

22.01.18

**1 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding damage to the Energy for Waste plant (OQ.4/2022)**

Will the Minister provide an update in relation to any recent damage to the Energy from Waste plant, including the costs of any required repairs to date and the projected date by which such repairs will be completed?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

Hairline cracks were found on the turbine generator during a routine service and inspection. In order to ensure that these cracks do not develop any further, and to ensure the safety of the staff and plant, the generator has been taken offline. The root cause of the cracks is not yet known. An independent turbine specialist has been contacted to assess the problem and advise on a solution. We will only be able to estimate the cost and time required to make repairs once the turbine specialist has completed their assessment.

**3.1.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

When thinking about an 11 year-old waste plant, is it something to be expected, and also would the Minister clarify the timeline for an inspector to come over and to assess?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

As the Deputy quite rightly says, the plant has been running successfully for over 10 years without any major problems with the generating system. It was during a routine shutdown these cracks were spotted. They are hairline cracks and barely visible to the naked eye but they are there. During the routine shutdown, a specialist team were inspecting the plant as a routine inspection and these cracks were found. We do have some forensic inspectors, if you like, who will examine the minutiae of the generators coming over either this week or next week to give us the all clear, hopefully.

**3.1.2 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier:**

May I ask the Minister what funds the repairs will come out of, the cost of the repairs will come out of please?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

We do have a special fund for the Energy from Waste plant that will come out of our reserves there. Once the forensic inspectors have had a look then they will give us either the go or no-go on that. It is a matter of safety for the team down at the Energy from Waste plant. We have had a provisional okay to start up but it will be at our own risk. Obviously staff safety is paramount and we need to get the official all clear from the forensic inspectors, which will also obviously give comfort to our insurers.

**3.1.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I think only the first part of that answered the question. Can the Minister confirm what this special fund is, and also to ask him whether it would be better to spend such money on modern technology that is less polluting rather than old increasingly redundant technology and make a step forward for this Island rather than just making yet another step backward?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I would disagree with the Deputy. This Energy from Waste plant has won European awards for the way it handles waste. It is an Energy from Waste plant. It burns waste and it generates the power, it generates electricity, which feeds straight into the Jersey Electricity Company, hence the expression "energy from waste". Plus the emissions from the chimney, which we share with the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company), are cleaned prior to any smoke or any emissions emitted into the atmosphere.

[9:45]

### **3.1.4 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Would the Minister confirm whether the return received from the Jersey Electricity Company for electricity generated covers the cost of repairs to the turbine?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

It will do eventually. Obviously we are not receiving any returns at the moment because the generating system is offline. It was designed to run as a complete unit but the generating section has been taken offline so it is basically running as an incinerator until such time as we can restart the generator.

### **3.1.5 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

It seems to me that the question I am asking - clearly we are not generating at the moment so there will not be a return - but in the contract with the J.E.C. is there provision for repairs and are they paid for by the Government or are they covered by the J.E.C.?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

We have a running repair and maintenance fund. We are not sure of the exact cost yet until such time as these forensic inspectors come over. If they say we can restart then we can restart. If there are major repairs needed then that would be a different matter. We may need some new turbine blades, which are not cheap, and they would have to be ordered. That would take some time to arrive. We are keeping a watching brief on that.

### **3.1.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

In terms of any damage that is caused to the waste plant by objects that are put into the waste stream that should not be, such as glass and metals, can the Minister tell us to what extent that is a problem and to what extent he thinks it causes damage?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Basically at the other end of the plant, not concerning the generating system, but in the actual burners themselves there is an ongoing problem with glass, not so metals, which can be removed. All but one of the Parishes now have glass collections and recycling, which is eliminating a lot of the glass that was previously going through the Energy from Waste plant. I have been in the tipping bunker when the various Parish refuse trucks have come in and you can hear the thud-thud as the black bags come out of the back of wagons and poured into the bunker and now and again you can hear the chink-chink of people who are being very naughty and putting glass in with their general refuse. I mean even if your particular Parish does not have glass collections there are glass collection bins around the Island for use. Because once the glass goes into the system it does melt and cover the moving grate on the bottom, which conveys the refuse forward. That is part of the clean-up process. We have planned shutdowns. We have basically 2 burning streams and one is often shut down for cleaning. Somebody literally has to go in there and chip away at the glass that has melted on the grate. If at all possible, we like to keep glass and metal out of the system.

### **3.1.7 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Given the fact that glass is so bad and damaging for the system, which presumably has to be paid for by taxpayers, can the Minister explain why there are not any glass bins, in fact, next to ordinary refuse bins, public bins in town and in other public places, so that when a member of the public finds some glass on the floor they have to put it in the main bin or leave it where it is, both of which are not particularly helpful outcomes? Will the Minister address that?

### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

It is very difficult. In most recycle centres around the Island there are glass bins. But we rely on people to act responsibly and put the correct item in the correct bin. It is not really feasible to have enormous amounts of bins everywhere because that would look unsightly. We do have some by certain bays and, as I say, along the recycling centres we do have glass collection. But we rely on people to do the right thing.

### **3.1.8 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:**

The Energy from Waste plant is almost halfway through its useful life. Has the Minister started considering where the Island goes when this plant is closed? Does it continue with energy from waste or is it to go completely recycling?

### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

It is a good question from the Deputy. Nothing has been planned as yet. This is the most efficient way at the moment of getting rid of refuse. We recycle as much as we possibly can but there are items that have to go through the energy from waste plant. And as I say, it does generate electricity and we have an excellent disposal route for the ash.

### **3.1.9 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Given that the last incinerator went decades over its useful life and was polluting the atmosphere and other things, does the Minister feel that he should be starting this debate now, seeing as it will probably take at least 10, 12, 15 years to get a final decision on which direction the Island takes?

### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Absolutely. I would say 15 years at the top end. But it is a very efficient plant. It runs very well indeed. We get very few problems with it relative to the amount of throughput it does have. A gas cleaning system is the core of the whole system. All gasses are cleaned prior to being emitted to the atmosphere. You cannot see it, you cannot smell it. If you went up to the chimney and put your head down the chimney you could not smell a thing; not recommending you do that. But it is very clean when it comes out. You cannot even see it. It is a very clean system. Until somebody comes up with something better ... we are on an Island 9 by 5 so it is very difficult to have 100 per cent recycling but we do our best.

### **3.1.10 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

The incident happened in November. As a member of the Environment, Health and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel and as a States Member I have learnt about the cracks in our infrastructure site from the media. Would the Minister commit, going forward, on regular updates of the panel and the States, and obviously the public, about repairs at the Energy from Waste plant and also the progress on Bellozanne, because there are 2 sites currently under consideration?

### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I am not sure where the Deputy is going regarding Bellozanne. I am happy to let States Members know when everything is operational again regarding generators but there is a constant state of repairs going on with water pipes, heating pipes, grate sections; there is constant maintenance going on at the Energy from Waste plant. More than happy to give the Deputy and the entire team at Scrutiny and any States Members a guided tour when everything is up and running.