

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2010**

Question

What progress, if any, has the Minister made in developing tidal power and offshore wind farms for the future and is Jersey linked into Scottish programmes in these industries and, if so, in what way?

Answer

The Deputy is referred to the recent statement made by Constable Murphy updating the House on the progress the Tidal Power Commission - that he Chairs - is making in investigating the potential for renewable energy from Jersey's marine resources. For convenience the statement is reproduced below.

The question also refers to the work Scotland is carrying out in respect of the development of Tidal Power. The Minister and Assistant Minister for the Planning and Environment Department represents the States of Jersey in the British Irish Council Environment (BIC(E)) Energy sub-group where there is a workstream specifically in respect of renewables. Scottish representatives chair this group and so there is ample opportunity to share knowledge and exchange information with our colleagues at both Ministerial and officer level. In fact on 1 & 2 November an officer from the Planning and Environment Department attended a renewable sub-group meeting of the BIC(E) in the Isle of Man. Moreover, at the recent Ministerial summit in June 2010 of the full British Irish Council in Guernsey the potential for marine renewables featured on the agenda with Jersey's position represented by the Chief Minister and the Assistant Minister for Planning and Environment.

However, despite an opportunity to share knowledge and exchange information within the BIC(E) context the Jersey situation is somewhat removed from the work that is going on in Scotland. The Scottish projects are world-leading in terms of encouraging the research and development particularly of tidal power and has a sub-sea wave hub in order to facilitate developers to carry out research and development in these incredibly energetic waters. This is a multi-million pound project subsidised by the UK Government and the European Union. Such an approach would not be appropriate for Jersey at the moment both because our marine energy resource is of a much smaller scale and our infrastructure entirely different from the Scottish network that has been specifically developed. However our contact through BIC(E) will enable Jersey to take full advantage of the outcomes of the Scottish projects.

Notwithstanding the work in Scotland we continue to develop the potential for renewable energy for Jersey led by the valuable work of the Constable of Grouville and I look forward to receiving the report of the Tidal Power Commission. Any recommended workstreams that arise from this report will be progressed by officers from this Department and from the Economic Development Department.

Statement on Tidal Power from Constable Murphy (16-09-10)
Chairman of the Jersey Tidal Power Commission

I would like to take the opportunity to update Members about the work that the Tidal Power Commission has been undertaking over the last year.

Members will recall some preliminary work carried out by the Tidal Power Steering Group in December 2008.

We were unanimous then in believing that tidal power could, in the medium term, make a real and increasing contribution to the energy requirements and energy security of the Island for the rest of this century.

We had no hesitation in recommending to the Minister for Planning and Environment that the possibility should be actively pursued.

The Minister agreed and asked for more detailed investigations to be carried out, appointing a Tidal Power Commission consisting of some of the members of the Steering Group with myself as Chairman.

The first key step for us, was to carry out a feasibility study into the area of prime resource, the Le Ruau channel, which is positioned between the north east coast and Les Echreous.

Real-time survey work in the channel was supported by a detailed economic analysis and scoping work in respect of the environmental and economic considerations that would need to be considered.

I'm delighted to report to the House that the initial optimism regarding the potential for tidal stream energy from Jersey waters was not misplaced.

Indeed, the available tidal resource has commercial feasibility with the potential of providing energy equivalent of 50% of Jersey's electrical demand.

However, at the current time to produce this energy would be more expensive to produce than electricity imported from France.

But, we believe that, as the costs of energy production rise there will be a breakeven point in the future at which the generation of renewable energy from local waters will become a reality.

This time could be bought forward significantly if Jersey were to be eligible for the renewable energy subsidies available for European and UK generators.

Our work has also identified a number of steps that need to be initiated before a detailed commercialisation strategy is developed.

These include considerable investigation into the environmental issues associated with the site. As well, it will be important to define the consenting and leasing requirements of any sites of interest.

Many of these initial steps are 'technology blind' and allow the emerging tidal stream technology sector to mature.

By providing the legal and consenting framework there is also the opportunity for other renewable technologies such as off-shore wind projects should developers wish to forward an application for this more established technology.

We recognise that these are very early days in what will undoubtedly be a long journey into the generation of renewable energy for Jersey.

There is much groundwork to be carried out especially when we consider that the lead-in times for these large engineering projects are many years.

For any future project to be successful, there will need to be a transparent and consultative assessment involving all the stakeholders and people of Jersey.

Recognising this, the Commission have opened several productive areas of discussion.

Even at this early stage the Commission has maintained a dialogue with the fisheries industry and other stakeholders such as the National Trust and Save Our Shoreline. Of course these are preliminary discussions but they have alerted us to areas of concern that will need to be addressed.

Importantly, we have approached Her Majesty's Receiver General in respect of the ownership and leasing arrangements for the sea bed to the 12 mile limit.

The Channel Island Renewable Energy Forum has been formed with representatives from all the Islands to discuss areas of commonality and co-operation across Channel Islands.

Already this is proving a very helpful forum and it will be critical for the Islands to work together if we are to be in a position to export energy through the Channel Island Electricity Grid.

Through the Island's place on the British Irish Council, Jersey has approached the EU to define how renewable energy subsidises may be applicable.

The Commission has also opened discussions with the new Minister for Energy and Climate Change in the coalition government to clarify if Jersey could be eligible for Renewable Energy Certificates (ROCs) if it were to export energy to the UK.

In summary, we believe that if Jersey is to have a truly sustainable energy future with a low carbon energy source and increased resilience from external markets, this workstream must be continued.

The Commission will be providing a detailed report to the Minister by November and I look forward to updating the House of progress in conjunction with the Minister for Planning and Environment.