

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE
MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ON TUESDAY 11th MAY 2021**

Island Identity Project

Over the past year I have been privileged to lead on a piece of work entitled 'Island Identity' which explores the many different elements which define Jersey. (Which is a lot more difficult than it sounds!)

Together with a very able Policy Development Board, whom I would like to give enormous thanks to, we produced a 200 page Interim Findings report.

A strong and inclusive sense of Island Identity underpins many of the goals and themes prioritised in the Common Strategic Policy (2018-2022) which this Assembly unanimously approved in 2018

The work was split into 6 focus areas, which ranged from our Constitution - Communities - to Connectivity* and settled on three primary objectives, being:

- People in Jersey are civically engaged and proud of their Island;
- Jersey has a recognisable and positive international personality; and,
- Public policies coherently support and develop Jersey's distinct identity.

These were narrowed this down yet further with 7 specific goals and over 40 suggestions of what we considered to be opportunities to kick-start the project. This report sets out our thinking and will act as a reference point and delivery aid, and can be found on the Island Identity website which we are launching today.

Since then, the work has been summarised in an easy-to-read Consultation document which we have also published today and will be available to Stakeholders, Schools, the Parishes, businesses, organisations and anyone who has an interest in the subject - which should be everyone, right? As this initiative now turns to you, and asks:

What does 'Jersey' mean to you?

To help us work towards the overarching objectives (against which success may ultimately be measured), we put forward two simple sounding questions for consideration:

'What makes Jersey special - and why does it matter?'

First, there is a profound and almost universally-shared sense that what we have in Jersey is special and worth protecting, yet also a widespread feeling that something is being lost. How can Jersey change with the times, embrace diversity, be a welcoming place for immigrants, play its part in an increasingly interconnected (and homogenous) world, yet still preserve and nurture its uniqueness?

I realise that questions of identity must be handled sensitively. We must take particular care that we are not defining some ideal of 'Jerseyness' which alienates people with different views and backgrounds.

Instead, I believe that discovering and celebrating what people themselves love about Jersey and value about the Island, can help provide common focal points for our growing and increasingly-diverse population.

Interestingly, nations which have a strong sense of national identity, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for example - are often among the best at integrating immigrant communities and giving them a sense of pride and belonging. Conversely nations with weakened identities are now struggling with legacies of social fragmentation.

How others see us matters too.

Internationally, our long-term future relies on projecting a positive image of the Island; a richer international personality than just that of our world-class finance industry. Our unique history and constitutional status, and our extraordinary endeavours in other fields of culture, heritage, philanthropy, international development, sport, business, art, digital, agriculture, tourism and conservation, there are so many, and these should also be recognised and promoted as part of our personality. Coordinating and projecting these facets of our Island identity will help us build the reputation and relationships we will depend on to thrive in a globalised world.

Thirdly, by developing and enhancing Jersey's distinct identity and outward facing profile, it will give us a framework to coherently set public policy in the future.

And why is now the right moment to investigate these matters?

Even before the events of last week, the "why now" question couldn't be more relevant and urgent as we as an Island, face the challenges of Brexit, and big global issues like climate change, pandemic recovery and huge technological advances changing the ways we work, the time is right to position ourselves as a global citizen with much to offer.

I also believe that during lockdown there has been a paradigm shift in our Society. It has given us time for reflection, to better appreciate the importance of family, our community, the environment, our wellbeing and all that we value.

We have great opportunities to diversify and innovate, as other British nations such as Scotland and Wales have done, with far fewer political and constitutional freedoms than we enjoy, yet Visitors to those places are confronted at every turn with proud expressions of who they are.

Whether you grew up here, work here or have chosen to make Jersey your home, this project is for you. The task has not been one to look backwards and attempt only to preserve our unique essence, but to shine a light on its many strands and look at the different ways they can be improved and woven together in the future.

So join me and articulate what Jersey means to you, what it means to be a part of this community, what makes us distinct, what we should value and defend, the principles that we should uphold as defining the best parts of Jersey and its people. In working together to shape our understanding of island identity and to enhance our international personality we can be proud of our Island, and maintain it for future generations.

The future is ours to shape.

And while we might face uncertainty, I passionately believe that the topic of our identity and international personality – what Jersey means to you and to others, the stories that you tell, where we are collectively and where we want to be – is a fundamentally optimistic and forward-looking one. And it is in that spirit of optimism that I say “Over to you!”

**Island Identity Policy Development Board’s Interim Report focus areas:*

1. *Constitution, Citizenship, Parishes and Communities;*
2. *Education, Sport and Social Cohesion;*
3. *Culture, Heritage, Literature and the Arts;*
4. *Environment and the Public Realm;*
5. *Economy and Connectivity;*
6. *International Personality.*