

Anonymous - 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear members of the Scrutiny Panel,

In 2019 Rob Ward asked the Assembly a question about how Jersey manages its soils - specifically carbon drawdown into our soils.

The response indicated that GHE was working on "more accurate baseline studies of soil organic matter across the island" (with Cranfield University) and GHE would "identify and implement additional measure[s] to increase carbon sequestration".

Subsequently in 2020 Aether produced a report for Government "Carbon sequestration and the role of soil and crops" which focused on the methodology and data required to account for local carbon sequestration. Calculations about the potential carbon sequestration in Jersey soil were based on UN global figures and heavily caveated by the need for real local data on current soil carbon and soil management.

It is good to see that the draft Carbon Neutral Roadmap (CNR) includes some investment in local carbon sinks and further work on defining their size and impact, even though the only funding for carbon removal is allocated to a document called the Marine Spatial Development plan.

Indeed in "EN5: Blue Carbon, Biodiversity and Sequestration" (page 128 of the draft CNR) the majority of the funding available has gone to Biodiversity - perhaps short-sightedly cutting off support for the development of blue carbon beyond the delivery of the Spatial Plan. But more concerning than that, explicit funding for sequestration has mysteriously disappeared.

One interpretation is that soil carbon storage has been written off before its potential could be properly evaluated, on the basis of the Aether report which itself was preliminary and lacked data. And also - only obliquely referred to in the report - on the basis of the established potato business.

I would not support ongoing allocation of resources to something that showed no potential - but in this case it seems that soil management as a target for investment in the CNR has been inappropriately dismissed even though it doubles up on impact in areas like clean water, biodiversity, food security, nutrition, and people's enjoyment of the natural environment.

In presenting this analysis to you I would also pose the following questions: Where is the promised baseline of soil carbon in Jersey? And, what was the output of the 2019 partnership with Cranfield, did Government pay for something it didn't get?

Thank you for your consideration.