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Dear Sir

**Letter of Comment -- P.2021/83 The Island's Future Aggregate Supply - the Committee
for the Environment & Infrastructure**

I refer to the above policy letter which has been submitted for debate by the Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure* ("CftE&I"). The policy letter asks the States:

1a. To agree the principle of on-island quarrying in order to provide the future supply of aggregate for Guernsey (Option A in the policy letter).

Or, only if Proposition 1a shall have been defeated,

1b. To agree the principle that the future supply of aggregate for Guernsey shall be through importation (Option B in the policy letter) on exhaustion of existing aggregate reserves at Les Vardes Quarry.

After careful consideration, the Policy & Resources Committee (the Committee) supports the recommendation to quarry on-island as it believes this is essential to support security of supply to meet Government and private sector infrastructure priorities. Additionally, operators make direct contributions to our economy by employing local residents and taxation on profits, while ensuring the Island takes responsibility for its impact on the environment, locally and globally.

The Policy & Resources Committee is also of the view that there would be less environmental impact should Les Vardes Quarry be used as the next inert waste site, but recognises that the future strategic requirements for waste, water and stone need to be presented and considered alongside each other before a firm decision is made by the Assembly.

The Committee acknowledges that there are timescales that the quarry operator, Ronez, needs to work within in order to ensure the supply of aggregate meets the demand and as determining the future aggregate supply policy is critical to many enabling actions of this political term, the Committee is very keen that the States reach an agreed position swiftly.

As ever, there are two strongly opposing views which must be carefully evaluated and considered in order to determine the most appropriate and beneficial solution for Guernsey. The policy letter submitted by the *CftE&I* clearly sets out the economic, social and environmental factors and recommends the solution that on balance, in its view, weighing up the positive and negative impacts, is the most environmentally responsible and the most certain for the Island.

The Committee does acknowledge that some levels of importation may be required given the number of large-scale projects set out in the Government Work Plan (GWP) but believes as a principle based on available facts that aggregate should be sourced locally until that is no longer an available option.

The policy letter acknowledges that the indicative increase in aggregate costs through importation is uncertain at this stage, but it would inevitably be passed onto the customer. This would result in increased building costs in an already difficult time where for example house prices are increasing fast as demand outweighs availability. The Committee is working closely with the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security and the *CftE&I* in order to assess housing needs in the Island and will find a range of levers as a matter of priority to assist with addressing the over-heating housing market but any increase in cost would have a negative impact on this work.

Importation of aggregate would negatively impact on our own resources, not only for the road building and repair programme but on capital projects. There are several significant GWP enabling capital projects that would require aggregate, or aggregate products, including the future harbour development, seafront masterplan, the secondary and post-16 re-organisation, and the modernisation of the Princess Elizabeth Hospital to name only a few. Funds are already stretched, and the Committee is mindful of the impact on delivery all areas would experience should the Assembly agree to full importation and its cost implications to the public purse.

The Committee would also like to highlight to States' Members that in addition to the likely increased cost of aggregate itself, additional funding would be required to facilitate the increased level of importation in the short-term which has not been accounted for with the Funding & Investment Plan. The GWP aims to create resilient and sustainable infrastructure and connectivity, but these interim measures would have to be funded and put in place out of step with the detailed proposals for harbour development. It should also be noted that if the Assembly agrees to import future aggregate supply, there may be difficulties in sourcing and shipping the rock armour required for the facility at Longue Hougue South.

There is no doubt that quarrying on-island will result in negative localised environmental impacts, however the Committee believes that the *CftE&I* has fully researched the issues and has determined that the negative impacts from importation outweigh those from securing supply locally: overall emissions will be higher as a result of transporting the aggregate from its source to the storage facility (still to be sourced and potentially purchased before fitting out), and higher HGV movements. The Committee particularly emphasises that crude oil has been stored in the Torrey Canyon quarry since 1967 and these proposals will result in it being cleared which is a significant and positive impact of quarrying on-island and an opportunity that should not be missed. The negative impacts from

quarrying on-island can be mitigated in some areas or enhanced through biodiversity net gain increasing biodiversity overall.

The Committee is cognisant that full importation would incur the lowest carbon emission footprint locally but agrees with the *CftE&I* in that as a jurisdiction mindful of the global impacts caused by man's activity, Scope 2 and 3 emissions cannot be ignored in the context of climate change when making this strategic decision. We must take responsibility for all emissions created as a result of products required locally, as is the agreed States' policy.

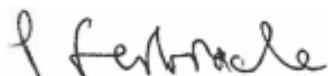
The potential for reputational damage should we move to full importation is significant and should be carefully considered. As Government we need to work with and support the initiatives being led by our community, not against them. The Committee is also aware that as an organisation, Ronez is environmentally focused and endeavours to make its operations as sustainable as possible when the company's business is opening and operating quarries. Should supply be met through importation, the way in which stone is extracted would be out of our control and may result in overall emissions being higher and greater environmental damage. This would also lead to higher costs to meet the greater offsetting required.

As has been evident over the last few years, circumstances can change very quickly and without warning, but this can also happen in a positive manner where technology evolves, and demand levels change. Therefore, the Committee supports the inclusion of a break clause before Phase 3 of Chouet Headland is developed, in order to re-evaluate the situation at that time.

The Committee is also welcomes the *CftE&I*'s intention to bring forward a co-ordinated response to the future strategic requirements for waste, water and stone and would encourage this work to be prioritised by those involved to enable the outcome to be determined by Q1 2023, as set out in the GWP.

Given that the timelines for the exhaustion of Les Vardes Quarry and a new inert waste facility at Longue Hougue South (LHS) are now closely aligned, the Committee fails to understand how it could be possible to demonstrate that LHS is the Best Practical Environmental Option for inert waste management, especially when the negative impacts set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are also considered. The Island's circumstances have changed since the Assembly agreed to progress LHS and capacity at the current Longue Hougue void space has also improved as the fill rate slowed; completion is now due to be between July 2023 and July 2024, resulting in less urgency to create a new facility and affording time for a re-set on policy to reflect the change in circumstances.

Yours faithfully



Deputy Peter Ferbrache
President