



Minister for Infrastructure

Reducing use of plastics in Jersey Scrutiny Review Hearing

October 2018

Post hearing follow-up questions

Please could you advise the Panel whether the Department has undertaken any research into what the best types of materials are to promote as alternatives to plastic, given Jersey's current waste infrastructure.

We have seen various catering suppliers move from single use food packaging to more sustainable alternatives, such as options made from vegetable based starch. These materials are compostable but not in Jersey as we only compost green/garden waste. The use of these sustainable alternatives however is encouraged as it reduces the use of single use plastic; reduces the risk of pollution and harm to wildlife due to litter and increases demand for these products which supports their manufacture and takes demand away from the single use plastic.

Rather than maintain the problem of single use materials and shift the problem from plastics to alternative materials, our focus is changing behaviour in the long term. For example, rather than look at the different types of single use containers water can be supplied in, we would rather the focus was on encouraging the use of refillable bottles and increasing the accessibility of water refill stations to the public.

Waste is a market and you are able to use policy levers and regulatory levers to change and influence the market. Regulation and certain economic tools can help guide behaviour. Are you

already utilising or considering such levers, particularly in regard to plastic waste? If not, why not?

The use of a charge to receive agricultural plastics at the Energy from Waste facility is a good example of a financial lever that has changed behaviour. The charge was initially introduced both as a deterrent to generating this type of waste and as an incentive for the commercial market to find a more economic and environmentally advantageous solution. This was a successful lever in that the commercial market now export agricultural polythene at the end of its useful life for recycling and re-use the polythene across multiple seasons.

All of our Energy from Waste customers agree to a set of site rules and this includes separating various materials for recycling. We are keen to trial the separation of high grade uPVC for recycling (i.e. window and door frames) and, when this is in place, this will be an example of how we can change behaviour as this material will no longer be accepted in mixed bulky waste for incineration.

What are you doing to promote greater public awareness of how and what is recycled in Jersey?

We continue to engage with our customers under our 'Rethink your Waste' programme. We manage a Facebook page under this name and receive questions and comments from our customers on a daily basis via this medium.

We also deliver public information events, for example a talk at the General Library, work with schools and community groups providing resources, lesson plans, assemblies, site visits and educational workshops; and work with the business community providing advice and sharing best practice.

Our 'Just Glass' campaign is currently underway. The aim of this campaign is to reduce the contamination in glass deliveries received for recycling at La Collette. This campaign reminds our customers to put just glass in the glass bins.

We also have a series of adverts running on ITV. Each advert focuses on a different household recyclable, for example metal lids, and reinforces the message that everything in Jersey collected for recycling is recycled and thanks customers for their participation in local recycling. These adverts aim to reassure our customers in order to achieve greater participation and maintain positive behaviour change.

We are currently working on redeveloping our formal education programme so that we have curriculum linked resources for schools that also support the Eco Schools programme. This will help to embed a love for the environment with learners in order for the next generations to respect and protect the world they live in. It will also help to develop local knowledge of waste and recycling.

Later this year we also intend to produce some communication materials that remind our customers what can and can't be recycled and what happens to the materials they recycle.

We also continue to engage with the twelve parishes, specifically in regard to developing the reach of household recycling collections which are currently provided by 6 parishes. Achieving island wide coverage for household recycling collections and thereby bringing recycling to the doorstep of every islander, continues to be a priority.

What would be required for Jersey to be able to recycle its milk cartons (a mixture of plastic and cardboard)? Has there been any engagement/consultation with Jersey Dairy on how this could be achieved?

We have engaged with Jersey Dairy on a number of occasions over the years. Our understanding is that alternative packaging is not considered to be commercially viable and that there is no intention for Jersey Dairy to lead an initiative to export milk cartons for recycling.

For milk cartons to be exported for recycling, a collection mechanism would have to be established; a depot would be required to receive and process the material for export (bale); the materials would have to be export for specialist recycling, a contract would need to be secured with a recycler that met the required standards (to ensure an environmental benefit) and communications would need to be developed to engage the customer.

Research would first of all need to be conducted into the cost of this process and funding would need to be secured to ensure the longevity of the scheme. The cost of recycling this material would also need to be compared against other materials which may achieve a greater environmental benefit through recycling than cartons.

We have looked into the feasibility of this in the past but found that the recycling process did not recover 100% of the composite materials from milk cartons and some of the material would be destined for energy recovery overseas. As milk cartons are currently processed locally for energy recovery and generate local electricity through this process, we did not progress the research.

Does the Department investigate proven recycling models from other countries and whether these could be adopted in Jersey?

Absolutely. Jersey follows the internationally agreed Waste Hierarchy model and looks to best practice shared across the world, notably by professional bodies i.e. WRPA and LARAC. The Department maintains current industry knowledge by consulting with the wider industry and maintaining the industry knowledge of staff.

In other countries, plastics are recycled and utilised for road surfacing. Is this a possibility your Department has explored? If not, will you commit to investigating this further?

The Department is familiar with this and has conducted basic research into the application. While it may seem a good idea in theory, it is important to note the following:

1. The plastics used make only about 1.5% of the final road mixture, the rest is normal bitumen & stone and so the amount of plastics actually reused in this application is limited.
2. The plastics used must be a specific type with specific melting properties.
3. Jersey would have to import waste plastics for use in this way.
4. As the surface with plastics in it wears down from the action of car tyres, then small parts of plastic could be washed off the road and into the sea creating the potential for pollution.

Our position on this would be to focus on reducing plastic use and ensuring Jersey's recycled plastics are turned into products that close the loop and can be fed back into sustainable waste management solutions at their end of their useful life.

We have heard recently that it is 75% cheaper to produce plastics from recycled plastics than from producing plastics from a virgin source. Would you know why this is the case that plastic production from recycling is not more profitable?

We do not have any data to hand comparing the manufacturing costs of using recycled plastics and virgin plastics. However, using recycled plastics to manufacture new products will have numerous environmental benefits as plastic is a finite resource. Basic research available from industry body WRAP states that recycling plastic reduces the amount of oil used for plastic production and reduces the amount of energy required in the manufacturing process.