in Jersey, the necessary changes will seem extraordinary at first to many, but it is essential in terms of adaptation, mitigation and climate justice that we make progress.

If we are to take the difficult decisions needed here in Jersey, it is necessary for the Government of Jersey to provide new regulatory frameworks and incentives that will ensure that the right changes are made here. Change is inevitable. It should be discussed, planned and managed.

It is absolutely essential that matters of equity and justice are considered front and central in each and every decision we make, for us humans as well as for all others that inhabit this place.

Transport

Challenge:

Motor transport pollutes the air with toxic fumes, dust and particles as well as carbon dioxide. Air pollution adversely affects every organ of the body, not just the breathing system. Motoring leads directly to costs in ill-health, not only due to this, but also through lack of exercise and social contact.

Replacing 100,000 fossil-fuel cars with 100,000 electric ones is not the answer.

Flying into and out of the island has the highest possible carbon impact per passenger-kilometre.

What do we need?

- Encouragement and incentives to many current car users to walk, cycle, use electric buggies and to travel by bus.
- Tens of thousands of journeys a day need to be accommodated by these alternatives.
- Invest in electric buses servicing new routes and travelling existing routes more frequently.
- Cycle-only lanes to accommodate commuting cyclists, along with secure cycle parking.
- Free or very cheap bike and mobility scooter hire and parking outside the bus station, every multi-story car park, and in parish centres such as Quennevais Parade, to encourage 'Bike and Ride' travel for commuters, business and shopping
- Cycling and electric mobility scooter traffic be allowed through all pedestrianised areas, with a speed limit.

- Deliveries and collections within the town centre to be made by electric vans, handcarts, electrically assisted trolleys and by cargo bicycle.

Buildings and homes

Challenge:

Concrete and steel are two of the highest-carbon industries on the planet. We must reduce the use of these products.

Our green countryside needs protecting. It is vital in providing local food, spaces for wildlife to recover, and natural carbon sinks. It allows rainwater to soak in, reducing flooding and increasing our fresh water reserves.

What do we need?

- Future developments to be on brownfield sites or in already built-up areas, using more sustainable building materials and methods. Revitalise redundant buildings.
- Existing buildings need to be maintained and made to last.
- Make insulation of new and existing buildings, both homes and businesses, a priority.
- Gas and oil to be phased out and replaced by electricity.
- Plastic as a building material is not sustainable. Government encouragement and incentives for the skills necessary to work with natural products from sustainable sources.

Taxation and funding

Challenge:

Our whole economic system, based on debt and interest, is also dependent on continual economic growth. Find alternatives to this model, and put them into practice locally.

What do we need?

- Increased investment in more sustainable areas of the global economy.
- Jersey must address its tax system in order to find the just and progressive revenue-raising measures we will need to protect our island, our environment and our people.
- As we have total control over everything that comes into the island, substantial 'polluter pays' measures can be introduced on undesirable goods and materials at source.

Divestment

Challenge:

Jersey's finance industry heads into an increasingly perilous state as the climate and extinction crisis and its implications hit home worldwide.

There is a reputational risk of being caught on the wrong side of history. Encouraging sustainable, regenerative and environmentally sound investment activities – and discouraging investments in fossil fuels, irresponsible extraction and mining, warfare, and the degradation of nature – will enhance our reputation and longer term financial stability

What do we need?

- Encourage participation by government and businesses in initiatives such as the UN Global Compact scheme on sustainable investment. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>
- Jersey's financiers should be as aware of the global crisis as anyone else. Knowing the real value and impact of our decisions, more than merely knowing the price of everything, must now be a necessary business tool.

Agriculture and food

Challenge:

Jersey's once diverse agricultural industry has been reduced to a few cash crops. These few uses of our soil have depleted and polluted it.

Depleted soil has very low carbon content, supports very little microscopic life, and has a poor structure. Poor soil becomes waterlogged in winter, dry in the summer, and runs off in heavy rain. It does not filter rainwater into the aquifer. It is likely to require prolonged irrigation for crops to survive hot weather as we get more stormy weather and droughts.

The profits from the land go largely to businesses that are not based here.

The fitness of our soil to do what nature intended is key to our survival. Without good soil we have no local food.

What do we need?

The priorities of Jersey's countryside must be to

- Enhance and protect the organic nature of living soil.
- To provide safe habitats for our full variety of wildlife.
- To collect and filter safe drinking water whilst providing as much local food as possible.
- Maintain a richer and wilder countryside as a valuable carbon sink.
- Eliminating our dependence on imported farm chemicals.
- Encourage and incentivise organic and regenerative farming methods, agroforestry, food forests and permaculture.
- Encouraging composting and mulching and the recycling of food waste from homes, restaurants and hotels.
- Wider field boundaries, four metres wide, of native trees and understories as island-wide wildlife corridors and sanctuaries.
- Allowing native species to overtake low-grade agricultural land, providing ecosystem, water and carbon sequestration services.

The sea and fishing

Challenge:

From beach cleans to recent events in the fishing industry, there is now a greater public awareness of the marine ecosystems' fragile nature. As beach users, ecologists and fishermen, we all want to protect our environment at sea. The Government of Jersey needs to support those who know and understand marine life.

What do we need?

- Accept that our local waters are another huge and important carbon sink.
- Reduce trawling and dredging to help carbon sequestration in the sea-beds.
- Work with fishermen to create more 'No-Take Zones' to assist sea life recovery
- Educate locals and tourists in the local lifecycles that our beaches and foreshore support

Waste

Challenge:

Throw-away packaging can last hundreds of years in the environment. Built-in obsolescence leads to goods that are effectively unrepairable. Our society and business model is built around regularly buying new clothes, household goods, cars, electronics, toys, furniture etc, and regularly throwing them away.

'Best before' dates on packaging encourage people to throw away large amounts of good food. Supermarkets' insistence on 'perfect' produce also leads to waste.

What do we need?

- Take clear and decisive steps to educate and to shift attitudes and behaviours away from those who profit from profligate waste.
- To get us to net-zero carbon emissions, we must seriously reduce the importation and creation of waste.
- Encourage and support enterprises such as SCOOP (which has proved that extremely low-waste food retailing is entirely feasible) and local repair centres for mobile phones, cookers, fridges and other consumer goods.

And finally

We are a small place.

We can control our future.

We can set an example.

We can work with, and not against, nature.

