

5.3 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin of the Minister for the Environment regarding protecting 30 per cent of the marine and terrestrial environment by 2030 (OQ.64/2026).

I was delighted to read the M.P.A. (Marine Protected Area) press release last week. Will the Minister advise how the Government intends to protect 30 per cent of the marine and terrestrial environment by 2030 in accordance with its international commitments under the U.N. (United Nations) Convention on Biological Diversity, and whether this work will include a programme of implementation and discussions with the Jersey National Park?

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat (The Minister for the Environment):

I thank the Connétable for the question. Firstly, I think it is important to recognise the significant progress Jersey has made in this area and the work undertaken by successive Ministers and Assembly Members, including former Deputy Steve Luce and, indeed, Deputy Renouf, in helping to establish the current network of marine protected areas. As the Connétable will be aware, the last week, following States approval in the spring, a significant expansion of Jersey's territorial waters receiving the highest level of protection has increased from 6.5 per cent to 21.7 per cent, with 2 further areas due to come into force on 1st January 2030, taking this figure to 23.4 per cent. As Minister for the Environment, I remain committed to supporting Jersey's international obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the global ambition to protect and conserve 30 per cent of land and sea for nature by 2030, and to playing its part in delivering the ambitions of the global diversity framework. However, achieving those objectives is both from the marine and land area combined and cannot be delivered within a single designation. These measures are the result of considerable scientific research, habitat mapping, ecological surveys and stakeholder engagement and are focused on protecting Jersey's most important sensitive marine habitats. The Jersey National Park is an important part of Jersey's environmental landscape and has a valuable role in promoting, conserving and enhancing the Island's natural and cultural heritage. An identified activity of a recent review of the National Park was to establish the National Park as a I.U.C.N. (International Union for Conservation of Nature) cat V protected area and include it on the I.U.C.N. green list. Our officers are now regularly in discussions with the National Park team about conservation and environmental management.

5.3.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I thank the Minister for her answer. I would just like to say that it is a significant amount of work that needs to be done, and it is a significant amount of important work to be done. Does the Minister believe that this Government has the resources and commitment to achieve this vitally important step by 2030, bearing in mind that it is only 4 years away?

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

As I have already stated, the work is already ongoing and it is important to identify that when we are doing work in relation to both marine and our land protections, is that we continue to consult with all of those people which it affects and we continue to work on projects which are achievable and reasonable. Obviously the question that stands, should we look at to find an additional 7.6 per cent to hit the target by 2030 for the sea. However, as I said, we need to be realistic and we must make sure that when we are doing these things that we are actually making proper gains, and that they are worth us doing and it is not just a paper exercise. So I am committed to achieving as much as we possibly can.

5.3.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Could the Minister elaborate if part of this work will be to update Jersey's biodiversity strategy?

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

I thank the Deputy for the question, and that is yes. Both myself and the Assistant Minister are committed to looking at the biodiversity strategy, and that work will be ongoing.

[10:15]

5.3.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for her answer. I would like to ask the Minister if, with that in mind, the strategy of course you need implementation and that needs budgets, and will she be putting further budget towards biodiversity strategy implementation in the next Budget?

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

At this present time, with only 2 months in this role, we need to look at all of the budgets and look how it is going to be divided, bearing in mind that the role that I have taken has been split from another. So obviously we will be looking how we are going to fund it and how much the costs are, but obviously the work is ongoing with the teams that we already have.

5.3.4 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

The Minister kindly mentions the role has been split, and of course this leads me to the question around the Marine Spatial Plan that was presented previously by the Minister for the Environment, which these roles have now been split. The Marine Spatial Plan is mentioned within the Bridging Island Plan, so is the Minister certain that she has responsible for this area or does it sit to the Minister to her right?

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

As far as I am concerned, my role is in relation to the Marine Plan, and so that sits with me.

5.3.5 Deputy A. Maltman of St Mary, St Ouen and St Peter:

Could the Minister explain the structure of the Jersey National Park and what kind of statutory powers that the park has? Could the Minister explain whether there are any plans in the future to bring more statutory powers to the park enshrined in law?

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

At this time I cannot answer that question. I am just, at this present time, visiting all of the areas where we work with closely and I am not in this, at this particular time, able to provide a structure of the National Park. But I am happy to ask a member of the team to do that today and to be able to provide that to the Deputy. [Appended to the Official Record at page number 52].

Deputy A. Maltman:

Thank you. I would welcome that conversation, Minister.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Connétable of St. Martin.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

No, thank you, Sir.