

STATES OF JERSEY



ISLAND PLAN 2011: APPROVAL (P.48/2011): NINTH AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 20th April 2011
by Senator F. du H. Le Gresley

STATES GREFFE

PAGE 2 –

After the words “the revised draft Island Plan 2011” insert the words “except that the Proposals Map forming part of the Plan be amended to include the following areas as part of the Coastal National Park –

- (a) Mourier Valley, and after the words ‘D4: North Coast Valleys’ on page 92 insert ‘[including Mourier Valley]’ as shown on the attached plan (Appendix 1);
- (b) La Commune de Gouray, and after the words ‘B5: St Ouen’s Bay Coastal Plain’ on page 91 add, as a separate bullet point, as shown on the attached plan (Appendix 2):

• **‘La Commune de Gouray:** The dunes at La Commune de Gorey, which form part of the Grouville Coastal Plain character area (B1), are a remnant of the historic landscape of this area and provide an important open break in the coastline. They are also valuable in terms of biodiversity, particularly for birds.

- La Commune de Gorey (part of B1: Grouville Coastal Plain)’

- (c) Site of former Plémont Holiday Village, and after the words ‘D5: St Martin’s Valleys’ on page 92 add, as a separate bullet point:

‘Site of former Plémont Holiday Village

- Site of former Plémont Holiday Village (part of E1: north west headland’ as shown on attached plan (Appendix 3);

- (d) North Coast interior agricultural land, and after the words ‘D5: St Martin’s Valleys’ on page 92 add, as a separate bullet point, as shown on the attached plan (Appendix 4):

• **‘North Coast interior agricultural land:** The essential character of this area is created by the contrast between the intricate patchwork of small fields, with the wilderness of the rugged north coast cliffs, heathland and sea. The views of sky and sea and enhanced ‘light’, the treeless windswept landscape and the distinctive boundary features plus a sense of remoteness all contribute to its special identity.

- E4: North Coast interior agricultural land’

And to consequentially amend Map 2.4: Coastal National Park on page 93, accordingly.

SENATOR F. DU H. LE GRESLEY

REPORT

If we are to save our Island from further inappropriate development, now is the time to make it absolutely clear to developers that, as elected representatives of the people of Jersey, we will not tolerate any further “**human**” erosion of our rural coastline.

The Draft Island Plan goes some way towards protecting those areas which have the highest environmental capital, but in my opinion we need to go further. I have identified 4 geographic areas which merit inclusion in the proposed Coastal National Park. These are – Mourier Valley in St. Mary, La Commune de Gouray, the Plémont headland in St. Ouen and the North Coast.

According to Policy NE6 the Coastal National Park “will be given the highest level of protection from development and this will be given priority over all other planning considerations. In this area there will be the strongest presumption against all forms of new development for whatever purpose”.

1. Mourier Valley [Character Area D4] [Appendix 1]

This valley was included in the Character Area D4: North Coast Valleys in the Countryside Character Appraisal [1999] Land Use Consultants [CC Appraisal]. To assist Members, I have included a map of the Countryside Character Areas as **Appendix 5**.

The Draft Island Plan proposes that all D4 areas are included within the Coastal National Park with the exception of Mourier Valley. The Plan gives no indication as to why this valley has been omitted on the Draft Island Plan Proposals Map.

The CC Appraisal describes Mourier Valley as follows –

“Mourier Valley is a steep narrow valley running down to a small inlet on the cliffs. Mourier Valley is filled with scrub, bracken and gorse towards the sea merging into the surrounding heathland, while to the south a narrow band of oak woodland clothes the valley sides.

Threats to Local Character

In the upper part of Mourier Valley the substantial residential development, with associated gardens and horse paddocks with a variety of fence and wire boundaries, interspersed with abandoned cõtils imparts a more suburban 'fringe' character.

MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Landscape re-instatement in the upper part of Mourier Valley, involving restoration of walled boundaries, and developing management options for abandoned cõtils (e.g. scrub/woodland cover or acid grassland/heathland). These proposals would need to be implemented in conjunction with the residential occupiers who appear to be the main landholders rather than through an agri-environment scheme.

Capacity: There is no capacity to accept any new development and **it is recommended that the North Coast Valleys should be given high levels of protection.**

Guidance: The only developments that can be justified in this area are small scale renewals or extensions to existing buildings and these will need careful attention to scale and design. There is no scope for extending or infilling residential development within Mourier Valley. **The undisturbed, tranquil character of these valleys must be retained.”**

Officers at the Department of the Environment can offer no specific reasons why Mourier Valley has been left out of the Coastal National Park, and I therefore seek Members’ support to have this valley included.

2. La Commune de Gouray - specifically all of the land to the east of La Rue a Don and Gorey Village Main Road, including the area of dunes to the east of Longbeach car park [Character Area B1] [Appendix 2]

La Commune de Gouray was included in the Character Area B1 in the CC Appraisal. The area is described as follows –

“Along the coastal edge, the area of dunes held by La Commune de Gouray have become stabilized and are now covered by low dune grassland and gorse. The area is occupied by the Royal Jersey Golf Club and the areas of rough, combined with short grass, and stands of gorse and scrub now provide one of the best remaining habitats in the Island for Cirl buntings and is their only regular breeding site in the east of the Island[**unfortunately we no longer have cirl buntings in Jersey**]. The dunes have particular landscape significance in providing an important open break in the coastline which is otherwise continuously developed all the way around to west as far as St. Aubin.

The dune area behind the sea is now occupied by the Royal Jersey Golf Club although this use has partially served to fossilise the ‘historic landscape’ of sand dunes and prevented encroachment by development which has occurred to the south.

The dunes at La Commune de Gorey are a remnant of the historic landscape of this area and provide an important open break in the coastline and they are also valuable in terms of biodiversity, particularly for birds.

The golf course on the sand dunes of Gorey Common provides is the only regular breeding site in the east of the Island for Cirl Bunting. The site is identified as being of Channel Island Importance for birds. There is very limited capacity to accept new development and **it is recommended that this area should have high levels of protection.”**

In the Draft Island Plan La Commune de Gouray is assessed as a Protected Open Space [SCO 4]. This is the same status as the St. Clement’s Golf Course. I believe that the protection afforded under the Protected Open Space Policy is insufficient to safeguard the natural features of La Commune de Gouray, which includes the

18th Century Fort Henry. I am therefore proposing that La Commune de Gouray is included within the Coastal National Park.

Officers at the Department of the Environment have suggested that the reason it is appropriate for La Commune de Gouray to be excluded is because the Coastal National Park ends at Mont Orgueil. However, I would point out that there is a break in the Coastal National Park at St. Brelade's Bay and therefore there is no logic in saying that the short break between Mont Orgueil and the northern tip of La Commune de Gouray prevents it being included.

Members will recall that, a few years ago there was a planning application to build a café/restaurant on the dune area to the east of Longbeach car park, at the northern end of La Commune de Gouray, which was fortunately refused. I believe that in this coastal area of Grouville there should be the strongest presumption against all forms of new development for whatever purpose. Only with Coastal National Park status can this be assured.

3. Plémont headland, St Ouen, encompassing the whole of the land occupied by Plémont Holiday Village, as identified on drawing number 1505/06/101 [Countryside Character Area E1] [Appendix 3]

This small parcel of land is part of Countryside Character Area E1. Members are well aware that there is a current planning application [P2011/0144] to demolish the existing buildings which were part of the former Plémont Holiday Village and to replace them with 28 houses. The applicant also proposes to return two-thirds of the site to nature. The planning application has been referred to an independent Planning Inspector by the Minister for Planning and Environment.

In 2009, the Connétable of St. Ouen brought a proposition to the States, P.144/2009, asking the States to decide whether to approve the acquisition by the Public of the site, known as Plémont Holiday Village, by compulsory purchase. In the report attached to the proposition, the Connétable pointed out that in September 2006, the States agreed that it would be in the public interest for the headland at Plémont to be preserved as an open space for the enjoyment of the public of the Island.

I do not know what will be the outcome of the current public inquiry instigated by the Minister for Planning and Environment, but it seems to me absolutely essential that this important area of headland is included within the Coastal National Park in order to prevent any expansion of the proposed housing estate at some time in the future.

4. North Coast [Character Area E4] [Appendix 4]

Members will have noticed from the Proposals Map that the Coastal National Park Area A1: North Coast Headlands forms a thin line along the North coast. The reality is that most of the designated area is limited to cliffs and coastal footpaths with occasional larger areas of heathland. The majority is land that physically cannot be built on due to the rough and steep terrain. If we are to protect our coastal heritage, we must extend the area of the Coastal National Park so as to include the small fields, tracks and Green lanes which adjoin the North Coast Headlands.

Character Area E4 is described as follows in the CC Appraisal –

“NATURAL INFLUENCES

Geology and Soils: “The area is underlain by hard igneous rocks with granite in the west and rhyolites in the east, with smaller localised areas of diorite and andesite on the headlands. The strip of land along the northern edge, adjacent to the heath land is clothed with thin soils derived from the underlying bedrock, further inland the solid geology is overlain by loess deposits which form a richer soil mantle. There are no Geological SSI.

Landform: This is the most elevated land in the Island and for the most part is over 100m above sea level and includes the highest point at Les Platons. The land slopes steeply down to the north coast cliffs, compared to the long gentle slopes which run down to the south coast. The land on the coastal edge lies exposed and open to winds blowing from the north and west and these are a dominant influence on its character. There are expansive views of the sky and sea.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Archaeology and Past Land Use: There are no archaeological or ancient monument sites, although the proximity to the north coast heathlands which have a very high concentration of Neolithic sites suggests that this area may have been utilised during this period. The characteristic size and regular, rectangular shape of many of the fields adjoining the heathland, for example, suggests that these enclosures may have a very early origin.

Patterns of Enclosure: The fields are small in area and often regular in shape. The area includes some remnant Medieval strip fields at Egypt as well as more recent nineteenth century enclosures on the headland at La Belle Hougue. Other than this very little is known about the history of enclosure, the paucity of orchards shown on the Richmond Map. 1795, suggests that it was originally enclosed as grazing or arable land. Near the coast, the land is exposed to strong salt laden winds and apart from the occasional wind sculpted hawthorn or oak, is virtually treeless. This is an open windswept landscape with the small rectangular fields enclosed by large earth banks and granite walls, often topped by bramble, ivy and gorse.

Further inland away from the extreme conditions of the coastal edge, trees survive and here, the substantial earth banks which form the field boundaries are topped with hawthorn and elder, shelterbelts of pine and sycamore and elm scrub are also common features along the lanes. The area comprises the agricultural land extending along the short northern watershed from the valley of Greve de Lecq in the west to the east side of Bouley Bay in the east. To the south the boundary is formed by the main north coast road and to the north by the coastal heathlands along the clifftop.

Settlement and Building Character: The area is fairly sparsely settled compared to the interior of Jersey. The Duke of Richmond Map (1795) shows scattered settlements throughout the area to the east of Sorel Point, which is presumably due to the greater shelter here as opposed to the westerly facing

slopes around Crabbe. The traditional settlement pattern involved isolated dwellings set into the more sheltered hollows, with the substantial granite farmhouses often built at right angles to the coast.

More recent developments have disrupted this traditional pattern and include lines of bungalows along ridgelines with a view to the sea. The nucleated settlement around the parish church of St. John, the highest and most northerly village in the Island, straddles the boundary of the character area.

The area is crossed by a network of narrow, winding lanes, bordered by high earth banks covered in gorse, a large number of which have been defined as Green Lanes. Many of these sunken lanes run northwards, terminating on the heathland edge and are likely to date to at least Medieval times when the north coast heath lands provided valuable grazing land. In contrast to these narrow winding lanes is the Route de Nord, which runs from St. Johns, down to the coast and along the edge of the enclosed land to Sorel Point. The road was built during the German Occupation, to keep the local workforce in full employment (and thus unavailable to work for the Occupying Forces), and is dedicated to the men and women of Jersey who suffered in the War. This smooth road, which cuts across the contours, provides views to some of Jerseys' most magnificent coastal scenery.

Current Land Use and Management: The land is almost entirely in agricultural land use with an intricate mix of both pasture and arable and even the very thin light soils on the extreme coastal edge are cultivated as potato fields. The area remains comparatively undeveloped with tourism developments being mainly located on the bays on the coastal edge. A small number of car parks and viewing areas have been created on the higher land and there are a few footpaths linking into the main north coast path.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

- the most elevated land on the Island, for the most part over 100m above sea level, comprising a band of enclosed agricultural fields extending across the short northern watershed and sloping down to the north coast cliff edge;
- underlain by hard igneous rocks with granite in the west and rhyolites in the east and smaller localised areas of diorite and andesite on the headlands;
- the land near the coast lies exposed and open to strong salt laden winds and apart from the occasional wind sculpted hawthorn is virtually treeless;
- an open, windswept landscape with small regular fields enclosed by substantial earth banks and granite walls, often topped by bramble, ivy and gorse, with hawthorn, elder and sycamore are characteristic of the more sheltered areas inland;
- land is almost entirely in agricultural use with an intimate mix of pasture and arable. The field pattern includes some small rectangular fields which may be of great antiquity, remnant Medieval strips and more recent nineteenth century enclosures;

- a remote, sparsely settled area with isolated dwellings set into sheltered hollows. More recent developments have disrupted this pattern and include lines of bungalows along ridgelines with a view to the sea. The village of St. John's straddles the boundary of the character area;
- includes relatively large swathes of land that remain entirely undeveloped without any buildings, structures or roads.

EVALUATION

Integrity of Character: The essential character of this area is created by the contrast between the intricate patchwork of small fields, with the wilderness of the rugged north coast cliffs, heathland and sea. The views of sky and sea and enhanced 'light', the treeless windswept landscape and the distinctive boundary features plus a sense of remoteness all contribute to its special identity. **The area is particularly important for the relatively large swathes of enclosed land which remain entirely undeveloped, without any buildings, structures or roads. These include the large area of land around Crabbe and the area east of Sorel Farm. They are unique on the Island.** The north coast agricultural edge has an intact, strong, positive character. The overall strategy is for conservation and management.

Key Environmental Capital

- **The whole range of field patterns and associated boundaries found within this area are of great historic interest, although as yet they remain unprotected and without any form of designation.**

Threats to Local Character

- The highest land around Les Platons provides a site for telecommunications masts and these vertical structures are very visible within this otherwise small scale, treeless landscape.
- Localised areas of change in the farmed landscape have occurred, for example, at Le Douet to the north-west of the village of St. John. Here, boundaries have been removed over the last twenty years creating a bleak plateau of large, open arable fields. The changes apparent here emphasise the importance of the field boundaries in creating the character of this area.
- Any new developments, even small scale farm buildings, can have an impact on its remote character.
- The location of conflicting land uses on the adjacent heath land such as the rifle range at Crabbe and quarry at Ronez all have an impact on the remote character, requiring heavy traffic to traverse the area.

LEVELS OF PROTECTION AND CAPACITY TO ACCEPT CHANGE

Capacity: There is no capacity to accept any new development and it is recommended that the agricultural land along the north coast should have high levels of protection.

Guidance: Generally the only developments that can be allowed are buildings essential for agriculture and renewals, extensions or conversions of existing buildings. These will require careful attention to location, scale and design to ensure that they are in keeping with the local character. Development, even small scale buildings or trackways, should be discouraged on the wholly undeveloped areas at Crabbe and east of Sorel Point. The further extension of St. John's Village to the north should be discouraged. Where developments are permitted, opportunities should be taken to achieve the environmental enhancements and management measures outlined above."

The key points as to why I believe the area E4: North Coast should be included within the Coastal National Park are –

- [a] the agricultural land along the north coast should have higher levels of protection than land in the centre of the Island;
- [b] the wholly undeveloped areas at Crabbé, Égypte and east of Sorel Point should have higher levels of protection;
- [c] the North Coast is a key tourism asset and is of economic benefit to Jersey;
- [d] the Green Lanes network in the Parishes of St. Mary and St. John afford pedestrians safe passage through this area to reach the cliff paths. This network could be expanded into Trinity so that, with the exception of the main roads, the whole area of the North Coast becomes pedestrian and bicycle rider-friendly;
- [e] the car parks at Greve de Lecq, Devil's Hole and Les Platons provide locals and visitors with suitable starting points for exploring the North Coast;
- [f] agricultural land in St. Ouen's Bay forms part of the Coastal National Park so there is no reason why the same cannot apply on the North Coast;
- [g] the area remains comparatively undeveloped and provides a backdrop for some of Jersey's most magnificent coastal scenery.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications arising from this amendment, although I would recommend that some form of signage is erected at strategic points so that visitors are aware of the inland boundaries of the Coastal National Park.









