

SHADOW SCRUTINY PANEL INQUIRY

WASTE MANAGEMENT

I'd like to make 3 points only:

1 SOFT VERSUS HARD SOLUTIONS

1.0 Don't shy away from people-based approaches. It is always easier to propose a technical fix. It is even more easy to debate the pros and cons of competing technical fixes as I fear your panel may be distracted into doing. But the technical fix route is more liable to disruption and breakdown, it locks you in to a certain path for a long time, and it is far more expensive.

1.1 You may think changing behaviour is likely to bring unpopularity. I am not so sure. Spending £60 million on a new incinerator when cheaper options are there for the asking may also be unpopular. And the solutions I suggest you consider have already been done elsewhere.

2. WORKING WITH PEOPLE

2.0 I refer to a Minute of the former PsC:

Public Services Committee Minutes 13/3/00:

"successful implementation of a Solid Waste Management strategy would require a significant lifestyle change by island residents and would depend heavily on the voluntary involvement of the public."

2.1 This is absolutely correct. The question is how such involvement can be created and sustained.

2.2 If we are talking "lifestyle change" and "community involvement" then I humbly suggest that the initiative must be seen to come from the grassroots and then responded to by the States. There are NGO's who would gladly get involved. The voluntary sector is flexible and imaginative, and would surely deliver more bangs for each buck as I witnessed for myself at a seminar for environmental NGO's some years back.

2.3 At that same seminar the answer was also outlined in a brilliant presentation from (I think) the then Director of Bristol FOE. He said that by involving the whole community in activities such as a waste reduction programme, you could promote good relations between all members of the community across divisions of age, ethnicity and so on, as all united to reach the common goal. This fostering of community spirit was as valuable as the waste reduction itself.

2.4 I would suggest that the natural home for such a waste reduction programme is the newly-formed Community Relations Trust. They could work with initially one or two natural communities in Jersey (one urban estate, one country parish for example) and would negotiate with the EPSD what the targets should be and the benefits which the local community would gain as they progressed towards the targetted reductions.

2.5 And then we would see the beginnings in our island of a better relationship between citizens and States, as both worked together, supporting the other party's efforts, towards a highly desirable goal - the saving of £60 million!

3. FISCAL MEASURES

3.0 Lessons from abroad. My wife is German. The town where she lives has had not only separation of waste for many years in common with most of Germany, but also has had charging for the collection of domestic waste by the number of bins emptied.

3.1 Such simple measures would have a dramatic impact here also. The charges were brought in in Germany because the cost of disposal was becoming so high that "something had to be done" I would suggest that the same is true here: "something has to be done"

3.2 The argument runs sometimes: Jersey is so rich that it makes no difference charging for things. This has been shown to be false by the precedent of parking charges which immediately had a dramatic effect on the availability of spaces, e.g. on the Esplanade. People did notice

3.3 The argument runs sometimes: any such charge (the same applies to charging for water, which is also the right thing to do because it is a scarce resource) penalises the poor. the answer is not to back off fiscal measures which are rightly levied in order to discourage people doing undesirable things like throwing away, but to tackle poverty properly.

3.4 What will happen, hopefully is that excess packaging will be removed by shoppers in the store where they buy the goods - why should they pay after all for the disposal of something they never asked for in the first place. I think the supermarkets would pretty soon get the message and in their turn they would take action.

I look forward to your response.

Daniel Wimberley