

GOVERNMENT PLAN REVIEW

JERSEY (COASTAL) NATIONAL PARK

To the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

Dear Connetable M.K Jackson

Chairman

We thank you for your recent invitation to complete a written submission on behalf of the Jersey (Coastal) National Park (JNP) as part of your Panel's Review of the 2020/3 Proposed Government Plan. We have taken cognisance of your Terms of Reference and will endeavour to respond as comprehensively as we can within the limited timescales available.

Background:

As your Panel is probably aware the J(C)NP was "born out" of the protest organised by the National Trust of Jersey in 2009 (The Line in the Sand) against the inappropriate development of sensitive areas of the island's coast-line although there were through that organisations on-going activities (Shoreline Campaign and indeed aspirations within Planning) a latent demand for action before the event itself. There followed the designation of the J(C)NP within Policy NE6 of the 2011 Island Plan essentially as a Planning Protection Mechanism although there was onus on the Minister for Planning and Environment to develop a CNP Management Plan to deliver the objectives of the NP, which include:

- 1 the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the NP.
- 2 to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the NP by the public.

This to be undertaken in co-operation with other public and private agencies, interest groups, landowners and farmers during the Plan period.

Following a period of inactivity the then Minister Rob Duhamel convened a series of workshops of all major "stakeholders" who might be interested in the task plus the relevant officers / politicians to co-produce a Plan in 2015. From these meeting an Action and Management Plan was developed and an Interim Working Group (IWG) drawn from the main interest groups composed of representatives of EDTSC, Environment, Durrell, Chamber, JFU, RJA@HS, Motor Cycle and Light Car Club, Societe and Visit Jersey was set-up to complete initial tasks. (this group was added to by way of representation from Infrastructure, the Comite de Connetable, the Marine Environment and the Architectural and Residential Community for completeness).

This Group was tasked with creating a brand / image for the Park, creating an operational website, proposing a governance structure and launching the Park to the public in May 2016 all of which was achieved with funding provided by EDTSC and Environment plus some if limited officer support which was eventually withdrawn from the project. Under Policy NE1 the Government of Jersey is obliged to continue to support the CNP through participation in the Governance Body and to support statutory functions within the Park boundary in a way that is sympathetic to the purposes of

the Park and provide specialist advice and administrative support (not recently forthcoming). The Department of the Environment is also obliged to lead periodic review of the CNP Management Plan.

The J(C)NP is also written large in the current Rural Economy Strategy and along with the generality of valuing and protecting our Natural Environment was a key feature coming out of the Future Jersey long-term aspirations generated through public consultation for the island. This was a theme carried forward by Government into the Common Strategic Policy Plan for the period of this Government (2018/20) whereby it is pledged to "embrace environmental innovation and ambition, by protecting the natural environment through conservation, protection, sustainable resource use and demand management, and by improving the built environment, to retain a sense of place, cultural and local identity." Intrinsically the JNP is a key deliverer of many elements of this ambition along with the potential it offers by way of health and wellbeing and indeed by its capacity to become an "economic hub" for the island particularly in respect of the Visitor Economy.

Since the launch in 2016 it has been a difficult Journey as driven by two volunteers (Mike Stentiford MBE and myself Jim Hopley) we have striven manfully to keep the project moving forward. The image and profile of the Park has been considerably enhanced and a solid marketing and website plus Social Media presence has been established significantly in co-operation with Visit Jersey and our marketing house Freedom Media to build awareness and understanding of the Park by both locals and visitors alike. We have lacked the promised administrative support and until very recently were not in a position to engage paid help of this nature or indeed to secure a fixed base for the Park. Both of these are now in place with a part-time officer in situ and partial occupation of the Frances Le Sueur Centre (FLSC) in St Ouen's Bay made available to us as an educational interpretation and information location. The Park has also been set-up as an NPO/Charity as a Company Limited by Guarantee whereby there is the opportunity to appoint a representative (of the major stakeholders) Board complete with non-voting but participative input from the relevant Government Department and the Commite De Connetables to represent Parish interests (this is work-in-hand).

The catalyst to future progress having achieved manpower support, a base and an appropriate Governance structure is to update the Management Plan, a task for the final quarter of 2019, to be achieved in consultation with GHE and to set agreed actions forward for the next few years with measurable and specific outcomes. To make this effective what is required is limited but steadily rising government funding. Hopefully to be at least in part matched by sponsorship (public and commercial), donations and volunteering which officer capacity gives us an opportunity to generate. There is also intellectual property value in the "brand" which might be exploited over time.

Against this background we would therefore offer in respect of your Panel's TOR's the following.

1 It must be adequately accepted that the whole of the Park project, likely to be somewhat updated and refined in the next iteration of the Island Plan (2021/31?) and through a revised Management Plan fully supports and indeed is an intrinsic player in Government on-going initiatives, Common Themes, and ultimately, Common Strategic Priorities.

2 We believe that in conjunction with officers of GHE the projects and amendments lodged are consistent with the requirements of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019.

3 We have carefully considered the level of resourcing, of all forms, allocated to the project over the life of the next Government Plan (2020/3). The funds designated will enable us to secure the appropriate managerial and educational and interpretation support to take advantage of the opportunities available to us along with maintaining an adequate level of marketing activity and support to continue to lift profile and understanding plus usage of the Park by locals and visitors alike to the benefit of the whole island. This to be done in conjunction with maintaining concentration of the key objectives of the Park as explained above. Part of the concept of the monies bid for in the Government Plan is that these can be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis as circumstances and outcomes demand. Continuity of funding is what is critical rather than the specific level as long as the sums made available are appropriate,

4 This is for others not the JNP to decide but we would offer the fact that anecdotal evidence from other widespread jurisdictions show that for every £1 invested in them National Parks generate at least £8 of hard economic benefit without the soft benefits of health and wellbeing. The attractiveness of the island having a NP to the visitor economy must be obvious as support and utilisation of the fact by Visit Jersey already demonstrates.

5 Again the background explained above demonstrates through the initiative that Environment as part of GHE fulfils its statutory obligation in large part through the stated intention of support.

6 There will indeed be specific key lines of accountability both on the part of the Department and indeed the Park as and when the Management Plan is realigned and made achievable through the proposed revamp. It is anticipated both through regular and appropriate reporting to both the appointed officer(s) and Ministers that outcomes and achievements and assessment against objectives will be carried out and adjustment and correction on both parties part will be made as necessary.

7 There is already much sustainability built into the project with much of the activity carried out to-date being designed to set a platform for future intensification of the whole concept. Much has been achieved in a relatively short period by National Park standards. It took decades in other jurisdictions for Parks such as in the UK for instance, to get to where we are now. In co-operation with our partners in the project, our other stakeholders including Government, there is total sustainability as we strive to play our part in meeting the aspirations of the island for the Environment adequately demonstrated through the long-term Future Jersey work. We could add much about how the Park and its allies can contribute to Jersey's drive for carbon neutrality but that perhaps is a subject for another day's discussion.

I hope the foregoing meets the requirement that the Panel has by contacting us but if further assistance or participation in the review is required then please do not hesitate to contact me or one of my colleagues copied in with this communication.

Yours sincerely on and behalf of the Jersey (Coastal) National Park

Jim Hopley Honorary Chair of the Interim Working Group.