

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY SENATOR J.L. PERCHARD
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2010**

Question

Will the Minister explain what he considers to be the benefits and disadvantages of designating much of Jersey's west coast as a National Park?

Answer

St. Ouen's Bay has long been recognised for the unique character of its natural environment: the 1968 St. Ouen's Bay Development Plan recognised it as '*the only large coastal open space left in the Island*' and in 1978 it was designated by the States as a '*special place*', the principal objective of which was to protect and enhance the natural environment, through positive land management, with a strong presumption against significant and inappropriate development: the St. Ouen's Bay Planning Framework (1999) provided the framework and proposed mechanism by which this was to be achieved.

The proposal to designate St. Ouen's Bay as part of the proposed Coastal National Park is, therefore, considered to be consistent with and complementary to the longstanding acknowledgement of the area's high environmental value and recognises that the area needs to be appropriately managed if the quality of the landscape is to be sustained.

The principal benefits of the proposal are therefore related to the protection and management of this area. The principal disadvantage would be the misconception that such a designation would lead to an unreasonable management and protection regime.

Protection

The proposed designation of a Coastal National Park for Jersey contained within the draft Island Plan embraces not only much of the Island's west coast, represented by St. Ouen's Bay, but also those other highly sensitive and vulnerable but valuable landscapes including the north coast and south-west headlands, the low-wooded edge of the north-east coast; north coast woodland valleys; and Jersey's offshore reefs and islands. The draft Island Plan proposes that these areas of the Island be given the highest level of protection from new development in order to protect and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural value.

The benefit of this for St. Ouen's Bay is that its landscape quality will be protected from inappropriate development.

Management

The designation of a National Park boundary will inevitably embrace both living and working landscapes where many of the characteristics that provide its special appeal are the result of human activities and management of the landscape. The Minister for Planning and Environment has proposed, in the draft Island Plan, that he will work with individuals, community, amenity, business and special interest groups to develop a Management Plan for the Coastal National Park which will have, as its principal objectives, the promotion of an understanding and enjoyment of the National Park by all who live and work in or visit it.

The benefit of this for St. Ouen's Bay is that the National Park designation provides a framework within which all interested parties can come together to determine how best the area can be managed to ensure that its special qualities are sustained into the future.

In the consultation* that has been carried out to date ^[1] about the designation of a National Park for Jersey there has been clear support for such a designation and the inclusion of St. Ouen's Bay within it. It is considered that this is because there is a broad acceptance that it is important to protect and manage the landscape of St. Ouen's Bay if it is to remain as a high quality environment.

Disadvantage

Perhaps the only disadvantage of proposed designation is that there is a misapprehension, of those who do not support the proposal and may be affected by it, that the creation of a new National Park for Jersey will impose an unduly and unreasonably restrictive planning and management regime upon those areas included within it. This is, however, a matter of perception and one that needs to continue to be addressed through discussion and engagement of those with an interest in those areas proposed to be embraced by the National Park, including St. Ouen's Bay.

Background Information on the Public Consultation

*A public consultation on the proposal for a National Park for Jersey was publicised and conducted during March 2009. The process included a questionnaire that was sent to 800 addresses within the St Ouen's Bay area and that was accessible to all on-line and two stakeholder workshops where specific individuals or organisations were identified and targeted, one held during the day at the Societe on the 10th March 2009 and one in the evening at St Ouen's parish hall on the 11th March 2009.

A combination of questionnaire and workshops was chosen to ensure that a) the process was as democratic as possible –i.e. open to all and b) that qualitative data relating to perceptions and specific concerns of key stakeholders could be gathered.

The key headlines from the questionnaire are that there is support for the concept with 84% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the creation of a National Park would bring benefits. In relation to the scale of the proposed National Park, 84% either agreed or strongly agreed that the boundary should extend beyond St Ouen's Bay and of those, 83% either agreed or strongly agreed that the boundary should be extended to include the South-West coast from Noir Mont to Le Petit Port.

Both workshops were well attended by 56 people in total. Outputs showed;

- There is significant support for a National Park.
- 1 Most organisations and individuals who contributed to the consultation saw benefits to themselves and/or to the Island.
- 2 There is consistency about what special qualities should be considered within a National Park - consistent with the National Park purposes set out in IP White Paper.

¹ Green Paper (2008) *Island Plan: strategic options* and *A National Park for Jersey?* (March 2009)