

THINK-TANK

Education, population, poverty, tax...getting views on topics like those in Jersey isn't the difficult part – but have you ever noticed how many people sound eminently credible when talking about them, even though they may actually be basing their views on conjecture, false facts and blind guesswork?

There is a real danger in making the 'facts' fit the opinion, rather than the other way around – which is exactly the point at which someone with an eye on the latest buzzwords will smugly insert the phrase 'post-truth' into the conversation, imagining its actually helpful.

So, we've asked the Jersey Policy Forum to add some robust material to those crucial local debates – the point is not to provoke agreement or acquiescence; it is to provide reliable material on which others can build their views.



By Gailina Liew, Executive Director, Jersey Policy Forum

Sense and Sustainability

Another year and yet more acronyms and terms to sort through in the broad area of sustainability. The journey started a few decades ago with CSR (corporate social responsibility) and then there was SRI (socially responsible investing), ethical investing, sustainable development, SDGs (the 17 sustainable development goals defined by the United Nations), triple bottom line or PPP (people, profits, planet), impact investing, sustainable finance, the five capitals (environmentalist Jonathan Porritt), the 'doughnut' and planetary boundaries (economist Kate Raworth), ESG (environmental, social and

governance criteria), SASB (Sustainable Accounting Standards Board) and GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) to list just some. Along the way, terms like 'green-washing' and now 'blue-washing' are also used to describe superficial activity that in reality is unlikely to result in actual improvement – a more commonly understood term might be 'window-dressing.' Are the different terms used in the broad area of sustainability really helpful or do they make it more difficult for people to make decisions about how they invest, run their governments, businesses, charities and activities?

**If it looks like a duck
& acts like a duck
& quacks like a duck
It's probably a rabbit
messing with
your head**



Key Objectives	ADAPT Framework (PwC)	Better Life Index 2018 and 2019 (OECD)	Sustainable Development Goals (UN)	Jersey's Sustainable Performance Framework (2020)	The Five Capitals (Porritt)	Doughnut Economics (Raworth)
1 Clean water	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Clean energy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 Sustainable lifestyle	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
4 Climate action	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 Life under water			✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Life on land	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7 Food security			✓	✓		✓
8 Economic growth	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
9 Quality infrastructure, industries and innovation	✓		✓	✓	✓	
10 Consumption and production	✓		✓		✓	
11 Partnerships for sustainable development	✓		✓			
12 Housing		✓		✓	✓	✓
13 Zero poverty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14 Health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15 Education		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 Gender equality			✓			✓
17 Removing inequalities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18 Social justice and strong institutions	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
19 Civic engagement		✓		✓	✓	✓
20 Social support networks		✓		✓	✓	✓
21 Work-life balance		✓				
22 Aging demographic	✓	✓				
23 Polarisation	✓					
24 Safety and security		✓		✓		

In 1983, the United Nations established the World Commission on Environment and Development, an independent commission with the mandate to bring countries together to focus on how to raise living standards for those living in poverty while ensuring that environmental are also addressed. Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former prime minister of Norway, was invited to lead the work. The final report of the Brundtland Commission, Our Common Future, was published four years later and included a definition of sustainable development that is still regarded as one of the best:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Since then, many different frameworks have been developed by different bodies for different purposes (ie. investing,

economic development, framing strategic thinking, reporting, etc.) but the underlying key objectives are common across many of them. The Jersey Policy Forum has developed a concordance table as a tool to show how a handful of frameworks that have been discussed as being relevant to Jersey map across the underlying key objectives. (see above)

The words of Brundtland in 1987 in Our Common Future are still relevant and meaningful today - 33 years later:

But first and foremost, our message is directed towards people, whose well-being is the ultimate goal of all environment and development policies. In particular, the Commission is addressing the young. The world's teachers will have a crucial role to play in bringing this report to them. If we do not succeed in putting our message of urgency through to today's parents and decision makers, we risk undermining our

children's fundamental right to a healthy, life-enhancing environment. Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development.

Let's cut through the jargon and confusion. Maintaining focus on and prioritizing action on the key objectives will be more useful and meaningful than trying to discern the differences between frameworks and political ideologies. The covid-19 pandemic is a global and local call to action. Jersey's sustainable performance framework provides a comprehensive map of the possible destinations. Stay tuned for the Jersey Policy Forum's report - Looking to the Future – to see what fellow Islanders believe is important to prioritise and achieve for a more sustainable, resilient and prosperous Jersey future.