

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY M.R. LE HEGARAT OF ST. HELIER NORTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 5th DECEMBER 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 12th DECEMBER 2022**

Question

Will the Minister explain the purpose of the digger moving Vraic around the beach at Gorey; and further advise the estimated costs of this work to the Government of Jersey?

Answer

The high spring tides and associated storm winds in early November left significant amounts of vraic deposited along the east coast from Havre des Pas to Gorey. The vraic became stranded at the high-water line once the tides began to reduce to neap tides. This stranded vraic was monitored by officers following complaints from residents who had suffered small black flies in their homes and the smell from the rotting weed.

The deposits at the Welcome slip in Gorey were by far the most concerning. They ran for over 200m along the beach and over 50m down from the high tide line. They were also the thickest, from 2m to 4m deep in some places including against the sea wall.

The Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department is permitted to move vraic in exceptional circumstances. It was decided that the deposit of vraic near the Welcome slip could not be left for a further two weeks until the next spring tides floated the stranded vraic away and so contractors were asked to clear the vraic away from the sea wall.

Lowering tides mean that the vraic must be taken down the beach so that it can be put in the path of the incoming water and so hopefully float away from the residential areas. This relies on the wind being in the right direction.

Contractors attempted to do this on two occasions as the spring tides on the 8th and 9th November reduced. A payloader and 16 tonne tipper truck were hired in for two days (10-11th November) and again on the 14th of November to take the vraic down to the tide line to be washed away but these attempts were only partially successful. A further attempt between the 28th of November and the 2nd of December was successful in clearing the thick deposits.

The cost of the hire of the payloader and tipper truck was as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 10-11th November | £2,650.12 |
| 14th November | £1,012.16 |
| 28th November-2nd December | £4,315.77 |
| Total | £7,978.05 |

These clearance operations are only undertaken in extremis partly because of the cost but also because the vraic and its associated microfauna forms an important food source for migrating and resident birds.