

Dear Scrutiny panel

As the majority of our local plastic ends up at La Collette to be incinerated, the question might be better put to the La Collette team - how is the waste ash treated and made safe to ensure it never hits the marine environment? Whilst there are a few PET recycling bins around, the idea of storing plastic bottles at home to lug down to the various centres has not yet caught on, so really they are fairly ineffective.

Single use plastics are by virtue of their name wasteful, however the alternatives for cleansing and rendering hygienic re-useable containers are not always enviro-friendly or feasible. Alternative packaging for food is problematic as the safety element is tricky. For example, rather than collect used glass bottles, we crush them as it is probably not economical to do otherwise? As Jersey imports the great majority of its goods, we are not really in a very strong position to insist on change to the current economical packaging. That does not mean of course that we should not make every effort to try! It is feasible that a plastic bottle deposit scheme might encourage people to change their ways? It did work for glass bottles for a while.

Jersey's recycling record is not particularly good. There is not really a proper strategy in place; the collection of refuse is handled differently in each Parish, some charge for commercial collection, some don't collect at all, some don't charge, it's a bit of a mess. There is a need for a change in the law which will have to be imposed by the infrastructure department to enforce island-wide reform.

Unfortunately, as the subject of waste is handled by various different departments, the silo mentality (read budget responsibility) has meant that waste and re-cycling is kicked from pillar to post. As a small and fairly wealthy island (the other islands ought to be on board) we should be at the forefront of reducing energy, waste and pollution whilst recycling to the maximum. In addition, we should be at the forefront as a test "bed" for new technology. Take electric cars for example - perfect for Jersey. There is no £5000 off the cost price as in the UK, a charging unit costs £2500 to install and the JEC regards e-charging as a new source of income, brilliant! Sadly we are not and the fault lies fair and square with the States lack of leadership and vision. Recycling and waste triage must be within walking distance of every islander for it to work properly. Every block of apartments, village of houses that Andium, Dandara and others build, waste management and recycling should be included in the scheme. Properties are not large in Jersey, space is at a premium so waste and recycling needed to be factored in. The Swiss often sink the bins in the ground, the French usually have them above ground. Either way, it is fairly simple to separate your waste and recycle easily given the tools and the right social conscience.

Taxation can play a part however, this does not mean tax business for waste so the public (read voters) do not have to pay. The proposed tax for waste water for business was ill-thought out with the sole aim of plugging a budget deficit caused by a budget re-allocation. The principal of charging for waste is clear, but not just as yet another way to raise money. Every islander, business and tourist must pay equally for their waste or nobody will "buy into" the effort.

VRD is another example of a mis-guided tax. As a tax for reducing pollution, it is counter productive as it makes new vehicles more expensive often persuading older vehicles to remain in use longer. If you wish to reduce vehicle pollution, then tax the amount of exhaust fumes each given vehicle produces. The only place I know that does this is Switzerland. New vehicles use the manufacturer's data to pay per mile driven, vehicles over 3 years old must be tested annually and pay accordingly for their level of pollution per mile driven. Apart from the fairness of user pays, it tends to naturally incentivise the vehicle owners to keep them well maintained. Full electric cars would not have a tax

to pay. The States should introduce islandwide MOT testing and the pollution test can be done at the same time. DVS could be automated and computerised freeing up time to operate and administer MOT testing.

The Scrutiny panel could do well to study the Swiss models or even travel to Switzerland (Geneva is probably the most suitable) on a fact finding mission as the Swiss have probably some of the most well thought out recycling, waste separation and pollution reduction schemes on the planet. I know as I have lived there. It would probably be cheaper than importing some UK consultant at any rate.

The new States assembly has started off badly with the new Chief Minister secretly signing up to a bunch of ill thought out social policies proposed by the Reform party. It would do well to bring forward comprehensive proposals for a sustainable ecological future for the island.

Mike Barnes

Director

Beausite Hotel