

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON TUESDAY 27th MAY 2025
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 3rd JUNE 2025**

Question

“Will the Chief Minister advise whether the Government of Jersey intends to adopt the principles of the Aarhus Convention, in particular the public’s rights to access environmental information, to participate in environmental decision-making, and to access justice in environmental matters; and, if so, will he provide the estimated timeframe for its adoption; and if not, what alternative framework is being used to ensure transparency, accountability, and public participation in environmental decisions, such as those relating to PFAS contamination and land-use policy?”

Answer

The Government of Jersey recognises the importance of the principles of the Aarhus Convention, which are taken account of in Jersey’s planning system both in the development of land-use policy in the Island Plan, and in the application of that policy in the determination of planning applications. Both processes are set out in legislation and require a transparent, open and rigorous process of public engagement and public involvement in environmental governance.

The Government Engagement Framework has been created to help government staff engage with the public on policies and proposals. It contains best practice guidance, tools and resources for effective public engagement. It also includes practical considerations for engaging with underrepresented groups in Jersey. The principles in the Engagement Framework provide for public engagement and participation on all policy areas, including environmental. It applies to the current discussions and research into PFAS, for which there has been a series of public meetings and engagement that will be ongoing.

The Government will continue to review engagement practices to ensure they remain effective, inclusive and responsive to the needs of our community.

The Government is also mindful that Jersey’s governance arrangements must be proportionate, adaptable and fit for purpose, and must also reflect the unique needs and scale of the Island. Therefore, there are currently no plans to seek the extension of the Aarhus Convention to Jersey at this stage. Any formal extension of the Convention would be effected in the normal manner following engagement with the UK Government as State Party to the Convention.

Additional information

The process of developing an island plan is prescribed in legislation and involves a transparent, open and rigorous process of public engagement and involvement in the creation of all environmental policy adopted in the island. This includes public consultation and engagement on the strategic issues and options that the plan should address; public engagement, as appropriate, on the development of the plan’s evidence base; consultation on the draft plan itself; participation at an examination in public conducted by independent planning inspectors; before the plan is considered for amendment and adoption by the island’s elected representatives. Throughout this process, all of the material related to the plan and its adoption is in the public domain.

The operation of the planning applications service is similarly transparent and open to public engagement, where the requirement to invite public comment about development proposals is prescribed in law; where any such comment is material to any subsequent decision; and where both first- and third-parties have rights of appeal to an independent party, should they be aggrieved by a planning decision.