



Notice

Dear Residents of Sark,

Alan Witney-Price's customer letter of 1st March 2022 begins with a misleading and unauthorised reference to the views my Office purports to hold. For the sake of clarity:

- My Office has no role in discussions between Mr Witney-Price and Chief Pleas on the future ownership of Sark's electricity company. The 2016 Law under which I operate requires me to act independently.
- My primary duty is to ensure a fair and reasonable price for electricity in Sark.
- To undertake this role, the 2016 Law empowers my Office to ask SEL for regular and reliable operating and financial information. Despite frequent formal requests, SEL has repeatedly failed to provide my Office with information I have requested. I am unable to confirm whether Mr Witney-Price has recently put in new capital. I have requested evidence of his earlier claims of injecting capital in order to keep SEL afloat, but no evidence has been forthcoming.
- I do not share Mr Witney-Price's view that the urgently needed replacement of equipment should be put on hold until Chief Pleas produces an energy policy. I shared this view with SEL on 6th January 2022 when I wrote:

"Your letter implies that you are withholding capital expenditure until the policy matters you mention are resolved. It is SEL's opinion that these issues cannot be resolved without input from Chief Pleas. Chief Pleas will no doubt have their own views on these matters, but it seems to me that you are forgetting that SEL is a private company and should make its own decisions, even where there is an element of uncertainty. Taking decisions on investments where the future is unknown is part and parcel of running a business and business leaders are judged by their success, or otherwise, in dealing with uncertainty. "

I then went on to list four earlier reasons given by SEL to explain its lack of investment over the previous 21 months of Mr Witney-Price's stewardship of the company, none of which was, in my view, credible.

- Mr Witney-Price states that he would like to see an independent, third-party assessment of my determinations in order to validate my approach. The 2016 Law makes no such provision but it does allow a regulated company to appeal any decision I have reached. Mr Witney-Price dropped SEL's appeal when he took control of the company and he chose not to challenge the Variation put in place in January 2021. Given that there is currently no price control order in place, I am at a loss to understand what it is he wishes to validate.
- If a reduction in energy prices is a priority as SEL claims, this is a further reason for SEL to invest in new, urgently needed equipment without further delay.

Anthony White
Commissioner
commissioner@epc.sark.gg

4th March 2022