

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 30th JANUARY 2024

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[9:30]

The Roll was called and the Dean led the Assembly in Prayer.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

I am sure Members will join me in welcoming His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor to the Chamber this morning. **[Approbation]**

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

The Bailiff:

The only business before the Assembly today is under part F of the Order Paper, Appointment of Ministers, Committees and Panels, and specifically the selection of Ministers. In accordance with Standing Order 117(2E), I ask the Chief Minister designate to read out his declaration and propose the first Minister on his list.

2. Selection of Ministers

2.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister designate):

I am pleased to nominate my chosen candidates for Ministerial office and they are as follows: Health and Social Services, Deputy Tom Binet; Justice and Home Affairs, Deputy Mary Le Hegarat; Children and Education, Constable of St. Peter; Housing and Communities, Deputy Sam Mézec; Social Security, Deputy Lindsay Feltham; International Development, Deputy Carolyn Labey; Infrastructure, the Connétable of St. John; Environment, Deputy Steve Luce; Sustainable Economic Development, Deputy Kirsten Morel; Treasury and Resources, Deputy Elaine Millar; and last but not least, External Relations, Deputy Ian Gorst. Thank you.

3. The Minister for Health and Social Services:

The Bailiff:

In which case do you propose your first selection?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I would like to propose Deputy Tom Binet for the Health and Social Services Ministry.

The Bailiff:

Is that proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? If there are no other nominations, then in accordance with Standing Orders, I invite Deputy Binet to address the Assembly for 10 minutes, whereafter there will be a period of 20 minutes for questions available to him.

3.1 Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour:

Following the events of the past couple of weeks, I am hoping that Members will take an objective view of my proposal to be appointed Minister for Health and Social Services, which would include continuation of the new hospital facilities project. Before commenting on the health part of the job, I would like to explain a little bit about the logic involved in combining these 2 areas. As Members will know, the first part of the political task of the hospital project was to ensure that the overall proposal made good sense and that the direction of travel was correct. The second involved details of the project being communicated as well as possible to as many people as possible. After that, it was our intention to take the emotion out of the debate. While that was never going to be easy, it has been achieved, I think, to an appropriate extent. A good part of the political task has been undertaken. The next job from the hospital side of the equation is to ensure that the new facilities marry up as

closely as possible to the future requirements of the service. It seems pretty obvious to me that one is a natural reflection of the other, and should be dealt with as such. Moving now to the actual service. I do not have an intimate understanding of every part of it, so what will matter most is my approach to the political lead position. While I have a basic grasp of some of the key issues that require attention, my primary focus would be to gain a full and complete understanding of the structure of the entire organisation. Next, familiarise myself with all of the key players and gain an understanding of the many points of interaction. Following, or indeed concurrent with that, gain an understanding of all of the key issues that need addressing. Finally, speak to various people within the organisation to get a “feet on the ground” perspective of those issues. This might all sound a bit basic and obvious, but with some 2,500 people working for the organisation and an annual budget of almost a quarter of a billion, getting the basics right is very important. While there are a good number of key issues to choose from, several have been quite central to my thinking for some time. From an overall perspective, there has long been a need for a clear basic health strategy that can be explained to and understood by all concerned, and a strategic workforce plan. Within that, issues like clarifying and strengthening the relationship between G.P.s (General Practitioners) and the health service will be important, as will improved interactions between the health service and the third sector, and agencies like Family Nursing and Home Care. Stroke rehabilitation is soon to be facilitated in a fully-refurbished and modernised setting, but we still lack a dedicated acute stroke unit and it is my intention to ensure that this is included in the Overdale section of the new hospital plan and staffed appropriately. Obviously, a reduction in waiting times for both physical and mental health treatment is vitally important, and I am reliably informed that the work of the Turnaround Team is already delivering improvements. That said, further improvements are still required and there is no doubt the clear, sensible decision-making will be vital over the next 2 years if this is to continue to be improved. In recent weeks, Members will have become aware of historic problems within the Rheumatology Department of the hospital. It stands to reason that the required investigations will need to continue, but it is important for it to be recognised that much will relate to the lack of appropriate formal governance procedures and structures within the service. As a consequence, the issue will need to be handled sensitively. The same approach will be required in relation to funding the work that may be needed to deal with it, and any other issues that may emerge over the course of time. All of which leads to the overall subject of health service funding - another delicate matter that I know is already under consideration. With that in mind, I will simply have to get up to speed with the work done to date and decide how that might develop from hereon. Another issue worthy of mention is the recently established Health Board. Members may recall that this attracted a degree of controversy from the outset. For my part, I considered it a little too early for it to be introduced and certain elements perhaps too expensive. I was concerned and remain concerned about the lack of a formal structure to ensure political accountability. However, now that it exists, it would be my intention to leave it in place and do my best to ensure that the range and quality of information it receives continues to be improved. In advance of the Assembly deciding whether it will support my nomination this morning, I would like to inform Members of my intentions insofar as they relate to those with whom I would like to work as Assistants. As Members may know, Deputy Rose Binet served as an Assistant Minister for 18 months and during that time has, among other things, done some valuable work in the area of mental health. In addition, she has worked with me closely as a dedicated assistant on the hospital project and been a member of the political oversight board. I would also seek to work with Deputies Andy Howell and Barbara Ward, both of whom have extensive experience, having been heavily involved in dentistry and senior nursing, respectively, for most of their lives. It is my firm belief that an excellent health service and a modern, well-equipped new hospital could provide a real cornerstone for the Island’s future. If we are to attract the best people to work here, be that in health or the wider economy, if we are to achieve better productivity, if we are to give people the confidence to stay living and working in the Island, we have to deliver both as soon as possible. One final issue that I would like to address is that of culture. I see this as one of the most vital ingredients in any organisation; large or small. Good culture sets the scene for

individual and collective well-being and determines outcomes. It creates reputations that define the attractiveness of an organisation. It also inspires confidence.

[9:45]

While political involvement does not cross over into practical involvement, I genuinely believe it can help in establishing a good culture, in turn influencing all of the above. If I am supported today, and I am able to remain in post for the rest of this political term, it is my stated aim to go as far as I possibly can to improve the health service, create a strong, happy culture and see a well-designed hospital under construction. I hope Members will see fit to support my nomination.

The Bailiff:

We now have a period of 20 minutes of questions for Deputy Binet.

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

Will the candidate continue with all the Ministerial Plans for 2024? If not, what parts will he change?

Deputy T. Binet:

I suspect this might be the odds that I am going to have to give to a number of questions. I am not as familiar as I should be with all of it because of the timescales involved, and that is a question I think I will be able to answer in the fullness of time. Not too long a time, I hope.

3.1.2 Deputy H. Jeune:

Will the candidate commit to continuing the review of the 1997 Termination of Pregnancy Law, and bring forward proposals for improvement as soon as possible as part of the wider women's health strategy?

Deputy T. Binet:

On the face of it, that sounds very sensible. I would assume that the answer to that would have to be yes.

3.1.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

Will the candidate be re-establishing the Women's Health Strategy Group?

Deputy T. Binet:

I think I might begin to sound like a broken record. If any Member wants to see me about a specific issue after this, that is close to their heart, I am very happy to meet any of them to discuss these issues and, if appropriate, I am sure they would be taken forward.

3.1.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Is the candidate aware of the work of the Women's Health Strategy Group, including the work on the termination of pregnancy previously mentioned and the work around the period scheme and work around access to I.V.F. (in vitro fertilisation)?

Deputy T. Binet:

Certainly, I am aware of the existence, but not of the detail.

3.1.5 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

With the ageing population, what is the candidate's view on the fact that the Island does not have a dedicated geriatrician?

Deputy T. Binet:

As it happens, I had a conversation yesterday with one of the senior members of the health service, and this subject was brought up. It was pointed out to me that it was quite woeful that we did not. I shall be looking into the possibility of making sure that that can take place.

3.1.6 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Will he commit to meet with me to discuss this, please?

Deputy T. Binet:

Certainly.

3.1.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour:

Can the candidate please state how would he manage conflict in his team and in his department?

Deputy T. Binet:

Without knowing what that conflict might be, it is rather difficult to say. But I just manage it in the same way as I would usually manage conflict. Try and bring things to a head and get them dealt with. It is a very difficult question to answer specifically.

3.1.8 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Maybe just to clarify, if any conflict of any type comes in his team or in his department, how would he address it in the best way to have unity in the team?

Deputy T. Binet:

I have been involved in employing people for some 45 years. I have had to deal with an awful lot of conflict resolution over the course of that time, and I just used the same methods as I have used all my life.

3.1.9 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

A retiring consultant recently described in the local press politicians meddling in the health service, in his view. There was one, he said, who knew what they were talking about, and that is the current Minister for Health and Social Services. The Deputy's speech clearly expresses that he does not have any knowledge of health services, nor indeed the current programme of work that he is about to pick up. In fact, it is quite shocking to hear the level of knowledge that the Deputy lacks today. How then does the Deputy feel he will succeed in delivering any improvements when he has described his first months will be spent learning on the job?

Deputy T. Binet:

I had thought I had made it perfectly plain in my speech, and I had made a point of detailing my approach to it in terms of getting to understand the organisation in its entirety and getting to know the key players and talking to some of the people within the system. I have to say, I am not particularly daunted by the prospect. I am actually looking forward to it. I have a reasonably strong work ethic, and I have been involved in a number of different things, many of which I did not understand before I started, most of which are now working very well. I am aware of the particular consultant to which the Deputy refers, and I just do not happen to agree with him on most of his comments related to political involvement in the health service.

3.1.10 Deputy K.L. Moore:

The Deputy also mentioned the culture change programme, which is a key part of work in the department. Does the Deputy feel that he has the appropriate characteristics to lead such a culture programme, which requires very careful management and people who perhaps believe in mediation processes.

Deputy T. Binet:

A very straightforward answer to that; yes. I made the point of mentioning culture because we appear to have had some culture problems within the Assembly, and I set about trying to address those so that we could get a slightly more balanced culture involved in Government.

3.1.11 Deputy H. Miles of St. Brelade:

Health is not only about physical and mental health. How will the Deputy prioritise and support the public health agenda and support ongoing work?

Deputy T. Binet:

Once again, far too early for me to answer that question in detail. Other than to say that I will be looking at all areas as quickly as I can and moving as swiftly as I can on all fronts.

3.1.12 Deputy H. Miles:

Will the Deputy commit to support the Substance Use Strategy in its entirety?

Deputy T. Binet:

I have to confess, like a number of other documents, I have not read the Substance Abuse Strategy. It is certainly something that I will look at and probably support. I do not think there is anybody in here that can truly say that they have read every document that has passed in front of them over the last 18 months. It is all a little bit difficult. If anybody was cross-questioned on day one of taking on a Ministry, I think most of them would be sort of in the same situation as I am at the moment.

3.1.13 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

There appears to be an issue surrounding confidentiality. I will give an example, if one is waiting at the hospital in outpatients, but the same phenomenon can be seen at G.P. surgeries, you will hear your name or the names of patients being called out; the full names and surnames. Does the Minister think that is a potential breach of confidentiality? Will he seek to address that and take advice from the Data Protection and Information Commissioner?

Deputy T. Binet:

This may well need to be addressed, but I think there are so many more serious problems within the health service that, I have to confess, it probably would not be the top of my priority list. Much as I accept it may be a problem, I think there are issues of greater importance that might need to be resolved first.

3.1.14 Deputy M. Tadier:

It may be small, but it seems that it could be something that is a low-hanging fruit. Given the fact that he seems to have 3 Assistant Ministers, does he think that he could delegate that small issue of confidentiality and client privacy to one of those?

Deputy T. Binet:

Yes. We have not got a full priority list at the moment, but I will take that into account certainly.

3.1.15 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central:

Will the Minister continue to progress the Health Access Scheme, thereby ensuring affordable access to primary healthcare on the island?

Deputy T. Binet:

That sounds like a yes, I think, to me. That seems sensible.

3.1.16 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Would the potential Minister outline how he would see expanding this scheme, in particular?

Deputy T. Binet:

No, I will not be outlining that at the moment because I have not got sufficient information.

3.1.17 Deputy L. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

Despite infertility being recognised as a disease by the World Health Organization and affecting around one in 6 people, access to high-level infertility treatment remains difficult to access for many Islanders and impossible for some, largely because of an outdated and not fit-for-purpose means-tested financial model. As Minister for Health and Social Services, what does the candidate propose to do to increase access to assisted reproduction treatments and reduce the financial barriers to accessing treatment?

Deputy T. Binet:

I notice everybody has lined up some very specific questions for me this morning. I have already corresponded with the Deputy on this issue last night, and agreed to meet her as soon as I can to discuss this in more detail.

3.1.18 Deputy L. Stephenson:

I do appreciate that. Will the candidate commit to continue work already well underway to deliver an improved fertility service model and to champion investment in it as part of the next Government Plan?

Deputy T. Binet:

The answer to the first part is obviously yes. As to the championing the funding of it afterwards, that will all come into the equation at a later stage. But presumably, yes.

3.1.19 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Government Plan has funding in place to bring hospital services under the regulatory control of the Jersey Care Commission. Does the candidate support the inspection of hospital services by the Care Commission? Will he stick to the current timetable to achieve this?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am not entirely sure that I am comfortable about that. I have only a very sketchy knowledge of the intention, but that is something that I have already got noted down as something to look at in detail.

3.1.20 Deputy J. Renouf:

Does the candidate support the use of clinical guidelines, the lack of which was highlighted as a significant issue by the Mackinnon report? Sorry, not by the Mackinnon report, by the Mascie-Taylor report.

Deputy T. Binet:

I think that is an obvious yes answer to that.

3.1.21 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:

I congratulate my friend, the fellow Deputy of St. Saviour, on his nomination. I am not clear, but maybe he put it, for the avoidance of doubt, that he indicated the Chief Minister designate is giving responsibility for the ... transferring from the hospital, the building project, to the actual Minister for Health and Social Services. Also, whether or not he is going to be taking up the role as Deputy Chief Minister. Could he confirm whether or not that is the case? Given all of that and what he has said in his answers so far, the huge workload underlying a number of the questions that have been asked,

what focus is he going to give to the engagement of the Board? That has been, it seems to be, key to the development and maintenance of health service standards going forward.

Deputy T. Binet:

I did make mention of the Board in my speech. These are very early days. We have a Board in place, and it strikes me it makes good sense to try and make good use of it. I have not attended one of the Board meetings as yet. I certainly intend to, if I can, as soon as I can. I did mention in the speech that what my aim would be was to try and improve the quality of the information that comes through to the board so that we can make best use of them.

3.1.22 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not think the candidate answered the question about whether or not he has been asked to be Deputy Chief Minister, and the issue of the transfer of responsibilities for the building of the hospital from the Infrastructure candidate to the Infrastructure Department, and how, as he has answered a number of questions, an awful lot of read, an awful lot to learn with not much time left. Is this the case that he is going to do that? Is he going to accept the building responsibility, Deputy Chief Minister, and how is he going to cope with all of what is a massive workload?

Deputy T. Binet:

I thought the 2 parts ... the initial parts of the question were more a statement. I think it is fairly well known that I have been asked to be Deputy Chief Minister. I said in my speech, I outlined the fact that the hospital would be coming within the health service brief, and I outlined some of the reasons why I thought that was sensible, because one has to be a reflection of the other, and it is a fairly straightforward process.

3.1.23 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour:

I am glad that the candidate mentioned the rheumatology report in his opening speech. Given his interview on Channel Television the other evening, he mentioned that the report has been issued and we must now get on with it. Would the candidate care to elaborate on what his plans are to deal with the release of the rheumatology report?

Deputy T. Binet:

I do not have any plans at the moment about the release of the report, but I have discussed this with - I know we are not supposed to - the Chief Officer of the Health Service yesterday. It is one of the things that will be top of the agenda for further discussion if the Assembly choose to appoint me this morning.

3.1.24 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

The outfall of this report and the number of people that have been adversely affected will result in compensation claims to the States running into sums of money that could build half a new hospital.

[10:00]

Does the candidate accept that a compensation scheme is probably the right way forward?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am not sure that it is a matter for me to accept or otherwise. There is a process underway, and that process has to be seen through to its conclusion.

3.1.25 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

As the candidate likely to become the next the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Health and Social Services has a statutory duty as a corporate parent, would the candidate share views with the Assembly, what does it mean for him to be a corporate parent, in law?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am afraid I cannot explain what I feel it would be to be a corporate parent, in law. It is a technical point and something I am sure will be part of what I have to deal with in the next few weeks.

3.1.26 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Has the candidate attended training that was provided several times to all States Members explaining what it means to be a corporate parent and if not, as a matter of urgency in the next months, will he attend the training and will know his duty as a corporate parent?

Deputy T. Binet:

No, I have not attended any of those sessions and if it is deemed appropriate for me to do so then I certainly will.

3.1.27 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central:

Does the candidate believe that the current mental health provision and offering on the Island is adequate?

Deputy T. Binet:

Sadly, no, not that I point a finger to anybody. I think that we may have to look for more funding for mental health. Mental illness is an area that is dear to my heart and that is something that will receive a particular focus.

3.1.28 Deputy C.S. Alves:

The candidate mentioned finding some extra funding. What other steps will he take to ensure that the mental health service is adequately resourced?

Deputy T. Binet:

My understanding is that this funding sits at the heart of the problem, in that we have not got enough people to do the job properly. That is going to be my first port of call.

3.1.29 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central:

Recently there was the launch of the Cancer Strategy, which includes work with some of the incredible third sector organisations on this Island. Will the candidate for Minister support that strategy and those organisations who are providing so much support for so many people on the Island?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am certain that I will, yes.

3.1.30 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Furthermore, as Minister for Health and Social Services, would he look into a screening programme for more men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, which is being developed more and more in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and would he perhaps take the opportunity to be a part of what is a really interesting piece of research that is going on in the U.K.?

Deputy T. Binet:

That sounds very sensible. It is very difficult. I can be asked 100 questions about whether I will support 101 different things and the answer has to be, in principle, yes, but everything has to be taken in context in accordance with the amount of money that we have got available.

3.1.31 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

The candidate successfully completed the Enid Quenault Health and Wellbeing Centre at St. Brelade. The whole hospital projects have been blighted with being disrupted during the election period. How does he propose to ensure that the existing development, the acute development at Overdale, gets completed after the election process, which will come in 2 years' time?

Deputy T. Binet:

As I said towards the end of my speech, it is my intention to make sure that the acute unit is not just contracted at the end of the session, but that the construction is underway. I would say it would be extremely unwise for any Assembly to cancel a contract once it is under construction. I would hope that would be sufficient to ensure that the acute unit gets completed.

3.1.32 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that elections throw up all sorts of different events, will he put mechanisms in place to ensure that we do have continuity in the completion of that particular element of hospital?

Deputy T. Binet:

I have some experience with construction contracts and I would say that basically a standard contract ought to be sufficient to stop anybody wanting to meddle with it and stop construction mid flow. I think just a good, standard, basic construction contract should do the job.

The Bailiff:

There are only 15 seconds to go, so I do not propose to call another question, which inevitably would take us over the time.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sir, may I just point out that there is an auditory noise, which some people have already a sensitivity to?

The Bailiff:

There is some whine.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It is extremely distressing to some people.

The Bailiff:

All I can do is ask if that could be looked into. Greffier, is there someone that we can find out what is happening? Deputy Ozouf, there has been a message sent. It is difficult to know where the noise is coming from. There is an attempt to try to sort it out, but I am not sure that there is much that can be done at this split second. No one has any machinery on that they should not have on? In any event we must continue. As there has been no other nomination and the speech and the period of questions have been completed, I can confirm that Deputy Tom Binet has been selected for appointment as the Minister for Health and Social Services. [Approbation]

4. The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

The Bailiff:

The next is the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. Chief Minister designate, would you like to make your nomination?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would like to nominate Deputy Mary Le Hegarat for the position of Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? If there are no other nominations I invite Deputy Le Hegarat to speak for up to 10 minutes, after which there will be a period of 20 minutes.

4.1 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the hard work that has been completed by Deputy Miles of St. Brelade. **[Approbation]** It is without doubt, as I said to the media this morning, 2 significantly good candidates. The role of Minister for Justice and Home Affairs is significant and such is the nature and importance of the diverse responsibilities falling under the portfolio it is only possible to cover some of those areas today. It does, of course, cover national security and law enforcement, immigration and borders, prison service and emergency services, alongside Jersey Field Squadron, registrar and vital functions supporting the administration of justice. I have a profound commitment to the responsibilities associated with the role and recognise the importance of tasks to be undertaken. My suitability for this position lies in a unique blend of experience, leadership qualities, ability to deliver practical results and a detailed understanding of the broad remit of the role. It is helpful to touch upon my background and the aspirations for the role. In a 25-year policing career, significant experience has been developed that spans the work of departments across the Justice and Home Affairs portfolio. The experiences have not only provided me with a comprehensive understanding of operational matters, but also allowed me to contribute strategically to the overall safety and security of our community. In my early years as a police officer, I honed skills through hands-on experience on the front line, responding to incidents and emergencies, dealing with the victims and witnesses to crime, arresting suspects, conducting investigations and preparation of material for use in court and the effective administration of justice. Whatever my role, ensuring public safety was a cornerstone of my operational responsibility, and this period engrained in me a deep respect for the daily challenges faced by police officers, paramedics, fire crews, customs and immigration, our prison staff and partner agencies. The recent Violence Against Women and Girls report highlights the extent of abusive conduct in society, and the issues it presents resonate strongly with me. At the risk of self-promotion, I would suggest that there are none in this Assembly who have the depth and breadth of first-hand understanding and experience of the issues that have been raised. As a detective, I was a trained specialist in dealing with vulnerable victims of violent crimes. I was a multi-agency practitioner in child protection and sexual offending against women and girls. I am totally committed to utilising the report as a catalyst for an action and to lead on driving the advancements as necessary. Historically, the police of course was very male dominated but, in the words of Sinatra, I did it my way. It is okay, I am not going to sing. Supported by excellent staff I advanced through the ranks in highly competitive fields. I became the first female to reach the senior rank of inspector in the States of Jersey Police's history. I am familiar with the administration of justice functions. As a trainer for 4 years, I taught law, policy, witness skills and court process across States departments, including Customs and Immigration. I hold an L.L.B. (Bachelor of Laws) in law from the University of London and, as the Deputy of St. Clement will know from his previous role, I was a regular fixture at the Bailiff's Consultative Panel advancing recommendations in the licensing cases. In addition to 3 overseas secondments focused on social deprivation and homelessness, diversity and inclusion, I worked alongside a senior U.K. police commander. I was selected for and completed the Metropolitan Police senior leadership course. Completing chief inspector duties in 2009 to 2010 followed, where my responsibilities extended beyond day-to-day operations to encompass strategic leadership, setting longer-term objectives, sharing departmental goals, and budget management. This was assisted by my financial background in the Tax Department and working in an accountancy firm.

I am a member of the Association of Accounting Technicians. Broader public safety initiatives became integral in my role. I navigated the complexities of law enforcement administration striving for forward thinking and adaptive approaches. I held responsibility for over 100 operational staff delivering the uniformed policing response across the Island. I qualified as a senior investigating officer and am highly experienced in the command of firearms operations. I am accustomed to making decisions, most challenging of course where there is urgency, the stakes are high, or there is ambiguity. Assuming senior roles benefited from my nuanced understanding of tactical operations, whether it was leading specialist units, managing critical incidents or implementing crime fighting strategies. As a senior officer, multi-agency experience was across Home Affairs departments. Joint working with both fire and ambulance services presents business as usual operationally in emergency scenarios for preplanned tactical operations. Also less well-known is strategic planning. As a C.B.R.N. (chemical biological radiological and nuclear) Commander I worked with senior fire service staff and separately with ambulance staff as a qualified major incident medical manager.

[10:15]

I was also the police lead with partner emergency services in the previously proposed Esplanade tunnel project, and we all know what happened to that. In summary, throughout my career, I have super-headed collaboration efforts and other essential departments, working seamlessly with fire services, ambulance personnel, Customs and Immigration and the prison system across levels as practitioner to senior command. I recognise the interdependence of our roles to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. This collaboration spirit enhanced our collective ability to respond to emergencies, manage crisis and address criminality. In my political career I have been fortunate to work with committed colleagues across the political spectrum with valuable support from officers of the States Greffe to get tangible results. As the Chair of the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel with Deputy Alves and former Deputies Pamplin and Pointon, within days of being elected, we launched a Mental Health Review. This significant cross-disciplinary review with police, prison, mental health, youth services and public witnesses delivered a significant number of actionable recommendations to improve service delivery. Following COVID we conducted a follow-up review, resulting in the panel submitting amendments to the Government Plan, to achieve funding for Orchard House and Clinique Pinel. The results in that Clinique Pinel facility will deliver an Article 36 bed, alleviating the need for people in crisis to be detained in police cells. I am committed to tackling violence and this has led to my proposition to outlaw corporal punishment of children. We know that the adverse outcomes in childhood, such as aggression, may be antecedents for the involvement in violence as an adult. I am proud that that proposition was supported and the work brought forward by Deputy Mézec in a previous role as Minister for Housing and Children. In terms of future plans, if successful today I will have several areas of attention: modern day slavery and human trafficking, just to mention 2. **[Approbation]**.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. There is now a period of 20 minutes of questions available.

4.1.1 Deputy H. Jeune:

Taking us to potential Ministerial plans for 2024, how will the candidate ensure the Youth Justice Strategy is child-focused?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

As somebody who brought a proposition in relation to the smacking of children, from my perspective, those plans that involve children and those areas of business I will be fully supportive of. It is quite clear that all elements of a child's young life are important and we need to, as an Assembly, ensure that we continue to follow those processes. I will be and I will be working with those groups where necessary.

4.1.2 Deputy H. Jeune:

How will the candidate plan to effectively embed a restorative justice approach within the Youth Justice Strategy, ensuring that it becomes an integral part of the system?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In relation to the strategy, it is important that when you have strategies that you look at all the elements of it, and that when you look at how you are going to embed things, you need to make it practical and simple. From my perspective we now have the C.R.I.A. (Children's Rights Impact Assessment) part of making the propositions, so for every piece of legislation and every piece of policy we need to ensure that children are put first and high up on the agenda. In relation to, for example, at the prison there was a strategy brought in whereby young offenders no longer are being put out on work in relation to that with adults, so it is important that young people have available the opportunities, to share their experiences separately.

4.1.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Would the candidate commit to continuing the equalities work that was recently established as a new area under the Justice and Home Affairs remit?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

As I said in my speech, I have done secondments overseas and during that time I worked very hard in relation to equality across the board. I worked very closely with the L.G.B.T.Q. (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) personnel in Edinburgh. From my perspective, I think as an Island we need to ensure that all policies and processes include all our community. It does not matter which part of society that you are part of; it is essential that we continue that work, so I will be continuing that work.

4.1.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the candidate name her top 3 priorities in the area of equality and would she include pressing for gender pay gap legislation with her colleagues in the Council of Ministers as one of those priorities?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In relation to equality, it is quite clear that in relation to the parenting and the law and legislation in relation to having equal rights for single sex partners in the care of children that is exceptionally important. It is the same as legislation so that people are able to gain proper and fair access. Can the Deputy remind me of the second part?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Would she prioritise gender pay gap legislation?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Absolutely. I think it is essential that everybody is treated fairly and equally. As I have said, I have spent 49 years of my working life fighting for the equality of women in society.

4.1.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

The same question: the Minister for Home Affairs is named Minister as a corporate parent, one of 4 Ministers. Would the Deputy please share her views on what it means to be a corporate parent?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I was never very good at definitions, so I am not going to try. My view in relation to being a corporate parent means that you take responsibility for that child and you ensure the welfare of that child, and you do whatever is in your power to make sure that the things that you do will not impact on that

child. When I was a police officer we introduced legislation in relation to Public Protection Orders. What that meant was that as a police officer if there was a child who was in danger you may have to implement or serve that order, so I think it is very important that whatever role you have within this Assembly that you understand the need that you will support and ensure that all elements of the law ensures that children are respected and looked after.

4.1.6 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the candidate advise if she has done the training that was offered to all States Members to be a corporate parent, and if not, would she commit to do it as a matter of urgency?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

If I am perfectly honest, I cannot remember. I certainly attended the C.R.I.A. training but I cannot remember if I did in relation to the corporate parent. If I did not, then I would absolutely attend that training.

4.1.7 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

Will the Deputy ensure that there will be a review of the gas outage and look to put contingency plans in place with regard to gas supplies for the future?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Thank you for the question. I always thought it was quite an interesting part that the Gas Law came under Home Affairs but of course that is probably because it is potentially an emergency situation, should something happen. Absolutely. I think it is essential that this type of scenario is better legislated for and I think that, from my memory, the law is probably not up to the speed that it should be.

4.1.8 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister state whether she would be open minded to the creation of a Commissioner for Human Rights and Equality?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I think this is a very important point that the Deputy has brought forward. We have a Commissioner for Children. One has to ask whether we should be looking at this area. It is not something I have looked at, but I think that in relation to human rights it is an important part of legislation, the same as other legislation. From my perspective I would certainly be happy to look at it if the Deputy required.

4.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for her initial response. There is a context to this question. We often find that we treat symptoms politically and socially, so the rights of children and the Violence Against Women piece of work are fundamentally important and areas that I have certainly supported, but they fall under a wider framework of human rights and we know that Jersey has its own human rights law that mirrors the European legislation. Would the Minister give thought to collectively working with other departments as to how we might ensure that all human rights are strengthened in Jersey in their application?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Having studied E.U. (European Union) law I am fully aligned with some of the factors that the Deputy mentioned. I think it is important that human rights are looked at and from the perspective of when we did the review of work permits, I had concerns whether people's human rights were being impinged in relation to some of our policies in relation to that so I am very keen to look at this.

The Bailiff:

Before we carry on I will be suggesting at the end of this question period that we adjourn for a short while to see if we can deal with the background noise, which apparently we cannot do while the Chamber is full of people. Just to say to Members that will be coming, but not immediately.

4.1.10 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

The Deputy mentioned her experience with firearms in her speech. Will she tell the Assembly her views on the current Firearms (Jersey) Law, which is more than 20 years old?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I am going to be a very busy person because, like the Deputy, I do believe that the Firearms (Jersey) Law needs to be looked at. What I also will say is I think we deliver new legislation on a fairly regular basis, depending on what the legislation happens to be, but I do think that we need to have a programme whereby we look at the law and then revisit it. The thing is that we sit on pieces of legislation for very long periods of time, we renew the law and we do not always then follow up and ensure that the law that we have produced is fit for purpose. I would be very happy to look at the Firearms (Jersey) Law.

4.1.11 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

The current Minister has committed to reviewing the law and has asked various Members to sit on a panel to review it. Will the perhaps soon to be Minister commit to that and will she also commit to consider the current Members who have agreed to sit on it?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I am very alive to the fact that it is the Constables who issue firearms and so therefore, from my perspective, I would be absolutely more than happy to deal with people who have already been working on this piece of legislation. There does not seem any point in reinventing the wheel.

4.1.12 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

I am glad I heard the Deputy mentioning in response to Deputy Tadier the importance of the Migrant Workers' Welfare report. Would she commit to looking at implementing the recommendations in that report?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

As I was part of the review panel then the answer to that is yes. My real concern is in relation to modern day slavery and it is something that I have to say has been on my mind for a very long period of time, and that is why I asked to go on to the review panel and became the Vice-Chair. It is very easy for us not to realise that things that are happening could fall into that category. I was very fortunate with another Deputy to be able to visit Nairobi, and Jersey was the only representative at the table that had no legislation in relation to modern day slavery. From my perspective, this is fairly high up my agenda because I think it is exceptionally important, particularly when you look at it from not only the welfare of people we are asking to travel to Jersey some very significant miles to work for us in all of the industries such as hospitality, retail, health services and agriculture. I think it is important that when they do come to Jersey that they are treated properly and fairly.

[10:30]

4.1.13 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

I have heard the Deputy mentioning modern day slavery as one of the main issues. What are the main priorities from those recommendations you see as being addressed as a priority?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

One of the concerns that we had was that when there are concerns raised in relation to work permit holders what I would like to see in consultation with Immigration is how we can resolve some of the issues that were raised by the Scrutiny report about the ability for somebody who raises concerns not to be straight away asked to leave the Island. It does not happen in all cases but what I would also like to point out is that within the Violence Against Women and Girls report it did in there mention that where there are matters that have been raised, that accommodation should be considered, even if that is for a short period of time, and thereafter should there not be potentially an opportunity to ... this would have to have some funding to be able to find secure accommodation, because there are circumstances I feel where we should not necessarily be asking people to leave the Island.

4.1.14 Deputy C.S. Alves:

There have been a couple of instances where the issue of possible racial profiling has been brought to my attention and I have been through it myself with regards to security and customs officers at airports and the port. What would the Minister, and I have raised this before in the Assembly, do to ensure that this is not happening and that staff are given the correct training and that this is followed through and monitored appropriately?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

The concerns that the Deputy raises need to be investigated from the point of view that we need to ensure that whatever we are doing, whether that be at our borders or within the police service, that we need to ensure that people are being treated equally and fairly and that when we do stop people it is for a justifiable reason, based on potentially intelligence or factors. I think that is important. I think it can be quite difficult sometimes, so I do genuinely see the concern that is raised by the Deputy.

4.1.15 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I am sure the Deputy can appreciate that it is often difficult for people to come forward and make complaints or provide feedback to the services. What steps does the Deputy think she can take to encourage the public to have more confidence and to bring forward any feedback they may have in relation to this?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

It is very different if the process is done by a police officer or a customs and immigration officer because if it is a police officer then there is the complaints and discipline procedure, and that is an effective piece of legislation that allows all members of the public to be able to make those complaints. I think sometimes there is a gap in relation to being able to complain about other areas within the States of Jersey employment from the perspective that when I worked in the Treasury Department we were looking at how to complain against a member of staff and what those processes would be. I think it is an area that the complaints processes within the States as a whole probably needs to be looked at, and I would quite like to see ... I am not saying a complaints and discipline process like you have in the police, but I certainly think that there should be something that is more robust, where people can genuinely complain and feel that their complaint is being listened to.

4.1.16 Deputy R.J. Ward:

To return to the Violence Against Women and Girls report, which I was very pleased to attend the launch of, and I think it is a very important document, can I ask the Minister designate, if that is the correct phrase, how she sees the role of education in the provision of a response to that report, and in particular the education of young men and boys to change their actions?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

It is quite clear that on the committee of that report, there are people from education from all different schools. The point is that we need to start with gaining respect from one another within schools, within the household, and that is why, as I said in relation to the smacking of children, I found that fundamental. If we start from a very young age then we will have those things implemented. I also think that in relation to some of the extra activities that are brought in, and I cannot think of one, P.S.H.E. (personal, social and health education) in relation to some of those areas that is where you need to provide input. It is unfortunate that we lost things like Prison! Me! No Way! and also some of the other things going into schools, because we could have been providing more scope to educate people as to what the legislation is.

The Bailiff:

I am afraid that brings time to an end, and as there have been no other nominations the time for speeches and period of questions has been completed. I confirm that Deputy Le Hegarat has been selected for appointment as the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. **[Approbation]** As I indicated a moment ago, we still have this noise in the background. It is clearly proving really troublesome to some Members. I am also told that we cannot do anything about it while the room is full, so do Members agree that we might adjourn for a couple of minutes to see if it can be sorted out before we return? Very well. The Assembly stands adjourned for 10 minutes at this point.

[10:37]

ADJOURNMENT

[10:49]

The Bailiff:

At this point, blessed silence from the machinery in the rooms, so I think it has been cured. I apparently knocked something as I came past the Chief Minister designate, so hopefully it has not put the whole morning into disarray.

5. The Minister for Children and Education

The Bailiff:

The next position to be discussed is the Minister for Children and Education. Do you make your nomination?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, Sir. Fortunately, it was only water. I am pleased to nominate for the position of the Minister for Children and Education the Connétable of St. Peter.

The Bailiff:

Is that nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Is there any other nomination? If there is no other nomination then I call upon the Connétable of St. Peter to speak for up to 10 minutes, and thereafter a period of questions in the usual way.

5.1 Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter:

I am seeking the role of Minister for Children and Education because I offer the opportunity to provide not just continuity but an understanding of the improvements we need to make under this new Government. It is critical that we now focus on the future and deliver for Islanders and I believe I am the candidate best placed to achieve this. The first major change will be to split the existing Children and Education Ministry into 2 new Ministries. Deputy Rob Ward will become the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and I will become the Minister for Children, which will also incorporate Skills. This will require an order to be drafted under Article 29A of the States of Jersey

Law 2005, and we anticipate that it should be possible for the order to be issued within 10 days of requesting it. The new structure will allow the individual Ministers to give each area the coverage that it deserves and it is recognition of the importance of these 2 key areas to the future of our children. I have served as Assistant Minister for Children and Education since July 2021. I was reappointed to this role in July 2022 under Deputy Gardiner and I thank her for her dedication and excellent work during the last 18 months. **[Approbation]** My key area of responsibility was for Children's Services. I believe my success in this role demonstrates that I can step up and deliver for the Island at a Ministerial level. The Minister for Children and Education must be somebody that the Chief Minister feels that they can work with and somebody who can work across the Council of Ministers to provide progress and delivery quickly. I can offer continuity and I will quickly re-establish forums such as the Corporate Parenting Board. However, I also believe we can do much more and guarantee young Islanders have the best possible start in life. We have several key infrastructure projects that we need to get rolling as soon as possible and much more to do around skills and foster care, because every child in Jersey is of the utmost importance. We have enjoyed a number of key successes across the past 18 months. An additional £6.5 million has been spent on our most vulnerable children to ensure they receive the best care and protection available, while supporting their wider families. The secure children's home, Greenfields, has been transformed. When I first accepted the post as Assistant Minister in 2021, I was shocked and appalled to see the deterioration of the administration, the staffing, and the premises, to an extent that it was no longer fit for purpose. We have now reversed that decline and received positive comments in the inspection reports. If a young person is required to stay at Greenfields for whatever reason they experience a more homely environment with numerous changes having been made to achieve this. I am also pleased to note that we are seeing fewer requests for Secure Care Orders. If elected, my aim is to reduce this even further and the question is could we eventually reach the point where we have the services in place to phase out secure care orders? We are currently progressing plans for 2 new schools in St. Helier to replace the ageing buildings that no longer meet the needs of children and teachers. Two new care homes have been opened during the last year to remove the need for emergency accommodation, but they currently lack planning permission. If I am elected as Minister, I will immediately begin work with the new Minister for Planning to rectify the planning issues relating to the care homes. We must work together to improve, amend, and produce the world-class buildings that our children and staff deserve, including our carers and teachers. We are also in the process of securing our first therapeutic children's home for Jersey, a facility that will further reduce our use of Greenfields and allow us to offer care that currently requires a child to be transferred to the U.K. This cannot be delayed. Further and higher education cannot be forgotten and additional planning work will be needed to prioritise around the ageing Highlands College campus. We need to explore ways to redevelop Highlands to allow it to grow, flourish and offer new opportunities to children and young people. Much has been said about the brain drain of our young people leaving the Island and we cannot overstate the role that much improved on-Island education opportunities can play in reducing this. We also need to recognise the importance of well-being in a child's education, something that is even more important post-COVID. Good universal education means that every child needs to be comfortable and confident both at home and in the classroom. Ensuring children have access to a nourishing school meal is essential and I will continue to work to roll out our pilot scheme to ultimately cover every school. As a Minister I will work with C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) to develop our understanding of why some children are missing from school for long periods. When they return, they need the appropriate support to rejoin their classes without embarrassment or hindrance. Children need to feel empowered and safe in order to learn. Those returning from absence who feel uncomfortable or uncertain may experience bullying, creating a new cycle of absence with antisocial behaviour ultimately becoming a key factor. I will also work with the relevant agencies in Jersey to understand how we can most proactively recognise the signs of children experiencing or being exploited by or for criminal or drug-related offences and take the steps needed to eradicate this risk. It is essential to extend the early years provision to allow parents to return to work, should they

wish. Research has shown that the extension of hours where early years care is available is key. Part-time care will often not allow a parent to return to work and so we need a closer working relationship between the Government of Jersey and the private early years sector to make sure these provisions guarantee new parents the support they need while preventing local businesses from risking closure. When it comes to legislation, I will ensure that the Commencement Act for the Children and Young People's (Jersey) Law is introduced as soon as possible. This Act will safeguard and support the well-being of children and young people across Jersey and is based on the principles founded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a Minister, I will ensure this Act strengthens existing children's legislation and delivers good practice both within and outside of this Assembly. During my time as an Assistant Minister, I have become heavily involved in foster care, promoting greater engagement with the Jersey Foster Carers Association and working with C.Y.P.E.S. to deliver campaigns that have successfully encouraged more foster carers to come forward, however there is more work that needs to be done to recognise the huge importance of foster carers and the work they do. As an absolute minimum they need to receive adequate remuneration and to be paid on time. We as a Government can and must give them greater support when they face issues and the red tape they encounter must and needs to be minimised. Going forward, I want to make a substantial change to how we view and support vulnerable children and those who need to be taken into care. I will work to place more children in foster care and find alternatives to care homes, finding successful long-term care opportunities for each child that guarantees their well-being and gives them the start in life they deserve. We need to give them proper individual care and not increase the number of care homes. Finally, I wish to promote the important work done by Skills, the "S" in C.Y.P.E.S. that is often unfairly overlooked. The work they do in finding the appropriate training for many of our children and young people is hugely important, particularly for those who do not wish to follow an academic path. Vocational qualifications are just as important. In finishing, I want to reiterate that what I offer is continuity with clear prioritisation and a vision for where we can do better. I want a better deal for carers, a better deal for those in foster care, and an education system that is modern and values every child, while recognising the value of skills and vocational qualifications. We need better support for those who may be at risk of falling through the gaps and enduring long absences. **[Approbation]**

[11:00]

The Bailiff:

There is now a period of 20 minutes of questions.

5.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North:

How important are foster carers to the candidate's plans to improve childcare?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

As I have just stated, foster carers are immensely important. I spent a day with a foster carer and the commitment of these people to young people, some of whom have faced abuse, goes far beyond what a normal parent might have to do in some cases. I intend to work with the foster carers and, as I say, produce a dramatic change where I would like to see some of our care homes closing and for us to have more foster carers in place. Towards this we have run a number of campaigns, and I am pleased to say that in 2024 we will be joined by 11 new foster carers: 3 have already been approved; 8 are still going through the training. That is tremendous and will improve the lives of so many children.

5.1.2 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Does the candidate believe that he will be able to get the funds to support the involvement of more foster carers?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

We have some funds available, but I certainly will be looking for more funding in the next Government Plan.

5.1.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

What in the Ministerial Plan published by the Minister for Children and Education for 2024 would the candidate change?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

At present I do not believe I am going to make any substantial changes to those plans. We have a number of schools to develop. I will work with the new Minister for Education and at this point, while the plan can be improved, I do not see myself making any substantial changes at this point.

5.1.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

If the candidate is going to continue with the entire Ministerial Plan, what will he add in?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I think one of the main changes I have just covered, and certainly one thing that I will be adding in is the move away from opening further care homes. We will have a therapeutic care home and I will continue with that plan, but my ultimate aim is to see the reduction in the number of care homes and the increase in foster caring, and that will be one of the main changes.

5.1.5 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

Could the Connétable of St. Peter explain please what are some of the advantages of splitting Children and Education into 2 Ministries?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I see one of the main advantage in splitting it is allowing the focus - separate focus - on education and on the other area, children: Children's Services, C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and skills. If we look at those portfolios, with education we have 24 primary schools, 7 secondary schools. Those are J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls), Victoria College, Grainville, Haute Vallée, Le Rocquier, Les Quennevais and Hautlieu, we have 2 specialist schools: Mont a L'Abbe and Le Sente, Highlands College and the Music Service. Already that is a very big portfolio for a single person. There are the non-provided schools as well: there are 7 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. Within the children's aspect we already have Children's Services, that in itself is an enormous area, we have C.A.M.H.S., which has been doing excellent work and seeing great improvement. I think that if we are going to give our children the best future then it is essential that we split this, children and education. It is something that I suggested in the past and was not done. I was disappointed when that did not happen, nevertheless, we are doing it now.

5.1.6 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

If the candidate is committed to continuing with the early years part of the Ministerial Plan, could he please outline how he intends to deliver funded nursery hours that will improve the affordability and accessibility elements of childcare while not sacrificing the quality of the childcare provider to our children?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

We absolutely will not make changes that in any way are detrimental to children. We will have to find the funding and that is something for me, and it will certainly be something for the new Minister for Education because that will be part of his portfolio, but should he require my assistance, I will be happy to help him.

5.1.7 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Does the candidate agree that universal funding for nursery places or indeed any childcare spaces for 2 to 3 year-olds should be the starting point?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Clearly the earlier that we can start this the better. Yes, I do agree, but whether we have the funding to achieve that immediately is something that I do not know. As I say, we will work together with the new Minister for Education and I am sure that will be one of his priorities.

5.1.8 Deputy L. Stephenson:

All children and young people have the right and need to play. How does the candidate intend to champion this right for our children and enhance opportunities for play for all ages?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Thank you for that question. Absolutely, we do need more green spaces. We need to ensure that those new schools that we are creating have those green spaces. I know that separately to being put forward to the Minister, the Constables, a number of us, are looking at a project to create green spaces in a number of the Parishes.

5.1.9 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Will the candidate commit to continuing the work on a Play Strategy for Jersey, recognising that the Bridging Island Plan sets out a clear commitment for the Environment, Economy and Children and Education Ministers to work together to deliver a play strategy for Jersey?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Absolutely. More play areas are essential and that is a key element for healthy children. I want to see more play areas and it certainly will be something that I will be encouraging.

5.1.10 Deputy H. Jeune:

We currently have 17 children off-Island, yet reports show that the system in the U.K. is collapsing. Could the candidate explain what are his immediate plans to ensure the safeguarding of Jersey children in a failing system?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

While it may be described as a failing system, I can say that the accommodation of children in Jersey is very carefully monitored and the places at which our children are living are some of the best in the U.K. We are extremely careful, we have received very positive comments recently about the care of our children in the U.K., and I will continue with the current policy.

5.1.11 Deputy H. Jeune:

Could the candidate explain the progress made with the Reciprocity Agreement with the U.K. regarding Jersey children being sent into the care of the U.K.?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I believe that the Minister wrote to her counterpart in the U.K. and progress with that is currently with our officers. I do not know the current state of play, but I shall certainly find out.

5.1.12 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:

In his speech the Connétable mentioned school meals and a pilot scheme for school meals. How is this progressing?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I would like to say it is progressing extremely well. The pilot scheme, we were first commissioned to start a pilot scheme in May 2019, and that may seem a long way away but of course intervening we had COVID. We did start pre-COVID with 2 schools and extended that to 4 and we extended the pilot due to COVID. What I can say, what we discovered in that pilot scheme, is that those were provided with hot free school meals. We have had to change the concept where in fact we will use a chilled cook-type operation where meals are superheated in the school. That in itself has brought its problems as it has required building work in some schools where no serveries were available. Leading on from that, there are some delays due to increased power being required for the ovens that heat the food as the schools would never have been expected to need that amount of power. During the process, I would like to say that following the pilot scheme we looked extensively for suppliers, and into Europe, there were enquiries in France, because there is no business in Jersey that can provide 4,000 meals a day, and that is the number that is required. We have eventually settled on a scheme where we have some local suppliers. Our own catering unit is providing 400, so 10 per cent of those, and is currently doing that. Then we have a European supplier that has a base in the U.K. that will probably provide the bulk of the meals. We are still looking at some local suppliers, and I think that was in our third round of looking for tenders. Where are we at the moment with schools? Well we have got 10 schools online, which I think is fairly good, and we hope to have all the schools having free school meals by the end of the year.

The Bailiff:

A supplemental question, Connétable?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

No, thank you, that was very comprehensive.

5.1.13 Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement:

The candidate highlighted that in the split of the portfolio, Skills will exist with the Minister for Children, and Lifelong Learning with the Minister for Education, if I heard correctly. What is the difference the candidate sees between skills and lifelong learning and how does he see this work being split between 2 ministries?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

The Minister for Education is looking at the portfolio from early years through to higher education, so that is everything in the Education portfolio. I see Skills as slightly different. I have been involved with them and I want to continue work, particularly with apprenticeships and the vocational qualifications. There are some children where the academic qualification is simply not for them and unfortunately what often happens is children go down this road of the academic qualification, they are unhappy. In some cases, they start missing school and yet they have a clear idea of what they would like to do, and sometimes that might be electrician, plumber, another vocational qualification. The important thing is to get them on to that track early, give them the academic qualifications that they do need, for instance, to be a plumber or electrician, but also give them the opportunity to gain the skills so that they can leave education with a skill and a job.

5.1.14 Deputy A. Curtis:

I am trying to understand what that difference was. My understanding from that answer was that the candidate said the Minister for Education had Skills from early years through to higher education and the Skills Ministry within Children had it from vocational. Could I just seek some clarity as to the difference and where does lifelong learning exist if the Minister for Education only has education until higher?

[11:15]

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Well, that is the current split. The vocational qualifications quite clearly can go beyond 16 or 18; however, I do see Skills, they do their work in placing children in various jobs. Particularly I look at the apprentice scheme, in fact, I do see the differentiation, and I think the Minister for Education is quite happy with the split.

5.1.15 Deputy K.L. Moore:

The designate-Minister mentioned carers and a better deal for them, will he intend to introduce some policy in that area? Could he perhaps identify what those policies might be and will he appoint a Minister? It would also be helpful for the Assembly I think to understand which Assistant Ministers he intends to appoint.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

As yet, I have made no decision on Assistant Ministers so I cannot provide that information. I have not asked anybody, and it is a matter for discussion in the next few days. Yes, we do need improved provisions for carers, particularly foster carers, and they have long been neglected. Many of them have a job as well as being a foster carer and I think one of the things that I wish to see is that people could be full-time foster carers with the appropriate benefit package as well. I think that is a move away from what we do at the moment, but I think it would be a very positive move. The rest of the policy has yet to be developed.

5.1.16 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Is the Connétable aware of the U.N.C.R.C. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) recommendations and how does he intend to progress these?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Yes, I am aware of the, I believe, it is 42 recommendations. Obviously, I need to do further research on that; I am aware of the recommendations. In fact, the first part of that will be our Children's Law which will cover a number of those but of course whatever work we do with children we should be aware of those U.N.C.R.C. recommendations on the convention on the rights of children. It is something that should be part of our culture, so I will be obviously giving the appropriate focus to that.

5.1.17 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am grateful for the designated Minister that he will continue with my Ministerial Plan in full. It feels really, really good and obviously it would be improved. I am also grateful that the enactment of the Children's Law that I planned to the end of February will be carried forward. I would like to ask the candidate would he, as a matter of urgency, sign off the terms and conditions review that was ready in January but was delayed to sign off because of this situation. We have seen the draft in December, we identified how the terms and conditions to teaching assistants can be improved, and does the candidate agree that it needs to be completed as soon as possible to allow teaching assistants to receive extra conditions?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Absolutely. I can see no reason why we would delay that and I will ask for that to be put before me as soon as possible. Teaching assistants are a key part of the structure of our schools and they should receive those improved terms and conditions as soon as possible.

5.1.18 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you to the candidate for confirming and I will look forward to that. I am sure the teaching assistants would be grateful to receive extra funding. Would the candidate commit to complete the

terms and conditions for teachers for 31st March, regardless of the delay of this situation that we are at and for the headteachers during the first half of the year to make sure that progress is made?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Well of course that will be the remit of the new Minister for Education, but I will certainly encourage him to do that and he will have my support if he requires it.

The Bailiff:

I am afraid there is only 7 seconds left and therefore I will not call upon another question. As there were no other nominations and the speech and question time have expired, the Connétable of St. Peter has been selected for appointment as the Minister for Children and Education. **[Approbation]**

6. The Minister for Housing and Communities

The Bailiff:

The next for proposition is Housing and Communities and, Chief Minister, do you wish to make your nomination?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I do, thank you. I am pleased to nominate Sam Mézec for the position of Minister for Housing and Communities.

The Bailiff:

Very well, is it seconded? **[Seconded]** Deputy, you have 10 minutes ... I am so sorry.

Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:

It is my pleasure to nominate Deputy Warr of St. Helier.

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy Bailhache, you nominate Deputy Warr. Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? No. In which case the position will be that Deputy Mézec will first speak for 10 minutes and then I have the 20 minutes available for questions to him. Thereafter, Deputy Warr will have the same opportunity to speak for 10 minutes and have 20 minutes of questions available to him. As is usual, when one candidate is speaking, the other will leave to a room where he cannot overhear what is being said. Deputy Warr, I ask you to retire from the Assembly with a member of the Greffe, I think. We will wait just a moment for the Deputy to be ... yes, I think that allows sufficient time, so up to 10 minutes, Deputy Mézec.

6.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South:

Can I start by acknowledging the work of Deputy Warr in the last 18 months and say that I **[Approbation]** hope to have the opportunity to build on much of that. There are 2 reasons why I have accepted the kind offer from the Chief Minister to nominate me for this role today and why I am asking States Members to vote for me. The first is my genuine desire to offer my services to a new united Government, which turns the page on the political strife we have seen recently. Being in opposition is often seen as the easy option but it is not the reason we went into politics. We went into politics to make a difference on behalf of the people who put us here and I do not want to shout from the sidelines and throw stones, I want to get stuck in and get my hands dirty. By doing so, I hope we can help bring the Assembly together and achieve the more inclusive and representative Government that we are all hoping for. The second reason is because Jersey faces a severe housing crisis, which poses a huge risk to our future prosperity and social cohesion, and there is no time to waste in resolving it. It is vital that the new Government can inspire confidence in Islanders that we will make progress in this key area as a matter of urgency, and we must acknowledge that it is urgent. Successive reports from Statistics Jersey confirm that the cost of housing is the biggest contributor

to causing poverty; maybe that is something to do with the increased reliance on foodbanks. We also know that hundreds of locally-qualified Islanders are leaving Jersey every year in search of better lives elsewhere with many of them citing the cost of housing as a key factor in their decision. This is something that is even now touching the lives of the relatively affluent as they fear losing their children and grandchildren to emigration. Forgetting the human impact, there is of course the economic impact too. The increased cost of housing puts pressure on businesses and employers to raise their salaries to levels that they will struggle to afford or risk losing the staff they have invested in, so either way we suffer socially and economically, and that is why it is a crisis. But I have experience leading an emergency effort on housing during the crisis, as I did during the pandemic, where I established a service which found and kept people in safe homes at a time when all sorts of restrictions were imposed on us. This was extremely successful and an example of how I am capable of stepping up to the plate and delivering in challenging circumstances. But as well as my experience, I believe that my decisive approach, my intrinsic understanding of this portfolio, and my communication skills mean I can hit the ground running and start steering things towards quicker progress right away. My 3 priorities will be: to support more Islanders into home ownership, to improve the experience of renters and to reduce the plight of homelessness in our wealthy society. A large part of the solution to all of these will be to improve the supply of new homes. I am very pleased to have shared positive words with the proposed new Ministers for Infrastructure and for the Environment, expressing their desire to work with me to address the blockages that have prevented new developments of family homes across the Parishes from being able to get started. I am sure that is a frustration that many of the Constables will recognise as well. I commit to working with them and supporting them. Whether that is on the reforms to the planning system or getting improvements to our infrastructure to sustain those homes, they will have my active support every step of the way. Through our government-owned developers, we can do more to provide the right kind of homes for Islanders. Andium is doing an extremely good job and are currently on site building 726 homes, but only 18 of these are 3-bedroom homes. That is why we need to get those sites in the Parishes moving forward as quickly as possible. The States of Jersey Development Company needs to be steered in the right direction instead of spending huge amounts of money on failed applications to build unsuitable homes; in particular I will tell them that they must respect our democratically-elected Planning Committee. Members will know that I am particularly keen to support schemes for first-time buyers. I desperately want the First Step scheme to benefit as many people as possible. I successfully got the funding to establish this scheme and I will argue for more funding to expand it. But as well as supply, we need to make better use of what we have already got and improve the experience for people who rent their homes. For both renters and landlords, we desperately need a new Residential Tenancy Law. The one we currently have is thin and provides very little for landlords and tenants to work from. There are all sorts of unjustifiable practices going on which we are aware of through our constituency work and evidence from Citizens Advice and the Government's Housing Advice Service, which I helped to establish. Whether that is the exploitative rent increases or revenge evictions, it is clear that we need a law that will protect tenants from bad landlords by upholding the practices already exemplified by the good landlords. I intend to get the work on a new Residential Tenancy Law back on track after it was delayed by the outgoing Government. I think the consultation on it took too long and by providing a lack of clarity on the political commitments for change, it provided an opportunity for some stakeholders to dig their heels in the sand, rather than forcing different sides to come together to help us identify where the right balances are. On that note of bringing different sides together, in advance of today I reached out to the Jersey Landlords Association to commit to them that I would meet them as early as possible to get things moving on several issues that I know they are concerned about. In particular, I want to work with them to get their input on effective measures to protect tenants from revenge evictions. Some landlords are nervous about this because they are worried it might mean losing autonomy and control over their properties and their ability to retain possession when a tenant breaks their tenancy

contract. But there is absolutely no reason why that should be the case and I want to make sure that they can have confidence that the balance we strike will suit them too.

[11:30]

It is also vitally important that we respect the decision of the Assembly made last year when it voted in favour of establishing a proper Rent Tribunal, and I make it clear that this service will be as much for landlords as it is for tenants. There is also work to be done to establish the code of practice for the licensing scheme that the States approved at the end of last year. I want to be sat round the table with them making sure that their voice is heard in this process so that that licensing scheme can be up and running, supporting those vulnerable tenants in our community, while providing really good guidance and advice to those who are renting out properties so that we do not inadvertently end up making criminals out of people when we could have helped them from the outset and made things much easier. There are lots of other little bits that I want to make quick progress on. For example, we need to improve the deposit protection scheme. I have raised numerous issues with how this scheme works in the last year which have not been resolved yet, and it just causes unnecessary stress for people who are just trying to live their lives and acquire a new home. There are some quick wins that we can achieve there and I know where to find them. On homelessness, I am absolutely committed to implementing all of the recommendations of the homelessness strategy. One in particular was to enshrine the definition of homelessness in legislation. Until now we have not had clarity on that, so let me provide that clarity now by saying I support that and will do it. The last time I was Minister for Housing I managed to secure a more appropriate funding mechanism for the main homelessness charity that we work with, and so I have developed a very good relationship with them and the other homelessness charities too. The more supply of affordable homes we can deliver and improvements to security of tenure we can achieve, the fewer people may end up facing homelessness, so all of these issues go hand in hand. I hope that Members will consider me as a candidate who has the experience and the know-how to hit the ground running with this Ministry and get things moving quickly with the sense of urgency that is required. I am very pleased to have the confidence of the new Chief Minister to do this and I pledge to Members that, if elected, I will play my part in a positive and unified Government that can help bring the Assembly and the public together while resolving this crucial issue that threatens our future prosperity. I look forward to taking questions from Members. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. There is now a period of 20 minutes of questions.

6.1.1 Deputy H. Jeune:

House prices, whether to buy or rent are impacted by supply. What will the candidate's approach be to managing an increasing supply for those who need it the most?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I thank the Deputy for this question. The last time that I was Minister for Housing I was a champion of providing the sites and access to Andium Homes as quickly as possible and giving them the certainty that they need to plan their building schedules so that they can get building. I did support the development of Ann Court, which was not a unanimous decision of this Assembly and which did lead to delays initially, but I supported that all the way through. That development, I think, is now almost full and has had a huge effect in getting people in urgent need of new housing into some really, really decent well-built homes at a more affordable level than they would have found in the private sector. I will absolutely be a champion and supporter of them and seek to get as early indications as possible for Andium about those sites when they become available. But also, as I mentioned in my speech, it is vitally important to work with the new Ministers for Infrastructure and the Environment on some of the newer sites that we know are coming available so that we can build

those family homes because there are not enough 3-bedroom homes on the building schedule at this moment in time.

6.1.2 Deputy H. Jeune:

Demand for housing to buy or rent is fuelled by availability of third-party debt. Will the candidate's approach be to make it easier or harder to borrow and, if so, for which categories of people?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Well, we know that there was commentary recently about what was called the "Jersey premium" for mortgages where Islanders were facing terms that were not as favourable as the same banks were providing in the U.K. There were examples we knew of people who, with the same bank, were paying hundreds of pounds a month more, which means over a longer period of time these people are paying more and it is harder to get that first step when you see that prospect facing you like that. It is not the Minister for Housing and Communities' remit to tell banks what they can and cannot do but we have seen from the Chief Minister his intention to allocate the financial services portfolio to Deputy Gorst on this. If he is successful in that, then I will want to work with him so that whatever arrangements we may seek to arrange with banks so that they are providing that more, then I would work with him to do that, the mortgage lenders, yes.

6.1.3 Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:

The candidate has touched on this subject already. I am sure the candidate is aware that there are a number of landlords who fear that if the candidate is successful that he would weigh legislation far too far in favour of the tenant as opposed to the landlord. What would the candidate say that would allay those fears and promises of an equitable solution?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

In my role as a constituency representative and as Minister for Housing previously, I have read more tenancy contracts than I could possibly recall, and I have seen all sorts of different examples of practice, lots of it absolutely decent and good, and many landlords going above and beyond what legislation requires of them, and I have seen instances where the complete opposite is the case. I believe that it is important to bring people with you, that is why I have made a proactive approach to the Jersey Landlords Association to say that I will meet with them early on. Despite what some might perceive, there are people in the Jersey Landlords Association who I have a decent relationship with. In fact, if you were to draw a Venn diagram of Jersey Landlords Association members and Reform Jersey members there would be a significant overlap, and I have lots of people in my social circle who are involved in that too. I have no problem sitting down with them and saying: "Right, I accept that landlords will have concerns about how they manage their assets and whether legislation will impinge on their abilities to do that. What I am not prepared to do is to say that difficult conversations are a reason for us not trying." We do need to try and we do need to put more protections in law for tenants against exploitative practices but one of the ways we do that is by learning from the good practice and trying to make that standard.

6.1.4 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Also, will the candidate be working with Parishes to furnish new first-time buyer housing and first-time rental housing?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sorry, did he say "furnish"? Could he just elaborate what he means by that?

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

As in supply; the supply of housing.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I had a picture in my head of the Constable and I with his St. Saviour van going round and delivering sofas and beds into new flats, which I am sure we would enjoy doing that. The Constable is right that there are sites that have been allocated for first-time buyer housing and affordable rental housing across the Parishes. The point in getting those sites was that they are not to be big tower blocks of one-bedroom flats. Okay, there is lots of need for one-bedroom flats, and managing that supply is important as well, but there is a great need for 3-bedroom homes for people who want to grow their families and have a nice place for those people to live in and also those who have special needs as well, whether that is for outdoor space and accessibility. I want to make sure we get moving on those sites as quickly as possible, and that is why I have been lucky to share some words with the other nominated candidates and hopefully we can start that very quickly.

6.1.5 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

How would the candidate define homelessness and what would be the consequence for an individual defined as homeless?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

There are many different forms of homelessness and there has been an informal definition that has been provided by the Government already. That can include anything from rough sleeping, which is the obvious one, but also the less obvious ones where people may technically have a roof above their head but because of the circumstances they find themselves in they have no security with that and so can be classed as homelessness for the intents and purposes of providing support to them. That might be somebody who is facing domestic violence and cannot leave the home that they are currently in, that might be people who are sofa-surfing, so there are a variety of different ways of defining it. What I would want the consequence to be for having that enshrined in legislation is that it can then trigger a process so that the public authorities that are responsible for dealing with a homelessness case are required to deal with it and do not pass it from pillar to post or ignore it. So that compulsion then for a public authority, whether that is Customer and Local Services or another department, perhaps the Health Department in some instances too, will then have a legal position established that requires them to then manage that case and get that person into a stable home eventually.

6.1.6 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Does the candidate have any concerns about the financial implications of what he has just said?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Potentially yes, because a consequence of that would be that you either have to find a home for somebody which, if we do not have the supply available at that particular moment, or if that person has got particular needs in what kind of home they would need, that would be difficult. But I say that the financial costs to our Island society in the long term by having a severe homelessness problem costs us more in the end because all sorts of things emanate when you do not have a secure roof above your head, whether that is mental health problems, whether that is the difficulty in sustaining employment, and as a society we pay for all of those costs as well. So getting things right at the start by getting people a decent and secure home, in the end that costs our society less.

6.1.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

During the Chief Minister debate ,I asked a question about circumstance. I have got another one that came from a constituent, a landlord who, very well-intentioned, but had a tenant that they simply could not get rid of for one year. What would the Minister do about that on the other side, if you like, of the coin, although I am not sure there are sides.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

As well as protecting tenants from exploitative practice when requiring them to leave their homes, there is no excuse for bad behaviour, and people who own properties should be able to retake possession of them if the person who had been living in that property is in breach of their contract. For something to happen where the Viscounts are not able to implement an eviction order for a year even though the order has been granted, then there is clearly something wrong. I do not necessarily know the full details of that case, although I have been told a little bit, if they are not able to be moved out of that home over a year with the Housing Advice Service and the Gateway and whoever would be connected to to find that person a new home so they can leave that property and the landlord can have a fresh start with it, then there is clearly something not working there and I would want to get those systems properly in place. I think that the proposed Rent Tribunal could be a good place for that where there is a specialised service separate to the Petty Debts Court that will hopefully deal with those better and perhaps even identify those difficult cases where an eviction is legally and contractually the right thing to do but would cause hardship on a tenant, to then kickstart those services into action to find that person a home so that that landlord can take repossession of their property as quickly as possible.

6.1.8 Deputy R.J. Ward:

It may have been slightly answered but I was going to ask, because one of the issues is that the landlord has to take legal action, if you like, which is not easy and certainly not quick here at times - no criticism - what would the Minister do to try and improve that situation? I hope I have not just got myself into trouble.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Well having the combination of the new Rent Tribunal and the new Residential Tenancy Law I hope would help that. I am aware of instances where landlords have faced an extremely difficult situation where the tenant is either not paying rent or is wrecking the property and causing thousands of pounds of damage to it, who then think that they have to issue 3 months' notice in accordance with the Residential Tenancy Law to get rid of that tenant; that is not right. They do not have to do that, they do not have to wait 3 months before starting action, they can start that action much sooner. Lots of landlords do not know that they have got the right to do that to protect their properties. So as well as the Rent Tribunal and the new Residential Tenancy Law, I hope that that can be accompanied with some kind of information packages for landlords so that they know what rights they have got as well over their properties because I do think I have come across cases where they have not necessarily been aware that they could have been able to deal with things quicker.

6.1.9 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that relationships between landlords and Government generally have not been that good over the past few years, and I heard the Minister in his speech mention that he would be meeting them, would he agree to go a step further and put formally in place perhaps quarterly or 6-monthly meetings in the diary with the landlords or those who are landlords, not necessarily the association, to enhance those relationships and learn from the problems of others?

[11:45]

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That is an easy question to answer; I would be perfectly happy to do that. I have been trying not to get ahead of myself in advance of today but I have started thinking about what I would like my engagement schedule to be like as Minister, how often I would want to meet the social housing providers, how often I would want to meet Citizens Advice and other bodies like that, but the J.L.A. (Jersey Landlords Association) would absolutely be a part of that schedule.

6.1.10 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How would he anticipate working with the main States property division, if you can call it that, Andium Homes? What will his relationship be there?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I do already have a close relationship with Andium, not just from being a constituency representative, but from my time as a Minister previously. I know some very, very good people there who I normally go straight to when I have got a particular constituency case that I need to deal with. I think, certainly in my previous term, there were difficulties in the lines of accountability where the Minister for Treasury and Resources as shareholder representative on some things had a greater say than the Minister for Housing and Communities who is responsible for setting policy for Andium. I would want to have a think about how we could perhaps work more closely with the Treasury side of things, who have the shareholder function, to make sure that they are not getting mixed messages from Ministers and that they are best placed to be able to finance the implementation of the policies that ultimately the Minister for Housing and Communities would be setting.

6.1.11 Deputy A. Curtis:

The candidate referenced the South Hill site. Could he clarify from his speech if it is his intention to work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) to see a different scheme proposed for the site or, if he has other plans, what are they?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I have to say that I have not enjoyed this episode with South Hill and how the development proposals have progressed there. I think that when the Planning Committee rejected the most recent application, that ought to have been a wake-up call for them to say that there is not that much support for that particular development. The size of the homes and the way that they are formatted around that site gives rise to serious concerns about the quality of life that people will have in there. I think that now is the moment to sit with them and say: "Right, okay, things have kind of changed recently in terms of our expectations of our property sizes, for one-bedroom homes, for example, and the amount of affordable housing we would expect a government-owned developer to be providing." I think having that conversation early on would certainly be a priority for me and I think I have been consistent on that.

6.1.12 Deputy A. Curtis:

On that site with the existing plans, it has been suggested that the affordable homes on the site would be the ones facing into the quarry and would be single aspect. Does the candidate support providing affordable category homes on this site with those units being the ones with the least sunlight and daylight or does he prefer not to discriminate on access to light?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am a staunch supporter of the basic human right of access to life; I find it an illuminating thing more generally. What does it say about us, frankly, that we would have a government-owned developer that would build a load of homes and the ones that are designated as affordable objectively be the worst ones in them without enough effort made to design them a bit nicer? I mean, for goodness' sake, we can do better than that.

6.1.13 Deputy B. Ward:

Please may I ask the candidate how he would manage the Deputy's strong views and commitment to his party's manifesto and the commitment of not crossing their red lines, especially if it will be contrary to a Council of Ministers' decision?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Let us be clear that it is the States Assembly that is the supreme decision-making body of the Island, not the Council of Ministers, and I am very pleased from the discussions that fellow candidates have had so far in trying to recognise that principle. I would be a fool if I attempted to bring forward a policy to this Assembly that I did not do the work on to convince people it was the right thing to do and to convince stakeholders that they could have comfort that it was the right thing to do. I appreciate that I have probably got some explaining to do about the finer detail of some of the things that I would want to propose but ultimately I want to bring States Members with me on that and they can, I hope, expect a lot of engagement from me, and probably even pestering at times, so I can try to explain what kind of policies we are pursuing and hear what concerns are and change them if I have to to get things over the line, to get progress rather than get nothing.

6.1.14 Deputy B. Ward:

The Deputy states he is a team player. Please can the Deputy provide the Assembly examples of this and how the Deputy will apply these skills if he was appointed as Minister?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Well for my almost 10 years in this Assembly I have always been part of an organised and transparent team in the form of the political party that I helped found. I am very proud of the progress that we have made and the leadership that I have shown in being able to bring a wide diverse range of people together to be a part of that team and for us to be so cohesive and, frankly, getting on really well. I have served in the Council of Ministers previously where I was very much a minority on many issues. I hope that those who served around the table at that time with me can recall those days that I was never unpleasant and was not a menace towards anyone else. We did very often respectfully agree to disagree and, when it came to staunch manifesto positions, we just agreed to disagree and I did not stand up on the floor of the Assembly and surprise Members with things that they were not expecting or deliberately antagonise them. It is in my personal interests, quite frankly, electorally, that this new Government succeeds and I am going to work as hard as I possibly can if the Assembly chooses me to make sure that that happens.

6.1.15 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:

What assurances could the Deputy give to landlords who have fears that they may not be able to reoccupy homes they intend to reoccupy or that they intend to have family members occupy?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I thank the Deputy for that question. A landlord who owns a property that they rent out which they intend to reoccupy themselves at one point, that might be as they are retiring or something like that, in even some of the places in Europe with the toughest rental regulations they do still normally have a clause in the law that gives landlords the right to have a tenant move out of a property so the owner can live in it. I think it is fair that if a landlord knows well in advance that that is their plan, they are coming up to retirement or something like that, then I think they should be encouraged to give as much notice as possible for the tenant who themselves might have lived there a very long time and need time to be able to plan where they move next. So even the places I think with the toughest regulations on this, that is an allowance that is made for so that possession can be retaken.

The Bailiff:

There are about 4 seconds to go and therefore I will not call upon any other questions. I would then ask Deputy Mézec to leave the Chamber and for Deputy Warr to be brought back. Very well, Deputy Warr, you have up to 10 minutes to address the Assembly and thereafter, as is usual, there will be 20 minutes of questions available to Members to ask you. If you would like to speak, Deputy Warr.

6.2 Deputy D. Warr of St. Helier South:

A new vision for housing. I want to talk to you today about my vision for housing in Jersey. I want to reduce division and inequality in our society by ensuring that everyone has access to a decent home that meets their needs. A major barrier to finding long-term housing solutions is political instability. Over the last decade we have had on average a new Minister for Housing every 2 years. That lack of continuity is killing us and makes it incredibly difficult to put long-term solutions in place. We need a whole-system approach because finding solutions to our housing crisis is so much more than just building homes. The good news is that for the first time in a decade we have a strategic Housing Department in place. If there were a simple fix that can single-handedly counter the macroeconomic forces and layers of complexity that influence Jersey's housing market, we would have found it by now. The challenges are systemic in nature and hence it calls for a systemic response. We must not forget that we also need to find solutions to enable us to develop a sustainable Island economy that can be separated from the need to constantly increase the size of the population. The housing crisis is a dynamic issue. Today's crisis is very different to when I came into office; however, homes are still just as unaffordable today as they were 18 months ago. It is not something that can be changed overnight for many geopolitical reasons. The speed of delivery of new homes is a major factor when it comes to sorting out our housing crisis. In this respect there have been many innovations in the construction industry. The result is that the delivery of homes, at The Limes for instance, will be at least 6 months quicker than if it had used traditional methods. Andium Homes have continued to build significant numbers of new homes at a period when economic conditions proved challenging for the private sector. The whole of the north of St. Helier is being transformed. Hundreds of new homes have not only been built but will be delivered in a very short space of time. There are still, however, hundreds of homes that need to be developed on the rezoned housing sites. This is where a whole-system approach has been required. A new liquid waste strategy was published by the Minister for Infrastructure in May 2023 and funding put in place in the Government Plan. This is a significant piece of work and has enabled the Minister for the Environment to get on and issue supplementary planning advice on all rezoned sites. The turnaround of planning permissions has come in for heavy scrutiny. In response, an improvement plan for planning services was published in July 2023. A number of recommendations were made in the Mackinnon review, which the Minister for the Environment agreed to implement. We also need to make sure we make better use of the homes we already have. That is why I have set up an empty home service. I have always said this is a moral issue for me: so many people in our Island struggle to put a roof over their head, yet others can afford to leave their homes vacant. It is a complex issue but we are making good progress. Finally, there is the Airbnb issue, the unacceptable loss of local housing stock to unregulated short-term holiday lets. We do, however, have to recognise that there is a tension here with the needs of our visitor economy. We must also recognise that the quality and security of our homes is the best it can be. To that end, this Assembly rightly passed the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) (Licensing) (Jersey) Regulations but we must be careful when we pass new laws that they do not inadvertently stifle the market and cause actors to leave. My new Residential Tenancy Law is well underway.

[12:00]

I have had a huge amount of feedback, which I will share with you in the coming weeks, and law drafting instructions are being updated as I speak. We cannot rush this law, it is a huge piece of legislation. Over the years Government after Government has introduced piecemeal legislation. I want to deliver a significant fit-for-purpose law that will work for everyone for at least the next decade. I have been criticised for taking too long, for going out to consultation. If we get this wrong for either tenants or landlords, mark my words, we will create a brand-new housing crisis. Take for instance the Reform manifesto pledge: "Legislate to make tenancies open-ended by default." The feedback we received to this proposal was excoriating. Many talked about the unintended consequences, the perceived loss of autonomy, in fact, for many it was the last straw and would cause

them to exit the market. Can you imagine the chaos that would cause? From the last census 24 per cent, nearly a quarter of all households, lived in the privately rented qualified sector; that is 38 per cent up on a decade ago. That pledge is more likely to create a homeless problem, which is why I asked Deputy Mézec in his speech where his red lines were. Would he compromise on these manifesto pledges? We all heard the reply: “Absolutely not.” Other people in this Island also have red lines and we must respect them, while at the same time providing adequate protections for the people they house; that is why I am taking so much time and care over this legislation. I will get there and a draft law will be delivered to this Assembly by the end of 2024. I want proportionate and appropriate legislation. Finally, I want to talk about access to affordable housing. 2023 has been a pivotal year in housing for this Island. It is the first year in a decade that Andium’s delivery programme really started making a difference and, in turn, created opportunities for the people of this Island. I published a road map for improving access to social housing in July 2023, just 2 months later I dropped the age of access to 35. By October this year it will be down to age 25. That is bringing security of tenure to so many more Islanders. The impact of that change is happening right now. The number of individuals on the waiting list has fallen by 20 per cent. This is the lowest it has been in years; that is what I call significant progress. That makes a real difference to people’s lives now. Leveraging Andium’s home delivery programme will also give me an opportunity to look at their rents policy. There are some real anomalies, particularly around right-sizing. It is also about time we took a look at the £30 million annual return being made to the Treasury. Work in this area will reduce the inequality to which I referred earlier. I do, however, fundamentally disagree with Reform’s manifesto pledge of a rent freeze until rent stabilisation measures are introduced. That would be a complete disaster for Andium, as they would have to make a choice between building new homes and maintaining their existing stock. With average rent increases over the past 4 years running at around 5.5 per cent and inflation over the same period running at 24.3 per cent, it does not take a genius to understand that they will simply run out of cash. Another case of firefighting for a short-term win while storing up real long-term pain. The affordability issue is a big one. Wages have simply not kept up with house-price inflation, which means buying a family home is way out of the reach of those on an average family income. Declining birth rates also reflect the reality that many families simply cannot afford that extra bedroom. In 2023 I brought forward 2 initiatives; the first increasing the income thresholds for access to the Andium Homebuy scheme. Despite this scheme offering a discount of up to 25 per cent on the price of a home, it still is not enough for median and lower-income families. Back in November 2019, £10 million was ring-fenced for affordable housing because, yes, there were not affordability prices even then. It is somewhat ironic that my critics, who had 3 years to spend this money, used the word “dithering” when I have taken just 18 months to deliver it. In about 10 weeks’ time this scheme will enable households who thought they could never afford a home to have a new home of their own.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much indeed, Deputy. There is now 20 minutes of questions available to Deputy Warr.

6.2.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the candidate believe that, as stated under the United Nations Human Rights Convention, adequate housing is a human right?

Deputy D. Warr:

Yes, I do believe that.

6.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does he agree with the statement from the United Nations’ own website which says: “Too often violations of the right to housing occur with impunity, in part because at domestic level housing is

rarely treated as a human right.”? If so, what would he do to make sure that the right to adequate housing, not just in the long term but for current tenants is met more rapidly?

Deputy D. Warr:

I think that is a combination of things. That is about protections, and we are talking about the Residential Tenancy Law. It is also about housing provision and making sure we build sufficient homes. I think it is also about providing knowledge for people, so that is such as services we already provide and the Housing Advice Service. I think the combination of those would give people comfort when it comes to looking for a new home.

6.2.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have a very specific question at the end of this but I have a couple of sentences to build up to it. Last night I received a message from a previous Minister for Education, who I stood against and we did not really agree on a lot. He congratulates me on the possibility of becoming Minister and offered an open door to say: “I can help you wherever you want to be helped.” I would like to thank Deputy Gardiner for being so positive as well privately and offering exactly the same sort of coalition, the sort of things to help bring this Assembly together. Can I ask the Minister, why has he not taken the same approach, rather than bring in another divisive debate to this Assembly, which is not wanted by the wider public? They want to see us start to work together and get on.

Deputy D. Warr:

I am struggling to understand “divisive debate”, that term being used by the Deputy. Because it has been quite interesting to see last night’s commentary by Deputy Mézec where he reached out to the Landlords Association, which apparently was the first time in 4 years, conveniently ahead of this debate. It is true, I am afraid, as I was told by the Chair of the ...

The Bailiff:

No, we will not have ...

Deputy D. Warr:

Sorry, okay. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Please, we will have no comment and no responses. Thank you.

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you, sorry. Also, I have constantly had to fight about delays, which has been brought forward by the very Deputy who has asked this question throughout the Assembly on the Residential Tenancy Law when I had gone out to try and find out and establish and make sure we do that correctly and deliver that correctly. I also find it interesting that Deputy Mézec now had to send an email around all the States Assembly Members to explain about the open-ended tenancy and how there might be other ways of dealing with that. If the Deputy engaged with me and engaged with the consultation period, I am sure we would not be having this discussion today.

6.2.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I think we have just seen what I meant by divisive. Let us be more positive. Does the Deputy understand that the way that we need to deal with anything that comes to this Assembly is, first of all, if it comes from the Council of Ministers it has to go through the Council of Ministers and then any Member who has an equal vote in this Assembly can bring an amendment, a rescindment and to change that legislation appropriately. Then this Assembly, which is the primary decision-making body, makes that decision. Does the Deputy understand that that is a much more constructive and positive way to do things, given the votes and the vision that we have had recently?

Deputy D. Warr:

I do.

6.2.5 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Can the Deputy say why he ignored a decision of the States on a proposition from Deputy Higgins, P.93/2020, to establish a digital register of all commercial and residential properties?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. It was not ignored, I think it was a case of prioritising. It was felt that there were other things that we need to be doing which were ahead of that. There is only so much bandwidths in the amount of work that needs to be done and that was felt to be a lower priority than the other ones, which we are currently progressing.

6.2.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Is the Deputy aware that millions of pounds of rental income leave the Island every week because of lack of transparency of ownership? What has he done to avoid this happening over the last 18 months?

Deputy D. Warr:

I am aware of lack of transparency of ownership only through our vacant homes checking out, and that is because it has been so difficult to find out who exactly owns homes. In terms of actual foreign ownership, we have seen the demise of the share transfer, so we have seen that gone. But I am not aware of, as the Deputy says, hundreds of thousands - I am not sure if he used that number - going out of the Island. It is not something that has been brought to my attention.

6.2.7 Deputy H. Jeune:

House prices, whether to buy or rent, are impacted by supply: what will the candidate's approach be to managing an increasing supply for those who need it the most?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. In terms of the supply and identifying what it is we need to be building, a lot of that comes through data collected on our social housing Gateway. Clearly, there will be private-sector builders who will be also building to the demand that they perceive. There is market data, there is Gateway data and clearly those are the ways in which we identify what the demand will be in the future. As the Deputy knows, we are building smaller units, one and 2-bedroom units. There is an affordability issue there but also it is a recognition that family sizes are also changing.

6.2.8 Deputy H. Jeune:

Demand for housing to buy or rent is fuelled by the availability of third-party debt. Will the candidate's approach be to make it easier or harder to borrow and, if so, for which categories of people?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. This issue around borrowing is a real challenge and our £10 million First Step scheme has demonstrated that, and I mentioned this in my speech. The sad fact is that even at 25 per cent discount on Andium Homebuy, homes are still unaffordable for the ordinary people of Jersey. The reason they are unaffordable is because they simply cannot get the borrowing that they require, which is why our First Step scheme has taken that shared equity up to 40 per cent. Even then that is on the edge of what people can afford. These are the steps we are taking and I think there is huge opportunity to develop on from our First Step scheme because at the moment it is a pilot project. We want to hear the feedback from that and then go forward with that scheme in other

more interesting ways. I think we can do that and I think we can do that fairly rapidly because of the Andium development programme.

6.2.9 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Has the Deputy considered how it feels for young people to look in estate agents' windows and see nothing that they can afford to buy or rent? Has he considered the feelings of parents when their young people give up hope of having any sort of home of their own and leave the Island? If so, what has he done in the last 18 months to put things right?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. I think what the Deputy describes is, sadly, nothing new. That challenge of getting out of your bedroom and then into a home that you can call your own has been a challenge; not just in the last 18 months, it has been a challenge for 20 years. I am sure those individuals ... and 20 years ago when I was the one looking in the window, I am sure I had the same concerns. Sadly, not everybody has the bank of mum and dad. One of the things that we have done is about widening the Gateway and I think that is a big area which we need to progress on. As I said already in my speech, we will have dropped the age of entry on the Gateway to 25 by October this year. I am also very concerned at this moment in time that we have no offer available for the 16 to 24 year-old category, but that is because they cannot get supported housing at the moment and that is an odd thing in our policy, it needs to be reviewed.

[12:15]

But I do believe that our social housing provision, our social housing Gateway, is the way to get people started out on their journey into, I would like to think, eventually home ownership.

6.2.10 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Unfortunately, homes are much more unaffordable now than they were 20 years ago. How many of the many thousands of young people who cannot afford to buy or rent privately have these schemes helped in the last 18 months? What is the number?

Deputy D. Warr:

I do not know that there is a number. Sorry, Deputy, when you say "schemes" I am trying to think of the schemes. We have got a scheme which is the entry on to the Gateway, which has clearly helped a significant number of people. The Gateway, as I say, entry has dropped by 20 per cent. I am trying to put a number here. Yes, here we go, the Gateway housing, the list was 883 in 2023. At the end of 2024 it is down to 674. One would suggest that that has helped around 210 individuals to get access to affordable housing.

6.2.11 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I had a conversation with somebody who, unfortunately, lost their home during the tornado. As a result of that, they were offered a significantly smaller home in a completely different area at an elevated price, with the justification being that they were originally on an old contract and they were now being put into a new contract. Bearing in mind this family lost everything pretty much that they owned. They tried to argue this and obviously did not get very far. My question to the Minister is: what are his thoughts on this and the approach around the old contract and new contract argument?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. I have to say I am familiar with that scenario. I am assuming the Deputy is referring to Andium Homes or I am not sure if it is another housing trust, but if it is Andium Homes this policy of moving people to a newer location which may be smaller, which increases their rent, is, in my view, wrong. It is one of the issues where I believe we do need to have a review of the rents policy but it needs to be a comprehensive review of the rents policy; it cannot

be piecemeal. If I am allowed to continue as the Minister for Housing and Communities it is something I am going to be dealing with very, very seriously.

6.2.12 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I want to refer back to something that the Minister said around bringing the numbers down on the housing list. What work has been done to ensure that those in our community who may be eligible to be on that housing list are able to apply and have that information available to them to apply to that list? Because I am sure that although those figures sound very positive, that there are many more people within our community that are eligible but are unaware of it or do not know how to approach the system.

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. You are absolutely right, one of the issues has been getting people to be aware of our Housing Advice Service provision. I am going to use the word “Communications Department” within the States; that is one of their jobs is to get out there and deal with that. But I am aware that this information is provided to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Salvation Army are aware of it, Caritas are aware of it. I think it is beholden on all of us to make those people who are vulnerable in our society aware of where they can go to find help with regard to a stressed housing situation.

6.2.13 Deputy G.P. Southern:

What scope, if any, does the candidate see for social rents to be set to respond to levels of household income in order to make properties affordable in the future?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I presume what he is saying is making properties more affordable in the future; I assume you mean making rents more affordable in the future. There absolutely does need to be a rent review but I would also point out that out of our more vulnerable people in society, 2,000 people within Andium Homes pay no rent at all. Their housing provision is completely covered and 3,000 people have their rental income subsidised. There is a significant amount of assistance already in the system. Can it be better? Of course it can be better. Again, a major rent review of that, I think, is long needed.

6.2.14 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

I may have missed it, but I did not hear the Deputy say anything about homelessness and I wonder if he might be willing to share his thoughts on that issue with the Assembly.

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question. With regard to homelessness, we obviously published and made official the definition of homelessness. That is not just simply about street homelessness, that is rooflessness, that is overcrowding, *et cetera*. What has been good about that has been that it has identified people in need, so whether it be going on to social housing provision band 1, their emergency need. Working with the likes of Shelter, Sanctuary, the Women’s Refuge, *et cetera*, we can place people and give them the support that they need to deal with these extreme situations. My bigger concern in all of this is collecting data. We have struggled to get the data together in this area. On top of that before the V.O.N.C. (vote of no confidence) was called, I was talking to other Ministers about how we prevent people getting into these acute situations. I think it is really important that different Ministerial sectors work together to try and reduce the number of people who find themselves in these extremely distressed situations.

6.2.15 Deputy B. Ward:

Wishing to be consistent with both candidates, please may I ask, can the Deputy provide the Assembly examples of being a team player and how the Deputy would apply these skills if he was reappointed as Minister?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. I think the biggest example of being a “team player” is working with the Minister for the Environment and the previous Minister for Infrastructure, in particular working on St. Saviour’s Hospital. Between us we were able to, first of all, get a Supplementary Planning Guidance out, which was important to do that. We also engaged Andium Homes to come up with a scheme as well. I would also add in a wider context on the drainage side of things. Earlier this year I have already mentioned that the Minister for Infrastructure brought forward a liquid waste strategy, and that is in recognition of the need for homes and to get homes connected up. If we do not have any drainage we cannot build more homes; that is what I mean about working together.

6.2.16 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

How will the candidate look after landlords and what are his views on mortgage relief and open-ended tenancies?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for her question. There are 2 elements there. Mortgage relief, I believe that horse has already bolted; that has been got rid of. One of the reasons mortgage relief is being ... got rid of is a very poor way of describing being removed but obviously it is to the disadvantage of people who pay rent. It does not seem fair that someone who has a mortgage just because they have a mortgage gets tax relief, whereas if you are renting you do not. I think that is a point. In terms of actual open-ended tenancies, I am kind of ambivalent a bit on that. We have done a big consultation process, the results of which have only literally just come in. The Greffe, unfortunately, suggested that we did not publish that during the purdah period, which is a great shame because I think it has been very informative. I think the most important thing for me is that we listen to landlords and tenants as well; it is a 2-way street, it is 2 things. We recognise, as I said earlier, where those different red lines are. We have to work on a compromise position. In terms of, does my view matter? I do not think it does. I want to listen to people. I want to make sure the law is fit for purpose and I want to make sure that private landlords do not exit the market in their droves because we have frightened them out of the market.

6.2.17 Deputy A. Howell:

Please, could the candidate state whether he agrees with open-ended tenancies? Would he bring back mortgage relief for people who are buying their own properties?

Deputy D. Warr:

Mortgage relief, let us pass the buck into Treasury. I think that would be a Treasury question, to be honest with you. What the Deputy is basically getting at is affordability. I think that is the crucial thing. How do we make funding more affordable? It is interesting, is it not, mortgage interest rates in Jersey are on average 1 per cent higher than in the U.K.? That is a barrier; that is a real barrier to the high levels of housing cost. What are we doing about that? Why are we not investigating that in greater depth? That will be something that I want to pursue.

The Bailiff:

That ends the period of questions for Deputy Warr. I, therefore, ask for Deputy Mézec to be brought back into the Chamber.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

During this interval, I do not think I am the only one but there is another dog whistle noise, it has been ...

The Bailiff:

I may not have the same canine credentials because I cannot hear it myself. **[Laughter]** But if there is then we are going to reach a natural break fairly shortly, Deputy, and perhaps we will see what can be done about it then.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am extremely grateful.

The Bailiff:

Very well. As both candidates have spoken and have answered questions, we now move to the vote. As there are 2 candidates, the electronic voting system will be used. Any Member wishing to vote for Deputy Mézec should press the P button and any Member wishing to vote for Deputy Warr should press the C button. Members retain the option of abstaining if they wish to do so, in respect of which they should of course press the A button. I invite Members to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The voting is now open. I ask Members to cast their votes, press P if you are voting for Deputy Mézec and C if you are voting for Deputy Warr. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South: 31	Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South: 10	Abstain: 6
Connétable of St. Helier	Connétable of St. Mary	Connétable of Grouville
Connétable of St. Lawrence	Deputy S.M. Ahier	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet
Connétable of St. Brelade	Deputy I. Gardiner	Deputy J. Renouf
Connétable of Trinity	Deputy K.L. Moore	Deputy H.L. Jeune
Connétable of St. Peter	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf	Deputy A.F. Curtis
Connétable of St. Martin	Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson
Connétable of St. John	Deputy D.J. Warr	
Connétable of St. Clement	Deputy H.M. Miles	
Connétable of St. Ouen	Deputy M.R. Ferey	
Connétable of St. Saviour	Deputy M.B. Andrews	
Deputy G.P. Southern		
Deputy C.F. Labey		
Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy M.R. Le Hagarat		
Deputy R.J. Ward		
Deputy C.S. Alves		
Deputy I.J. Gorst		
Deputy L.J. Farnham		
Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
Deputy T.A. Coles		
Deputy B.B.de S.V.M. Porée		
Deputy M.R. Scott		
Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy M.E. Millar		
Deputy A. Howell		
Deputy T.J.A. Binet		

Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				

Deputy D. Warr:

Sir, could we have the results read?

The Bailiff:

In just a moment. Firstly, given the voting, I declare that Deputy Mézec has been appointed as Minister for Housing and Communities. **[Approbation]** Yes, do you wish the votes read, Deputy Warr?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Could I just thank Members for their support and that and I look forward to working with people across the Chamber?

[12:30]

7. The Minister for Social Security

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. The next is Minister for Social Security. I suggest we deal with the nomination phase and we will see where we get to before continuing into luncheon adjournment.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am pleased to nominate Deputy Lyndsay Feltham for the position of Minister for Social Security.

The Bailiff:

Is that nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? Very well. There are no other nominations. There is a period of 10 minutes within which Deputy Feltham can speak and then 20 minutes for questions. It seems to me it might be a useful use of time to deal with the 10 minutes of speech and then the luncheon adjournment, if Members are so minded and ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Sir, may I, in the interests of being able to complete this nomination, I am not sure if it is fair on the candidate to split in the middle and I would like to propose we sit until 1.00 p.m. and finish this particular item?

The Bailiff:

That is a matter for Members of course. Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

There is a noise, Sir, that I certainly cannot ... I think I have found out where it is coming from, Sir, audible noise that is very unpleasant and it is ...

The Bailiff:

Can I ask those sitting in the area of Deputy Ozouf, are they aware of an audible noise? Perhaps Members could indicate. Deputy Le Hegarat, are you aware of any? Deputy Ahier, Renouf? No. Are you aware of any noise? Can we turn off that air-conditioner? Thank you. We will turn off that air-conditioner in the hope that that is the issue. Very well. The proposition is that we sit until 1 o'clock to deal with this matter to a conclusion; that has been seconded. Does any Member wish to speak on that proposition? Those in favour of adopting, kindly show. Those against? Very well.

Deputy Feltham, you have 10 minutes or up to 10 minutes in which to address the Assembly and thereafter 20 minutes of questions.

7.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

Firstly, I would like to thank the Chief Minister designate for his nomination and his commitment to welcoming diversity of opinion around his Council of Ministers table. I believe that within the current Assembly this challenge around that table will lead to better outcomes for our community. On a personal level, Social Security is a portfolio that is very close to my heart. I grew up in a single-parent household in social housing and can remember as a young child going with my mother to the Parish Hall to collect the brown envelope that would contain our welfare allowance. Of course, as a young child the reason that memory stuck in my mind the most is that we might stop off at the shop on the way back and get a small paper bag of sweets. My mum went on to be elected herself, joining the Social Security Committee and also become its Vice-President. Discussions around the family table often related to social security policies and my mum's campaigns about the high cost of rented housing and the inadequate old age pension. While the policies at the time needed vast improvement, I think we always expected that future generations might have better opportunities than ours. We certainly did not envisage that working families would be worse off in 2024 or the idea of foodbanks being required on the Island. It is critical that this Assembly comes together with a joint focus on solving the issues associated with such a high cost of living and income inequality. We must work with the third sector and listen to people with lived experience in order to identify unmet needs and make the necessary changes to government programmes and legislation. Importantly, we must also learn from the past and we must challenge the policies, systems and legislation that are not delivering what our community needs. There is important work that is already underway that I wish to continue, and I thank the outgoing Minister for starting that work. Our ability to deliver social benefits efficiently, effectively and accurately is currently impeded by outdated systems and processes. But it is essential to ensure that this transformation programme enables benefits that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of Islanders. They must be flexible and not lead to a computer-says-no scenario or a scene from "I, Daniel Blake". Compassion, human interaction and understanding must be at the centre of our delivery of social benefits. I would like to work in partnership with all Members to ensure that the needs of our constituents are understood. In particular, I would like to work closely with our Constables, who I know have their finger on the pulse when it comes to the needs of their parishioners. Through the knowledge in the Parishes and Deputies' constituency cases we all have experiences to draw upon when it comes to identifying service gaps and improvements. We also need to continue to ensure that we adapt and extend the benefits and support to adults with long-term care needs and their carers. I want to work collaboratively with the Minister for Health and Social Services to ensure that services are available to meet people's long-term care needs. We must also look after our pensioners, particularly those who the States pension is their only source of income and live in relative poverty. But also those who find themselves just above the income threshold for Pension Plus and the Community Costs Bonus. Protection and dignity for workers is also a priority. I will implement the whistleblowing rights passed by the Assembly last year. I will also strive to meet the Assembly's commitment of the minimum wage to be set at two-thirds of the median wage by the end of the year. In order to do this and to work towards a living wage, I will work collaboratively with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, industry representatives and the Employment Forum, as well as third-sector partners like Caritas. I will also seek advice from industry and union leaders about further improvements that can be made to our Employment Law. I am committed to ensuring that our government services are inclusive and accessible. I will champion the disability strategy, as well as work to ensure that our Discrimination Law meets the needs of our society. I was disappointed that the outgoing Government rescinded the last Assembly's commitment to remove G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax) from period products, which I personally view as a discriminatory tax. I will endeavour to improve the current offering and availability of free period products and seek the views of community and equality representatives, as well as suppliers, as to

how best to take this project forward. I also value Scrutiny and the role that it plays. I will seriously consider the recent recommendations made by the Health and Community Services Scrutiny Panel about income support overpayments and also the Work Permit Policy Review Panel about the effect our policies have on migrant workers. I commit to working collegiately with Scrutiny and the Public Accounts Committee to make our policies, legislation and administration the best it can be. We are a rich Island and we should be ashamed that working families are telling us that they have to choose between heating and eating and that there are queues outside our local foodbanks. We have to work together within the Assembly to overcome this. I hope that the Assembly will place its trust in me to lead on that work. [Approbation]

The Bailiff:

There is a period now of 20 minutes.

7.1.1 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

We heard quite a few commitments from the candidate but will the candidate commit to continue the work of the outgoing Minister for Social Security to advance the Jersey Pension Saver or Secondary Pension Scheme?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I have reviewed the outgoing Minister's Ministerial Plan. It is of course very high level and I am not aware of the details of what that particular scheme looks like. I am looking forward to hearing from policy officers about what is planned and looking at the detail, so that I can decide how to prioritise that piece of work.

7.1.2 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

That piece of work is advanced and there is a programme for implementation. Does the candidate see any obstacles to bringing that piece of legislation before the Assembly before the end of this political term?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As I have not had the benefit that the questioner has had of seeing all of the details about that piece of work and the implementation plan, it would be impossible for me to know at this point what those obstacles might be. But of course, as the Deputy and the Assembly will be well aware, I am a details person and I will indeed be asking for that implementation plan so that we can move forward as quickly as possible.

7.1.3 Deputy H. Jeune:

Will the candidate continue with all the Ministerial Plans for 2024 and, if not, what parts will she change?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Thank you for the question. As I have said to the previous questioner, I have reviewed the Ministerial Plan for 2024. The information that is available to me is very high level. While it all looks good on paper at the moment, I do need to review the details in conjunction with officers to see where priorities lie. I think one thing I will say at this point is one of the first things that I will do is ask to see the Risk Register so that I can prioritise according to where the highest risks and highest needs may well be.

7.1.4 Deputy H. Jeune:

Would the candidate change the response to the Scrutiny review into the income support overpayments and, if yes, what parts would she change?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I was disappointed, and I have said that publicly, with the response to the Scrutiny review on overpayments. I need to understand why the Minister had made that response and whether there was any information that was available to the Minister that was not available to me at the time. But my moral understanding is that where an overpayment is not the fault of somebody, really they should not be suffering and being put into a position of financial hardship because of that. I would absolutely want to be avoiding positions where people are in financial hardship because of mistakes made by the Government.

7.1.5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Currently parents can receive 6 weeks of full pay from their employer for parental leave with a further 10 weeks per parent of statutory parental allowance from the Government. How long does the candidate think that parents should be financially supported to care for their children at home?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I would be quite willing to do some work with other Deputies. I know Deputy Doublet feels very strongly about parental leave. I, myself, took a good lot of parental leave off when I had my child in Australia, where the provision was much better. I do believe that provision needs to be improved. But of course, what we do need to do is work with industries, work with union representatives and be collaborative about what a solution may be that is workable for everybody. But I am absolutely supportive of supporting parents to take the necessary time off in early years.

7.1.6 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

The previous Minister had just started a long overdue review as a result of a proposition by myself. Does the candidate commit to continuing with that and making sure that it is a robust review that includes the views of both businesses and families, so that all needs can be accommodated?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, absolutely.

7.1.7 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I would like to thank the Deputy for the work that she has done as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and would like to know how she might be bringing some of the Comptroller and Auditor General's recommendations into her work to provide value for money for taxpayers.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank the Deputy for her question. It was my experience with the Public Accounts Committee that makes me realise that one of the first things I need to do is look at the Risk Register. Also, due to that experience, I also know that the other thing I need to do is look at the previous recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and also Scrutiny, so that we can prioritise. I know that there are a number of outstanding recommendations across Government, so we do need to look at where there are recurring themes and where the greatest risk lies.

[12:45]

7.1.8 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Is the Deputy committed to producing value for money in terms of delivering the outcomes that she wishes to deliver?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, I am absolutely committed to delivering value for money. One of the projects that I am keen to look at with officers is the current programme around I.T. (information technology) delivery. I am

incredibly aware that the current I.T. infrastructure for Social Security is outdated. But what I am keen to do is ensure that we are operating that programme as efficiently and effectively because we know that there are risks associated with I.T. projects and I think it is important that we learn from the past.

7.1.9 Deputy H. Miles:

Currently adult children with autism and complex related needs who reside with their parents are not entitled to any rental component to their income support. Parents are also not considered to be preferred providers of care and are, therefore, unable to access any element of long-term care allowance to support their children in the family home. Does the Deputy consider this to be fair and reasonable, given that such parents are saving the States hundreds of thousands of pounds per year?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank the Deputy for her question. No, I do not personally think that that is fair or reasonable. I have been working, indeed my Government Plan amendment that was successful was around providing support for families with children with life-limiting illnesses, and through the work that I did with that I did start to engage with some of the charities that work with families. I would also like to engage more broadly with other charities that are working with other people with more complex needs, such as Autism Jersey.

7.1.10 Deputy H. Miles:

I thank the candidate for her answer. Will she undertake a consultation to address this issue as a matter of urgency?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think the best thing that I can do is speak with the third-sector agencies and then plan what the next stage might be and what such a form of consultation would look like. I obviously have not had the benefit of seeing the departmental operational plan or further details on the Ministerial Plans. But I will undertake to meet with those third-sector agencies as soon as possible, so that I can assess that need and work out where we can prioritise it.

7.1.11 Deputy A. Howell:

Will the candidate bring back a proposition to take G.S.T. off period products?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am of course mindful that it was an Assembly decision to rescind the previous decision. I have said publicly that I am concerned that some Members of the Assembly may well have felt that the free period products project may have been more successful at this point in time than it has been. It is certainly something that I would welcome a conversation with the Chief Minister and around the table at the Council of Ministers about.

7.1.12 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:

I was encouraged to hear that the candidate was prepared to work with the Constables to address the needs of those within our community. I am sure, along with some of my fellow Constables, we share a common frustration that with the move from welfare to Social Security, which I do not disagree with, that we have lost contact with some of our community who perhaps through pride do not make it known to us that they are in need. I would welcome the opportunity to work to see if we can break down some of those barriers to improve that situation for the well-being and welfare of our community. Does the potential candidate agree?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I wholeheartedly agree and I look forward to working with the Constables.

7.1.13 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

The Deputy mentioned the Disability Strategy in her speech. In what ways will the Deputy prioritise the welfare of Jersey's 16,000 people with disabilities?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Disability access and inclusion is another subject that is close to my heart and an area that I have touched upon within my previous work in Australia. I learnt a lot within that experience around partnership working and I think it is really important that all government departments work in partnership to see the disability strategy that is important to all departments and not just one. Again, I did not want to pre-empt today but I have been thinking about some of the steps that I would like to take in my first few weeks of office. One of those would be to meet with the team that is responsible for implementing the disability strategy and identify what barriers there may well be to implementation of that strategy and indeed if the strategy is still in the right place and needs to have any reviews done of it.

7.1.14 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Will the Deputy consider allowing for more flexibility at Social Security to allow for people's individual needs and circumstances?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, I would. I think Social Security should be the department that is the most inclusive and should be leading the way for all other departments. But that should be going for every single government service, which is why I brought the amendment that I did to the last Common Strategic Policy.

7.1.15 Deputy G.P. Southern:

It follows on from the previous answer. But when I first came across Social Security way back when, 25 years ago - I think it may have been in the time of the candidate's mother - I would always say that when you were in need of help, of the 3 arms that you could turn to, which was housing, social security and the Parish, you could guarantee that the best treatment you would get when you were seeking help was from the Social Security Department. Sadly, I think that is no longer the case. Does the candidate agree with me that it is time for a refresh of the culture of the Social Security in order to make sure that it is comprehensive and inclusive?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think that we need to ensure that the staff working with the departments are supported and empowered to work in a compassionate way with the people that come through their doors. I am aware that of course the current structure that we have was part of the One Government structure where Customer and Local Services was to be seen as the one front door. I think perhaps some of the focus on some of those other services is taking some of the focus away from Social Security and what the needs of people coming through the doors of the Social Security Department might be. I think also in my constituency work one thing that I have observed is that there does not appear to be an easy front-door access where people can find what pathways are suitable for them. The clear pathways between other departments, such as C.Y.P.E.S., Children's Services or Health, so that people's needs are assessed as a whole.

7.1.16 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does discretion have a role to play in the running of the Social Security Department?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think one message I would like to give the officers within the Social Security Department would be that if a decision feels morally wrong, if they are getting instances where they are feeling that the

decision according to the legislation does not feel right to them, I would absolutely want to know. I was talking in my speech earlier about identifying the gaps. If the staff on the front line do not feel empowered to tell the Minister what the gaps in provision that they are noticing are, then I think that that leads to greater gaps. Coming back to the point about discretion, I think that discretion is important in some cases because the legislation is very black and white and, let us face it, people's circumstances are not that clear cut.

7.1.17 Deputy A. Curtis:

The Barriers to Business report highlighted social security payments as an obstacle to employers, both for those looking for transition and part-time employment, as well as those looking for an entrepreneurial entrance into the workplace from employed to self-employed. Will the candidate be looking into working with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development on refining class 2 contributions and lower earning limits to help better serve the workforce with social security?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am a collaborative worker and a team player, so I would absolutely be working with other Ministers and would welcome work with the Minister for Sustainable Economic.

7.1.18 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I welcome an approach from the designated Minister for Social Security for identifying the gaps and work through the gaps. One of the gaps that I would like to raise with the Minister, it is the difference of the support from the family members who are adopting children that do not receive any support to the families that are not family members that are adopting children. This lies with the Minister for Social Security. Will the Minister for Social Security be willing to look into procedures if it is on the policy or low, and to address this unfairness?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes.

7.1.19 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Some of the families that are adopting, they are looking into the living wage and I know that the designate Minister mentioned, would the candidate expand on the plans to introduce living wage?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I cannot at the moment because I have not had the opportunity to sit around the table with other Ministers and discuss that. Like I said within my speech, I think that we need to take a collaborative approach to the introduction of the living wage. We need to work with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and we need to ensure that industries that might be affected have the confidence that we will back them up, so that they can remain sustainable.

7.1.20 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Would the candidate look into the S.L.A.s (service level agreements) of the department, if successful, in order for the work of the department to prioritise quality and accuracy, rather than quantity?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank the Deputy for her question. Yes, looking at the service level agreements for the department is something that I am absolutely open to doing. I would also seek to look at the key performance indicators to identify whether they are the best key performance indicators to lead to the type of Island outcomes that we, as a States Assembly, would want.

The Bailiff:

Supplementary question, Deputy? There is one minute left. Are there any other questions for Deputy Feltham? No other questions, then ... Deputy Kovacs, you have another question. You now have 54 seconds left to ask and answer.

7.1.21 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

She stated in her speech she would want to prioritise support for pensioners, in what way does she want to do that?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Again, talking about potential gaps, I think that there are a number of pensioners that do fall into a gap whereby they pay a small amount of income tax, which means that they are then not able to qualify for other benefits, such as Pension Plus. I think that is one of the first places that I would want to look. As the Greffe States staff know, that is one of the areas I was looking at when I was a Backbencher as well.

The Bailiff:

Supplementary question? Very well. There are now 8 seconds left. Deputy Farnham, I am assuming you do not want to ask a question.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, Sir. I am eager to propose the adjournment.

The Bailiff:

Very well. Then that brings the period of questions and the speeches to an end. I can confirm that Deputy Feltham has been selected for appointment as Minister for Social Security. **[Approbation]** Is the adjournment proposed?

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

The Assembly stands adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:59]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:15]

8. The Minister for International Development

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Next on the list, Chief Minister designate, is the Minister for International Development. Would you like to make your nomination?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am pleased to nominate Deputy Caroline Labey for the position of Minister for International Development.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? Very well, if there are no other nominations I will invite Deputy Labey to speak for up to 10 minutes, after which there will be a question period for a further 20 minutes.

8.1 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin:

Today is definitely a day of mixed emotions. I am a little sorry to be here again less than 2 years after this Assembly elected me Minister for International Development in 2022. Today, as then, I rise to make the case as to why I should continue in the job I have come to love so much and ask you not to change your Minister for International Development, and to grab a bit of stability where you can. It hardly needs stating but we live in an increasingly unstable world. Working to help people in some of the poorest places and most volatile troubled spots on earth. I am acutely aware of how changeable and turbulent life can be and sometimes that instability can even rear its head here in Jersey. It is true it has been a tough few weeks in politics and indeed for anyone who cares about Jersey, so now might be a good time to remind Members that they should be proud of all the things Jersey does really well. Without a single shadow of doubt one of the things Jersey does exceedingly well is international development. Jersey's Overseas Aid programme is undoubtedly one of our Island's leading success stories. We have lifted hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty, engaged thousands of Islanders in the most rewarding work, and helped to change the narrative about Jersey across the globe. We have done this by focusing on the Island's strengths and concentrating the provision of aid in 3 areas where we already lead the world. There is so much to be proud of here, not just for me but for all of us, so I would like to take a couple of minutes to give you some details and also to set out what I would like to do if you allow me to continue this work. First of all, one of the key strategic changes we have made to Jersey's aid programme since I became Minister 5½ years ago is the focus on helping others; not just with financial aid but by using our own skills where we can to add real value. In partnership with some of the world's best aid agencies from Comic Relief to the U.N. (United Nations) to the World Bank we are bringing basic financial services like savings and credit to hundreds of thousands of the previously unbanked, with a special focus on women. Meanwhile, in partnership with Durrell, we have pioneered an entirely new discipline called Conservation Livelihoods. This focuses on the connection between poverty and environmental destruction. This allows us to save species and habitats while creating sustainable livelihoods for poor people. This is where dozens of national parks and tens of thousands of people have moved from vicious circles of grinding poverty and habitat destruction into virtuous ones where restored ecosystems nurture the poor and vice versa. The last area of Jersey's expertise we focused on is dairy. Our dairy experts at the R.J.A. and H.S. (Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society) are helping tens of thousands of smallholder dairy farmers increase their milk yields where I have extended programmes to Rwanda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Nepal and now Zambia. Our beloved Jersey cow is playing a star role in this. If you elect me I promise that the Jersey cow will be the passport out of poverty and food insecurity for many more poor families around the world. Indeed, if you elect me we will continue to expand these portfolios using Jersey's unique talents to help others and develop our global reputation in the process. Secondly, we have created more opportunities for Islanders to help others less fortunate than ourselves. It is not just the fact that we received overseas aid in 1945 that makes people from Jersey generous; we are generous by nature, although we do need to know how our money is being spent. Since I last stood in front of you for re-election we have restarted our volunteering programme and this year we will send more Islanders abroad on community work projects than ever before. We are also advertising for our tenth intern and are about to send our fourth young Islander on a 2-year work placement for the U.N. If elected, I will ensure we provide even more opportunities for Islanders to get involved. This year we are also on course to give more support than ever before to local charities working abroad like Durrell, Hands Around the World and the Gurkhas. Thirdly, in partnership with the U.N., the U.K., the Bailiff's office and Side by Side we have honed our ability to respond rapidly and effectively to humanitarian emergencies. We now utilise pooled funding mechanisms to ensure Jersey's aid is accessible within hours of it being needed in places like Yemen, Syria, South Sudan and the Horn of Africa. We have been at the forefront of aiding the Ukraine in its hour of need, making sure public donations as well as government money gets to the right organisations at the right time and is properly accounted for. On

my watch, Jersey Overseas Aid has gone from an amateur, kitchen table organisation to a professionally-staffed donor agency. We do exemplary due diligence on our partners, we monitor and measure our impact and we know exactly where every penny goes. There was a time not long ago that we were rated in need of urgent improvement by internal audit. We now have a perfect score, and we do it on 4 per cent overheads, which is around half the international average. I have delivered on every single one of my Ministerial pledges for 2023 and we are a long way towards delivering all the objectives we set out in our 5-year strategy published in 2022. What is more, this has been achieved from a backdrop of the J.O.A. (Jersey Overseas Aid) workplace which is now the highest rated government body in the Island as we score 896 out of 1,000 for employee satisfaction compared to a States average of 631; a rating described as world class. If you elect me to finish my term I will do exactly what I promised when I stood here in June 2022. Working with my fellow commissioners I will expand our impact, promote our Island identity, and increase Jersey's reputation in a very good way around the world. **[Approbation]**

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Thank you, Deputy Labey. There now follows up to 20 minutes of questioning and first on my list I have Deputy Howell.

8.1.1 Deputy A. Howell:

Please could the candidate explain to all Islanders why Jersey should give overseas aid?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Jersey is a wealthy jurisdiction and back in 1970 the wealthy jurisdictions around the world made a commitment to the poorer countries that they would help and support them. The obvious goal was 0.7 per cent of G.D.P. (gross domestic product). We have not achieved that but we are slowly working towards it. We have managed to fix our budget to G.D.P. so when the economy grows our budget grows with it, and likewise if our economy shrinks so does our budget. But it is a longstanding commitment to assist the world's poor.

8.1.2 Deputy H. Jeune:

J.O.A.'s current strategy talks about focusing on upstreaming to contribute to systemic long-term change. What types of programmes or projects has J.O.A. moved to since adopting the strategy that contributes to more systemic change?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

We believe the thematic programmes that we have chosen lead to that. All our programmes are sustainable, they are no longer a scattergun approach and we do them with the hope that one day we do not have to do them, so we ensure that all our programmes are sustainable.

8.1.3 Deputy H. Jeune:

In light of criticism within the international development community surrounding white saviourism and concerns about perpetuating a form of colonialisation in international development, how does J.O.A. actively involve and prioritise the voices, concerns and decisions of local communities in the countries it has prioritised?

Deputy C.D. Labey:

We work with the communities. We like to feel that we do not go in there and impose things on a community. We always work with the communities themselves in the hope that we eventually work with the Governments of those countries. We do not give any money; we are not a bilateral donor, we do not give our money to Governments. We work with the communities that we are supporting.

8.1.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The candidate said if she is elected; well, she is going to be the Minister so we can ask positive questions. I have a declaration of interest, having worked for J.O.A., but many of the issues that she raised in her brilliant speech, if I may say, having improved J.O.A. to the lengths she has I can absolutely recognise that. What she did not say - and maybe she could help us in her answers - is she is going to be the Minister for International Development with all of those controls in J.O.A. which so splendidly she has spoken about, but the other thing that I recall her in the last Government and the previous Government was she was also a passionate advocate of working with External Relations about the Jersey identity. Is she going to take that same driving zeal about the Jersey identity project, and how will she work with her new colleague - who will not be me - the Minister for External Relations to develop that Jersey identity around the world, which is not just about financial services?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Indeed it is not. I would like to thank the Deputy for his complimentary comments. I would very much like to pursue the Island identity project and have it filter down through many departments. I have been doing my best to get them to recognise the importance of it. But certainly there is a lot of synergy with the External Relations Department. Some ideas or some recommendations that we had in the original Island identity document was to set up the Jersey diaspora, the networking globally that could assist Jersey in many ways. It could assist Jersey people living abroad and help them in whatever way we can. We have ideas about putting out a newsletter so more people are informed about what we are doing and we can keep in contact, as I say, with the diaspora. Also with ambassadors; we would like to promote anyone to be Jersey's ambassador, whether that be front line staff in hospitality, whether that be business people representing the Island abroad.

[14:30]

We would like to give them the basic knowledge about our constitution and what we are about so they can be our ambassadors. There is a lot of work to be done but a lot with External Relations as well.

8.1.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

(4 seconds of French spoken) but I cannot because it would be unfair to most States Members. Does the Minister designate agree that the work of External Relations is more than just simply talking to the current party in the U.K.; that it is more than that, and what would her recommendations be to the new Government which is going to be incoming about the scale of opportunities. We see the tectonic plates of the world changing with elections in the U.K., U.S. (United States) and across Europe. How does she plan to advance the interest of those issues which she has so clearly explained?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I always felt post-Brexit Jersey has got to carve its own way in the world. We cannot just rely on Whitehall or Brussels; we have got to stand our own. The Jersey Overseas Aid programmes and the themes that we have chosen, drawing on Jersey's expertise in dairy, financial inclusion and conservation we feel promote these as well as offering expertise and bringing value to our programmes. But certainly in Africa, Jersey is known for the Jersey cow. In Madagascar we are known for our work in conservation with the work that we do with Durrell there. I am proud that we have an enormous financial services industry over here, of course we do, but I think it is good that we are not only servicing wealthy people; we are now servicing the poor with our financial inclusion programmes across the world.

8.1.6 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

The Minister mentioned earlier several countries, quite a few of which are either in or very close to conflict zones. We all know what is happening with the Ukraine, obviously Israel, Gaza, and

obviously problems in the Red Sea now. Does this complicate matters for the Minister to get emergency aid through to where it is very badly needed?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

It is always complicated getting aid to troubled areas, and that is why we use partners on the ground that we are used to working with. We feel that they have extensive experience in working in troubled areas. They are our eyes and ears on the ground and they know when it is appropriate to take aid in, what is needed, and they feed that back to us. But it is a very hard task they have got and obviously some areas are worse than others. But the emergency humanitarian aid is different to our sustainable projects.

8.1.7 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

The Minister mentioned working with local agencies but is the Minister also working with organisations like Red Cross, Red Crescent, U.N., and just supplying them with money to get aid through where it is needed?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Yes, absolutely. As I alluded to in my speech, we do huge amounts of due diligence on our partners and the ones he mentioned, Red Cross, Red Crescent, U.N., Save the Children, other organisations, it would depend which areas, wherever there is an emergency. Some of the bigger agencies work better in different jurisdictions, so we have about 10 of the larger agencies on our books, so to speak, and we choose the ones that are most suited in a particular jurisdiction.

8.1.8 Deputy H. Miles:

There are an unprecedented amount of humanitarian crises going on around the world. How does J.O.A. prioritise which crises to support and how do they measure the impact that that support has on vulnerable communities?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

As I said, we work with about 10 large agencies who focus on humanitarian crises and they report back to us about the needs and what they feel is required. The officers assess all the requests we get and come forward to the Commission with recommendations. Ultimately it is the 6 commissioners that make a decision as to which communities we support and what we should be giving them and how much.

8.1.9 Deputy H. Miles:

I think the Deputy has answered how J.O.A. prioritise those crises to support, but the statistics show that 14 crises were funded in 2023 to a total of about £3.5 million; how do small amounts of money split between many crises have an impact on local communities?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

That is a very good question. We split our budget; we allocate about 25 per cent of our budget for humanitarian emergency need at the start of the year. Obviously as the year goes on if there are more crises we can move the budget around. We have various ways of funding emergencies; one is with pooled funds. We have got certain organisations like U.N.O.C.H.A. (United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs) that we give monies to and they have got a pool of money and they will allocate those monies and report back to us where it is, and the Commission overseas that. We also fund an organisation called Start. Now, this was set up to fund smaller emergencies that we do not necessarily hear about on the national TV, and they are not so widely reported on. One of the persons that set that organisation up has now become a Jersey resident, she is married to a Jerseyman and she lives over here so we are blessed to have her to advise us. But also that

organisation funds the smaller, less-known emergencies and obviously we fund the monies direct as well.

8.1.10 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The term “international development” can be interpreted in a number of different ways. We know of the work gone into the African continent and indeed Ukraine, but coming further into Europe how does the Minister propose to relate, shall we say, to the closer Europe, the neighbours we have nearby, whether it be France, Italy, Germany and the closer countries. What is her policy with regard to those please?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

In order for international aid to be deemed as international aid it is known as official development assistance. The O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries define which countries are poor countries and in fact we choose the countries we support for our sustainable projects by taking the humanitarian development index. We choose the bottom 50 countries in the humanitarian development index and divide that by the corruption perception index squared; we feel that we should not be funding countries with a high corruption index because obviously I have got to justify the funding to the Jersey taxpayer. We also pick Anglophile countries because it is quite handy in order to read the reports that we get back. So the countries are on the humanitarian development index, the poorest 50 of the world, and they are the least corrupt. We feel by going into fewer countries that is when we can achieve the most impact.

8.1.11 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could the Minister expand on where we are with regard to aid in Ukraine, which is probably a humanitarian issue rather than anything else?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Well, where we are, it is still an emergency humanitarian need there. Jersey has funded the Ukraine with not only Overseas Aid monies but also the Bailiff’s Fund and the generous people of Jersey have donated. We have so far sent £3.4 million worth of aid to the Ukraine. As issues come up we have still got some funding out there. We are training women in minesweeping, and various other humanitarian projects. It is an ongoing situation so I guess the funding will be ongoing unfortunately.

8.1.12 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Can the Minister highlight what she thinks were the main achievements in the last 18 months?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Probably setting our budget so that the increase ... when I took over as Minister, the budget was going down, which is not a good look for a wealthy Island. So 5½ years ago we set it so that we connected it to the G.D.P. and set it so that our budget goes up by 0.1 per cent per annum to the end of this Government Plan, and then hopefully we will have another debate about it and see what we do. So that I think is what was one of my achievements. Sorry, that was not in the last 18 months, but it has been going up slowly in the last 18 months as well, so we are more aligned to the O.E.C.D. average. I think as well, setting the themes. In the last couple of years, we have crafted an aid programme so in the last 2 years we are helping 325,000 more people than we were 2 years ago in our projects. Yes, I cannot really think of any more, sorry.

8.1.13 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Where does she think she could do better in this term if she continues?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I think everyone can always do better and you need to keep a broad mind on that and look out for learning opportunities. But probably, and obviously during the pandemic that was a difficult time for overseas aid, but we used the time to look at our back-office stuff, our internal audit and that sort of thing. So now everything is up to speed and we are very proud of our back office and our staff survey, and now I think probably what we could do better is tell more people about us, tell our stories so that all school children know about what we do, the career opportunities, the public know what we do and can be justly proud of what Jersey achieves.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

There is less than 10 seconds on the clock, I am afraid, so I think that draws to an end the question time. There being no other nominations and as the speech and period of questions have been completed, I can confirm that Deputy Labey has been selected for appointment as Minister for International Development. **[Approbation]**

9. The Minister for Infrastructure

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Do you wish to make your nomination, Chief Minister, for the Minister for Infrastructure?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I do. I am very pleased to nominate the Connétable of St. John for the position of Minister for Infrastructure.

[14:45]

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? Very well, there being no other nominations, I call upon the Connétable of St. John to make a 10-minute speech.

9.1 Connétable A. Jehan of St. John:

I have given this position a lot of thought prior to allowing my name to go forward. Clearly it is a diverse portfolio and perhaps we all need to remember the strap line of the department; keeping the Island running. The team is dedicated to making things happen 24 hours a day, 365 - or 6 this year - a year. I offer myself for election with nearly 3 years' experience in this Assembly, having been a member of the Public Accounts Committee, the Hospital Review Panel, and G.S.T. review. I have also now had the privilege of being an Assistant Chief Minister and Vice-Chair of the States Employment Board. To this role, I would also bring a lot of relevant experience from a variety of senior roles in business and the third sector, including extensive experience in transport and logistics. While I feel I bring a lot to the role, I do not underestimate the amount I will have to learn and learn quickly. I would like to pay tribute to Deputy Binet, who I believe has done a good job during his time at Infrastructure, and I would aim to carry on the good work that he has started. I will try to cover most of the areas in the department. Transport: in my previous life I have run large fleets. I am aware of the many challenges and costs associated with this. Eight years ago, I successfully introduced electric vehicles to a fleet and 4 years ago renewable diesel. So, I am fully supportive of the department's work in this area. I will work with the new group that has been set up to review operators' licences and move forward. I hope we can get resolution in this area with a light touch approach. Road safety: like most I am a car driver. I am also a bus user, a cyclist, and a walker. I wrote an article in 2019 entitled *Is it time for Government to get serious about cycling in Jersey*. I have had the pleasure of attending a couple of local workshops with the Dutch Cycling Embassy and, having attended these workshops, I am sure there are some quick wins to be had. I will continue the work that has started on reviewing the feasibility of e-scooters and we will look to expand this to

review the potential for electric bikes that are unrestricted but would require a licence plate and insurance, as is the case in Switzerland. If we look at the total success story of Les Landes School, who absolutely encourage families to walk and cycle to school, we should be trying to replicate this right across the Island. Only last week I was shocked to receive a report that had been written 2 years ago from my local school in St. John. I was shocked because the Parish has been working with Infrastructure for many years and we had not been made aware of this work, let alone seen the report. We have to be able to make decisions on a more timely manner. Consultations, of course, are important, but we also need to see action. Public transport: I am a big fan of our current bus operator, LibertyBus. I think they have done a great job and I was happy to support the introduction of student bus passes. I am also a supporter of the hopper bus, having utilised the loop bus for the Island Games in 2015; I am fully aware of the potential. I believe that we need to do far more to promote this service so as to increase ridership. With 24 per cent of St. Helier residents who work in town using their car to get to work, clearly there is room for improvement. In general, as someone who uses the buses, I find the buses to be clean and the drivers to be helpful and while we have an ambitious target to electrify the service, which LibertyBus have already started to invest in, we should not underestimate the benefits of encouraging people to use the bus, especially against single car occupancy. During this cost-of-living crisis it is also worth noting the financial benefits from using the bus, something again that should be promoted. I have long advocated that there should be a circular bus route across the northern parishes, and I would like to see how this could be achieved, especially now we have the Enid Quenault Centre at Les Quennevais. Waste: the solid waste strategy needs to be revised, as it is almost 20 years old. Having been involved in the first Parish to recycle in 2006, I look at our kerbside recycling rates and look to Guernsey with envy. We have to do better and I will work with the team and the Connétables to try to achieve this. The La Collette planning issue needs to be resolved to give the industry confidence. Liquid waste: we have seen £15 million identified over the next 2 years to increase capacity. Many of my former colleagues from St. John have tried to get increased investment in this area from the outside. I will do my best to convince my colleagues on the Council of Ministers that this is just the start and that we need to invest in our infrastructure on an ongoing basis. The recent Scrutiny Bridging Liquid Waste review contains some excellent recommendations, and the department need to review those and come back with a response. Stakeholder engagement was one of the key points I found to come through in there. I will look to work with the Minister for the Environment and explore how we can include grey water in new builds to reduce the amount of water that goes into the system. Sports facilities: I am aware that Deputy Stephenson has done some good work in this area. A town skate park needs to be delivered as soon as possible. Oakfield should start in quarter one this year. There are also exciting plans for the FB and, if we are to be serious about hosting the Island Games again in the future, we will need to secure funding for this. I would like to explore a central booking system to combine Infrastructure sports facilities with our school facilities. I had discussed this with the former chief executive of Jersey Sports as it works well in other areas, and I look forward to working with colleagues from Education to ensure that our Island assets work for all Islanders. Property: this is a very large area of the portfolio and, just like our drains, we have under-invested in this asset. I am told we have some 800-plus properties ranging from German bunkers to castles, with some 260 described as active buildings, such as offices, schools, et cetera. The continued issue for Property Holdings is the widening gap in the condition of the estate and the maintenance funding. This is being compounded by the ever-increasing requirement for statutory and regulatory compliance. The department finds itself spending a greater proportion of the available funds in making the buildings safe, leaving even less funds for business-as-usual maintenance, which means we are effectively overseeing a deteriorating estate. We need to take pride in our properties and look at ways of increasing efficiency. We need to take a longer-term view of our estate and work with Treasury on a sustainable funding model that sees our properties retain their value rather than decrease in value due to the lack of maintenance. I will be trying to convince my colleagues on the Council of Ministers that the financial benefits we gain from the new office headquarters are reinvested into our existing property portfolio, either in full or in part.

While the department is ahead of its targets in decarbonising its fleets, there is a lot of work to do with the estate. We own some very old buildings. We are sat in one now and we have seen the challenges this morning. These will require investment. St. Helier: parking is a genuine issue in St. Helier for residents, workers and visitors. While being committed to making other forms of transport more accessible, we cannot ignore the fact that for a vibrant capital we need to provide the facilities. The previous Minister started some good work with the markets and, working with the Constable of St. Helier, this is an area I would like to see progress along with the Lido at Havre des Pas. Another area that I will look to work on with my colleagues is on some of the key regeneration tasks concerning access to town, including bringing forward the very overdue strategies for walking, cycling, bus travel, and parking. Implementing essential walking and cycling routes, and improving the public realm in the town centre is something I intend to work closely with the Connétable of St. Helier on. In closing, I would like to pay tribute to the team at Infrastructure. I certainly hope that I can work with them to ensure that together we can keep the Island running. Thank you.

[Approbation]

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Thank you, Connétable. I invite questions from the Chair. The first light I saw on was yours, Deputy Ozouf.

9.1.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Connétable will have been in the Assembly with the previous Bridging Island Plan and he has rightly said about the issues to do with drainage. We are, as of today, I am sure the Minister designate is aware, there is not a single spade in the ground in relation to any of the rezoned sites. Would he kindly advise, as a new member of the Council of Ministers, whether he would advocate, given this very challenging issue with infrastructure and sewerage, whether or not there is a case to relooking at some of the areas of the bridging Island Plan and perhaps some of those sites that were the preferred sites that on, perhaps a misunderstanding, were not passed? I am most grateful.

The Connétable of St. John:

Thank you for the question. I am not sure if it is more relevant for the Minister for Planning, but I will give you my view. My view is that we need to do another Island Plan and not run it over for a lengthy period of time. I think we need to work together - Housing, Planning, and myself - to prioritise works, prioritise sites, and that if we cannot find sites that have facilities then we may need to come back to this Assembly with sites that have facilities.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I would say the Constable has answered it brilliantly, thank you.

9.1.2 Deputy J. Renouf:

The candidate spoke about the need for investment in many areas, but not so much about funding. Does the candidate support the development of waste charges as proposed in the Government Plan that has just been passed by the Assembly?

The Connétable of St. John:

Thank you for the question. I am taken back to 2016, the last time that waste charges were discussed by the States and I was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, chairing their Transport and Tourism Committee. At that time, I felt the charges were not targeted enough. They were targeted at the hospitality industry in the main. We have to look at ways of funding. The report that I referred to in my speech identifies a further £52.4 million funding, and we have a massive gap. So, we will have to look at raising funds and I will look to work with my colleagues on how we can do that.

9.1.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

Would he commit to bringing in such charges before the next election?

The Connétable of St. John:

I will do what is right for the Island. For me, it is about needing the monies now, sooner rather than later. It is not about getting re-elected; it is about doing what is right for the Island short term, medium term, and long term.

9.1.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Connétable referred to drains earlier on. I just wondered what his position was with regard to the extension of the main drains network to those properties, which are as yet not connected.

The Connétable of St. John:

Thank you for the question. As someone that represents people in the north of the Island, I am sure that the Constable will know my answer. It is 2024 and we have so many houses and areas that do not have access to mains drains; it is embarrassing for an Island of our wealth. We have to look at different ways of taking waste from properties, whether that is in the traditional way that we do it or looking at modern ways of doing that. At Bonne Nuit we have a different way of doing it with the pumping station there. We have to look for new ways, inventive ways, and I would also add that water is also needed to some of these areas.

9.1.5 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does the Connétable feel he might be considering a sewerage tax in the future?

The Connétable of St. John:

I think I would refer to my earlier answer to Deputy Renouf; we will have to look at ways of funding and see how we can do that. There were suggestions of looking at Jersey Water and amalgamating Jersey Water with our waste water. So, there are a number of different ways, but what we cannot do is delay. We need to get on with this and not worry about election cycles.

9.1.6 Deputy H. Jeune:

What proposals will the candidate bring forward to make Jersey Property Holdings and J.D.C. (Jersey Development Company) work better for the people and communities and environment of Jersey?

The Connétable of St. John:

There are a lot of synergies between the 2. I have spoken about that in the past, but I am not up to date to where those plans currently are. I think we can do a lot more together. I think we have got a lot of duplication. One of the challenges for Property Holdings is recruitment, and I know that S.o.J.D.C. have a lot of talented people. It is about whether or not we can leverage that resource to help both parties.

9.1.7 Deputy H. Jeune:

Watching how hard it was for the former Minister for Infrastructure to get enough funding for all the areas in need, as the candidate has outlined, how will the candidate convince the Council of Ministers to give or get more funding from the current restrained budget to make sure that Jersey Property Holdings makes properties fit for purpose, including increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions?

The Connétable of St. John:

Thank you for the question. Currently, there is no funding for energy efficiency in our buildings and yet we are offering people who can afford to put energy efficiency in their homes subsidies. I think we need to look at the money that we have and look how we use that. Where do we get the best

benefits from? So, we have schools, which are used for several hours a day, for not all year around. Would we get better use out of insulating homes, or do we look at schools? So, there is a lot of work to do in that area and I am very keen to pursue that.

[15:00]

9.1.8 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like to ask the Constable if he will progress as soon as possible with the First Tower playing field delivery for the First Tower School as plans were drafted by the end of 2022, the feasibility study has been done and we just need to progress and make sure that schools have a field.

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for her question. I also thank her for her great support at St. John, where we faced a similar challenge and we hopefully will be delivering the playing field this summer after some many years of trying. I am not familiar with where that project the Deputy mentions is in terms of planning and funding, but it is something I am prepared to look at and get back to the Deputy.

9.1.9 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

What will the candidate do to ensure that the voices of children feature in his work given the Youth Parliament's interest in play spaces and retaining trees around the Island?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for her question. If I can take the 2 parts, we need to do something after Storm Ciarán. Clearly, we have a lot of work to do and we need to work with the whole community, including youngsters. I remember the Millennium project at St. Catherine's when trees were bought for youngsters as a way of celebrating the millennium. So, we need to try to do something like that. My colleague to my right, the Constable of St. Peter, mentioned the work that the Connétables are doing around play areas. We are engaging with an expert, we are trying to work together to make efficiencies, we are looking ... St. Martin has a great example of a built play area, but they also have a great example of a natural play area. The one benefit of Storm Ciarán is there are lots of natural play areas that have been made available to us.

9.1.10 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Could the candidate advise what he will do also to improve safer routes to school and particularly in the area of St. Saviour, which of course has the most concentration of schools in the Island?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for her question. As I mentioned, I am well aware of the time it has taken previously for work to be carried out to make simple changes. I am a great fan in trying things and I call it guerrilla traffic works by using cones instead of laying down pavements. Try things first. One of the challenges the department has had is around recruitment. We have a large reliance on expensive contractors and consultants and I will work with the department to try to reduce this to get some locally employed people so we can make progress.

9.1.11 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Last year, the Assembly approved a proposition I brought to reinstate the Reuse Centre at La Collette. Could the Constable confirm that he will work to bring this to fruition as soon as possible and that he will support all recycling and reuse practices, which benefit the public?

The Connétable of St. John:

I would be very happy to give that commitment. If you follow my social media, you will see once a month I post: "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" because we are very passionate about it in my part of the Island. The La Collette facility is an excellent facility. We can do a whole lot more with the facility.

I believe it is currently out to tender and I look forward to getting that resolved as soon as we practically can.

9.1.12 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

The Connétable mentioned in his speech, quite rightly, the need to invest in properties owned by the States of Jersey. Is he opposed at all to also potentially selling some properties that are owned by the States of Jersey?

The Connétable of St. John:

Not at all. Sometimes you have to divest when you no longer need something. I was shocked yesterday to find a property that is owned by Property Holdings that has a States department in it that pays rent and it has an A.L.O. (arm's length organisation) in the same building that does not pay rent. Clearly something is not correct. There has been a recent review about the condition of properties. I could not tell you where those 260 or 800 properties are, but in a year's time I am sure I could tell you where the vast majority are.

9.1.13 Deputy A. Howell:

Does the Constable have any ideas and thoughts about what he may do with Fort Regent?

The Connétable of St. John:

Like many, I spent a lot of my youth at Fort Regent. I have many happy memories and one of my worst memories when I was thrown in at the deep end by a teacher when we had to do our swimming lesson. But we do have many happy memories. I think it is vital that we retain the soft play area at Fort Regent for young families, unless we can find an alternative venue. I spoke briefly with Deputy Stephenson yesterday and officers. There is a possibility to site a skate park there. They are looking for simple solutions, which are cost-effective and which we can introduce in a phased approach. I need to get up to speed on the current plans, and again it comes back to funding. But I do think we can do things. I understand that the roof is structurally sound. It may need a new cover, but I think we can do a lot of things there and get it back used for the whole community.

9.1.14 Deputy A. Howell:

Does the Constable agree at the moment there is very limited indoor space for children and families and it is really vital that we get on as quickly as we can?

The Connétable of St. John:

I do. We do have a number of facilities. The challenge for a lot of the facilities is the cost of accessing those facilities. We have some terrific facilities around the Island. It is affordable facilities that we need for young families and we need to make sure that what we have works. I spoke earlier about a central booking system for school facilities. We have some amazing facilities around the Island at our local schools, which are totally underutilised. I have enjoyed going to concerts at Haute Vallée. That should be far more utilised. We have sports halls which sit empty night after night, week after week, and we have to do far more to open those up to the community rather than building more additional properties.

9.1.15 Deputy A. Curtis:

I will change my question following Deputy Morel's on public ownership of the estate. The public of the Island have owned an estate for hundreds of years and, if the Minister is happy with disposal of assets, does he also then believe we should be reinvesting in new assets to ensure that this Government owns land for the people of the Island for hundreds of more years.

The Connétable of St. John:

I do and I think my predecessor had started to work on that. I mentioned car parking. We need to provide more car parking, so we need to identify potential sites and go out and make some strategic purchases. We should also be doing the same for homes and other things that we need. Where we have sites, existing sites, buying land next to those sites would make sense for future proofing. We should absolutely look at that and divest of those properties that we do not have a use for and use that money for things that we can use.

9.1.16 Deputy A. Curtis:

That is reassuring. One such site we have is Mont de la Ville, on which Fort Regent sits, which was previously owned by Les Procureurs de la Ville before being purchased by the British, and we only received it back about 80 years ago. Does the candidate believe that we should retain ownership in the public to enjoy for hundreds of years and not split up the site?

The Connétable of St. John:

In general, I agree with that statement, but I do believe that we should look into the possibility of long-term leases potentially for a hotel, which has been discussed. So I would not rule that out but I think overall we should retain the ownership in what is absolutely a key site for the Island.

9.1.17 The Connétable of Trinity:

If I could ask the Constable, I am sure he is not yet up to speed with all of the current plans of the department, but I could advise him that over the last few months I have been working closely with the previous Minister and the then Assistant Minister for Education to deliver some road safety improvements for Trinity School. The plans are in place and funding and the arrangements have previously been agreed. Could I ask him if he would be committed to keeping the department's foot on the pedal to keep this and have this project delivered in the summer recess 2024, as was originally planned?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Connétable for the question. Without knowing the detail, I would like to say yes, but I put a proviso there in case there is something that I am not aware of that would prevent that. As I said earlier, we need to do things quicker. St. John's has been looking at road safety improvements for probably 15 years, so we are a little bit behind my colleague behind me. So, I am aware of the frustrations, the frustrations within the community. You go out to consult, you get people on side, it takes for ever for something to happen and then people change their mind, you have to almost start again. Once we have made some decisions, we need to get on with it. I assure the Connétable that I will do my very best to see that happens this summer.

9.1.18 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Noting the candidate's various references to sporting facilities in his address, could he advise on the extent of Infrastructure's future involvement in the operation of sporting facilities and is there indeed any intention to transfer that area into his department?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Connétable for his question. Sporting facilities is something that I am quite passionate about and, before I joined the Assembly, I was working with a number of people in setting up a facilities group for people who provided sports facilities. I suppose I should declare an interest inasmuch as I am a director of a sporting facility at St. John. We have not had the discussions about the detail. Sport is something I am passionate about, I do know something about, and I look forward to working with the Chief Minister and colleagues in finding a way forward for sport.

9.1.19 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Virtually my question is: does that mean there is a possibility that responsibility for sport might be transferred to Infrastructure?

The Connétable of St. John:

Currently we have sports in facilities in Infrastructure, and part of it is with Sustainable Economic Development. We have not had those discussions and I would not like to commit either way going forward.

9.1.20 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M Porée of St. Helier South:

This question is with regards to Property Holdings and the management of the future development of the markets. Is the Deputy aware of this development and, if so, is he also aware of how the market traders feel presently in terms of insecurity, instability, and dissatisfaction, and how those plans have been imposed upon them and how this is affecting their well-being and their ability to make long-term plans to their business and secure their livelihood? If the Deputy is aware of it, what would he intend to do with regards to communicate with the traders?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for the question. This is an area that I know that the Constable of St. Helier is also very keen in. I am not aware of the issues that the Deputy raises. I am aware that we have just announced late opening for 2 restaurants, opening on Thursday afternoons. I would encourage people to, next time they are in the market, stop, look up, look around, and see what an absolute jewel we have there. I would commit to working with those market traders. I thoroughly enjoy, for example, going to Borough Market in London, and I think we can recreate something on a much smaller scale here where it is a really vibrant, exciting place, where it is a destination, not only for locals, but visitors as well.

9.1.21 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I know that time is very short. The Constable is a seasoned political operator because we have both helped on election campaigns for an individual. Can I just press the candidate, he is obviously going to get the job, what are his red lines about the coalition agreement with Reform? Because he was asked earlier about sewerage tax. In this new Government, where are the red lines? Is it a higher tax or a sewerage tax and has he had any idea about where the red lines in the new Government are going to be, because they will have some?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I think the Deputy probably is unaware of the timescales that have happened since last week's changes. There has been no discussion about liquid waste, any other waste, any taxes, any charges. There has been no discussion whatsoever. I have an open mind going into this. I think what we need to do is realise that we have areas of our infrastructure that we have totally underinvested in for many, many years and we need to find a way of funding those, whether that is divesting in property ...

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Saved by the bell there, Connétable.

The Connétable of St. John:

Thank you.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I just asked about higher tax but ...

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

As the speech and period of questions has been complete, I can confirm that the Connétable of St. John has been selected for appointment as Minister for Infrastructure. **[Approbation]**

10. The Minister for the Environment

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Chief Minister, your next candidate.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would like to nominate Deputy Stephen Luce for the position of Minister for the Environment.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Is that nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? Very well, Deputy Luce.

[15:15]

10.1 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin:

Can I start by thanking the Chief Minister designate for his support and putting me forward for this role and also for the support I have received from Members in this Assembly and many people outside of the Assembly. As we all know, it is a short term to the next election, a little more than 2 years before purdah starts again, and this speech may reflect the shortness of that term. But I want to say to Members right at the outset that in many ways, under my leadership, it will be as steady as it goes, a different skipper at the helm, the wind may be coming from a different direction, but I am going to adjust the sails and the tiller, keep the boat moving in the same direction. That direction is doing the best I can with this portfolio for all Islanders. I am going to start, if I might, by talking about farming. I was brought up when it was the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and I want to talk about farming straight off, and I want to go straight to the analogy of brown cows in green fields. For me, the dairy industry is key to our countryside. It provides rotation for our fields. It is a really big part of the picture and I want to keep amending the rural support scheme, which has worked so well recently to protect our Jersey cows. They keep our Island beautiful and I mean to keep it that way. We know that farmers are key to our countryside and the recent devastation they have faced, they are going to need some help with. The only thing I will say about trees is I will do nothing that will hinder anybody planting a tree in the near future. Recently, Members will know, I brought a proposition to the Assembly for more money for farmers. I am going to keep that in mind as they will need continued support to provide increases to biodiversity and betterment of soil quality while keeping our land productive. I want us to produce more local food because food security is vital. We realise, of course, we cannot grow everything in Jersey so imports are also essential. But we are moving towards a countryside with more small holdings and I will encourage those people to invest and to take part in that move away from bigger and bigger farms to more smaller entities. Could I speak very briefly now about fishing and how I would aim to keep our fleet profitable? There must be ways, and I will investigate them, all new ways to make more money for fishermen because it is only when fishing boats are out fishing that they make a living, and it is hugely expensive just to keep a boat tied up in harbour. Having to go out fishing and to make money, you need stocks to catch and to sell and stock management will be key. Obviously, once you have caught those fish, exports and local sales are also a priority and we have to find ways to increase the added value of that product we take out of our water. We are going to need some facilities to do that onshore and I will be looking to other Ministers to help me with that. Brexit was a huge challenge, but we have got through it. We are now managing our local waters, and that is a massive step forward. But exporting is still not as easy as it was before Brexit happened, and I want to continue to do what I can to ease this problem. First of all, I do not want local requirements to be a hurdle and I will do whatever I

can to make the local requirements as simple as possible for fishermen to maintain. But one of the issues we do face is not having a border inspection post in the E.U. close to our waters, and I will continue working on that issue with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and the Minister for External Relations to see what we can do about that. I want to continue to work with our French neighbours, our French cousins, and that is fishermen and politicians alike, because we have worked and fished alongside each other for ever and we need to keep doing that. We need to keep that dialogue working. But I know there is a way of managing and increasing the stock in our waters, but we need to keep our local fleet viable while we get to that position. I can assure fishermen that I will do all I can to keep them in business while we take the steps to safeguard and increase our precious resources. The warming of our oceans is changing the species that we see in our waters, and we need to adjust in order to cope with that. While we are talking about water, that leads me to discussions on a wind farm. This is itself another challenge to our fishing grounds, but we are going to keep this project moving because there are questions - many questions - to be answered before we take the big decision in this Assembly. Why did we want a wind farm? Why did we want to start talking about it? Was it carbon? It cannot really be because replacing one form of sustainable energy with another will not make very much of a difference. Was it about security of power on the Island? If that is the case, we will need to make sure some of that power lands on our shores. There will be infrastructure implications and cost implications for that. Maybe it is just profitability and the money we might raise from taxing the energy that is sold or just leasing the seabed. Either way, there are massive costs involved and it is my view that we would have to look to private money to do that because the risk to our Island might be too great. Finally, there are implications for the Channel Island Energy Grid that we would have to take into account. The last issue I want to talk about generally when it comes to our waters is the Marine Spatial Plan, and I will say straight off the top that it would not have been my top priority, but this work is in progress and it is my intention now to keep it moving. The consultation has just been completed and we need to look at the responses we have had from everyone. I intend to address and resolve the 2 main issues, one of closing some of our well-used and vital fishing areas for our scallop dredgers, and also the question of access to our offshore reefs. I will look to provide solutions that satisfy all sides as challenging as that may be. I am under no illusions how challenging that could well be. I want to talk very briefly about planning and the department. First, I would say design is everything for me. I think we could do so much better on design and I will encourage architects to deliver that. I also want to deliver on the public rail, on schools, and I want to ease the way that the department deals with applications and the service that the department provides. Can we make it simpler? Can we reduce the cost? How can we use building control to speed up the build? I want the department to return to what it was, a department I knew many years ago, a department that said yes, and a department that worked with people to get their applications over the line. One issue that the Minister and I have differed on over the last couple of years is whether we should be redebating the Island Plan in 2 years' time. I am very clear in my view that when we passed the bridging Island Plan it was a 4-year plan and that it should come back in 2026. I will be looking to not impose anything but to discuss with others whether that is still the best thing to do. Is what we have now too complicated? Are there too many policies? One thing we do know is that we need to be passing housing sites that can be built because we know we cannot wait another 6 or 7 years to choose some more sites. I will come back to housing in a moment, if I may, but very quickly, under carbon, I want to look at the Energy Law; it is too outdated. We have to look obviously at transport and housing and reducing gas and oil and carbon emissions. Do we have the electricity and the network to cope with the takeover from these carbon-emitting fuels and we have to look forward to reducing carbon emissions, but we have to do it sensibly. In my view, we cannot, for example, have Islanders getting very cold and freezing in their old historic homes because we do not allow them a sensible form of heating. For me, more carrots and less sticks. Finally, and I wish I had left myself more time, housing. Deputy Gorst, to my right, said in his speech last week affordable housing, we need to get there, to prioritise the big issues. Deputy Mézec spoke of the housing crisis, and Deputy Farnham, the Chief Minister in front of us, affordable housing is

the issue. I completely agree. It has to be addressed. Yes, we are getting on in the north of town with the sites that we have identified, but we need safe walking routes, schools, community facilities, and I commit in the few seconds I have left to working with the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Housing and Communities particularly to resolve these issues. In conclusion, some may say this is a poisoned chalice of a Ministry, but I absolutely do not see it that way. I am hugely enthusiastic about my chance to influence policy on the environment, on our territorial waters, on our countryside. I thank Members and the Chief Minister for his support. **[Approbation]**

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. We now have up to 20 minutes of questions. The first question is from Deputy Jeune.

10.1.1 Deputy H. Jeune:

Last year, the Assembly passed P.14 to introduce a land development tax equivalent charging mechanism to capture the increase in land values that happens when land is rezoned for housing. Will the candidate commit to bringing forward such a tax or charge?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

This is a painful memory for me inasmuch as in my last spell as a Minister for Planning and Environment, I proposed a C.I.L. (community infrastructure levy). It said if somebody got a planning permission to do a large scheme that a small percentage of the uplift in value should be put to a community scheme and improve the Island for everybody else, and I got well and truly hammered on the floor of this Assembly. It is one of those regrets. But I still believe in the principle. If somebody gets an uplift in value through a stamp that comes down in a Planning Department, it costs the States, it costs the department, nothing to do that, but an individual, courtesy of that decision, does get a huge increase in value. I think it is only right that a small amount of that money goes back to the States and in some way, shape and form is used for the benefit of all Islanders. So, I will look at it. But I would say it is still a painful memory of the last time I tried to do this on the floor of the Assembly.

10.1.2 Deputy H. Jeune:

Because it has been already passed as P.14, the candidate will be happy to know, will he commit to ensure that no more fields are brought forward for rezoning until such a charge has been established under P.14?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I have to say to the Assembly that, as I have said literally a few minutes ago, my top priority, along with other Ministers, is housing provision. If I had to make the decision between rezoning another greenfield for housing or waiting for this to come along, I think I would have to go with the housing, to be perfectly honest. Having said that, I do not think if the principle has been passed that some of it should hold us back particularly. I will do my best in short order to ensure that we do get on and get that in place, so that if more fields are rezoned at least there is a mechanism to recover some of that uplift in value.

10.1.3 Deputy L. Stephenson:

The Bridging Island Plan contains a commitment that the Ministers for Environment, Economy and C.Y.P.E.S. will work together on a play strategy for Jersey. What does the candidate interpret his role as being as part of that commitment and how does he intend to play his part to achieve it?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is the Minister for the Environment's job to do work with others as much as he possibly can. As many Members will know, it is not really for the Minister for the Environment or the department to

come forward with those plans, inasmuch as somebody is going to have to make a decision on a potential application in the future. Minister and officers have to stand back in the initial stages to make sure they are not passing too much of a view in case they have to make a final decision and they would conflict themselves. Having said that, I have seen the benefit of the new play area, a wonderful play area we have just had in St. Martin, already being heavily used. I knew through Parish surgeries that it was very much in demand. Areas for play, whether that is for very young children or maybe young teenagers, are vital areas and places they can go outside of school hours, anything to avoid them hanging around with nothing to do. They need to be organised and have these areas. I will do my part and if any other Minister comes forward - and I am looking particularly at the moment at the Minister for Infrastructure - I am sure we would have discussions about moving those forward as quickly as we possibly could.

10.1.4 Deputy L. Stephenson:

I am not quite clear if that means that the Deputy would commit to that commitment in the Bridging Island Plan continuing or his department's involvement with it but perhaps that is a question for another day.

[15:30]

Given what he has just said about play and planning policy and specifically mentioning the St. Martin's project, we have encountered questions around the need for planning permissions for pieces of equipment and the time, cost and process associated with that. Will the candidate commit to review the current rules around play equipment and planning with a view to, potentially, simplifying them and perhaps even allowing more permitted development?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I have always strived where possible to increase the amount of permitted development that any individual on the Island is allowed to do without permission. It is certainly something we can look at. I know that you need to really careful, inasmuch as every time you change a law there will be people who will look to go further than you want them to. But, yes, I agree with the principle of increasing permitted development. Getting back to the play areas, I did make a commitment and I was thinking particularly about the areas in the north of town where we are building housing at the moment on the Mayfair Hotel, Ann Street Brewery, Play.com. We have got the brewery just about to start building. We have to provide open green amenity spaces for these communities particularly. Those of us who are lucky enough to live in the countryside have fields, they have space to move. But green and open play areas for that matter are vital and the more densely populated area, the more important it becomes.

10.1.5 Deputy A. Curtis:

The candidate mentioned in his speech design, and if one walks around St. Helier or travels around the Island they will come across architecture that does not meet the character of the area, does not lift Jersey, whether it be traditional or modern. How does the candidate intend to address improving design quality in new developments and does he think planners are suitably equipped with guidance to assess and enforce this in applications?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

They are design policies in the Island Plan, as the Deputy will know. Any officer that adjudicates on an application is entitled to interpret those policies as they see fit. I am fortunate enough to travel to London on a reasonably regular basis and every time I go there I am amazed and blown away by some of the architecture, some of the design that I see there. I come back to St. Helier and to Jersey and wish that on many occasions we had taken some of that brave design to have some really outstanding architecture. I have said it before, I found it disappointing some of the recent applications in the middle of St. Helier, in the heart of our capital, that are so lacking in outstanding design. I will

go away, I take the Deputy's point. Some sort of modern design may not fit very well in the countryside where granite farmhouses and the like are more typical. But I think it is hugely important that we look at the area of the Island that we are discussing and it may be the first conservation area that the previous Minister has designated or likely to designate at St. Aubin, where you see a character there that we would want to replicate and continue to replicate. But it may be that that particular type of design would not suit another part of town or another part of the Island. I think it is very local, depending where it is. There is certainly some guidance that can be given to officers. But I just go back to the ability to have outstanding and uplifting design in outstanding buildings, in St. Helier is something I would encourage as much as possible.

10.1.6 Deputy A. Curtis:

The candidate referenced some rather disappointing architectural designs in St. Helier but those were approved under Island Plans which had policy, such as GD6 design quality. Does the candidate believe we need to extend or review the remit of the Jersey Architectural Commission and look at the board of that and how we engage them to ensure that these policies are enforced and that when we see new large developments they are something we can be proud of?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I think I would encourage any of these large developments to be put to the Architectural Commission and to be viewed by them and to get their reaction. We have some very, very good people on that group and they are there to advise applicants as to where they might improve. Certainly when I meet them I will certainly stress my own desire to maybe look at design and look at other types of design. Maybe if we can push more applications, large applications, in the direction their input can be taken on board by the architects for the applicant and then get reflected in the final design of the application.

10.1.7 Deputy J. Renouf:

Does the candidate accept that at a time when private investors are finding it difficult to invest in large-scale projects and even when they gain planning permission are not necessarily bringing them forward for development that possibly the best tool that he has available in terms of supplying houses is to work with the A.L.O.s, Andium and J.D.C. (Jersey Development Company) and tell them to bring forward proposals that sit comfortably within the Island Plan? That will get through the planning system easily and quickly and will, therefore, be deliverable within timeframes because they are controllable by us, as taxpayers.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Timeframe is something I want to take a good look at. I do not necessarily want to shorten the 8-week and 13-week but I would want to make sure that we, as far as best we can, deliver on those timeframes. But of course meeting policies is just one thing, there are a number of factors that can influence the time taken to build out a project. But I take the Deputy's views exactly on board. If we have minimum sizes I do not think it is right that our arm's length organisations and the 2 that he mentioned in particular come forward with applications which only just meet or, depending on how you view it, meet those requirements. It is incumbent upon us Ministers, whether that is the Minister for Housing and Communities, the Minister for Infrastructure, myself and others to come forward with ways to build houses for those people who desperately need them as quickly as we possibly can. Those houses, as the Minister for Housing and Communities said, need to be in many cases 2 and 3-bedroom houses. We need to make sure they are the right size for people. The last thing we want are people living in cramped properties where it is an additional challenge to bring up a family where you have no space to do anything. I do agree with the Deputy.

10.1.8 Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, I was thinking particularly about the waterfront. W, would he agree that a possible way forward for developing the waterfront might be to persuade the J.D.C. to think less about the absolute

maximum return and more about the public realm and the public benefit, that the conversations that could be had with the J.D.C. could be to persuade them to move along that direction.? If that requires some give and take from Government in terms of funding and so on, that that might be a better solution, rather than relying on the maximum commercial return, which means pushing the designs and the scale to the very limit and possible planning refusal.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot disagree with that. Jersey Development Company at the moment provide us with things that we would not necessarily get out of the pure private developers. I am thinking particularly about the small areas of public realm, which we do get from them. It would be nice to see larger areas of public realm, and I would be encouraging them with the waterfront to maintain the areas that are as large as possible for the public to enjoy. I have to say when it comes to the waterfront, I have been slightly disappointed by the number of iterations now that we have seen of the waterfront master plans. There was a particular one that I thought was good, which had a lot of concentration on site lines. Wherever you were on the site you could look distances at Noirmont or Elizabeth Castle or back up towards town. I found that the last iteration may be slightly more disappointing, albeit that it was concentrating on housing. But I take the Minister's view on board. These arm's length organisations that are owned by us are developing our land and I think it is incumbent upon us to provide a good percentage of that land for the public - for all the public - of the Island to enjoy and not just the ones that are living there.

10.1.9 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Could the Deputy please explain his position with respect to the St. Brelade's Bay improvement plan for which funding has been granted and whether he will support it being developed during his office?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I have been aware of the Deputy's stance on St. Brelade for some time, even since before she became a States Member. Certainly, I have been involved in various applications in St. Brelade's Bay. I think on many occasions where you have conflict - that might be too strong a word - but there is a middle ground to be taken. We need to find ways to keep St. Brelade's Bay vibrant for tourism. It is one of the most beautiful bays, not only in the Island or the Channel Islands but in the south of England, and we need to keep it that way. But at the same time if people are going to enjoy it they need to have tourist facilities in order to do that and they have houses in which they want to live in, if they are fortunate enough to own in that area. But I think we need to tread a middle ground. Certainly, some of the more recent policy, which has become applicable down there, I think is maybe slightly too strong, and I am thinking particularly about the policy which does not allow any increase in footprint; that might be slightly precluding us from moving forward. But I would say to the Deputy, I would be keen to look at all sides of the argument. I do not want to exclude tourists. I do not want to exclude people who would seek to do a better job with their home in that area. At the same time, I do not want to exclude other Islanders from not being able to visit.

10.1.10 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I just would like to point out the restriction on footprints just relates to residential homes. We would ask if the Deputy would answer the question about whether he would support the development of St. Brelade's Bay improvement plan, given that there is funding for it?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am keen to support the development of that plan. I would say to Members, however, that one of the very few conflicts I do have in this job is that I do own a small number of shares in a hotel at St. Brelade, and just put on notice that I would have to be quite careful about how I would push those developments forward.

10.1.11 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

My question is about the Food Law. We have around 4,000 Islanders at risk of sudden death through anaphylaxis. Will the Deputy prioritise bringing forward the regulations of the Food Law, including allergen labelling, to help prevent possible fatalities?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I am happy to do that. I think it is important in this day and age where increasing numbers of Islanders face allergies to all sorts of different types of foods, that it is important to know exactly what they are buying when they buy it. I will work with the Deputy on that issue.

10.1.12 Deputy A. Howell:

What changes does the Deputy intend to make to the Planning Department to make it good and work for Islanders and also good for members of staff?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is some years now since I worked closely inside the Planning Department and I think it is already good but it needs to be better; it is clear. We had a review and a report not very long ago now which came out with a number of recommendations. I think it is incumbent upon me in very short order to make sure that the progress that was a response to that Mackinnon review is on track. Certainly I see improvements in some areas but, I have to say, I am continually told by other people that the time to register the applications and get on to that time, when the clock is ticking, seems to take a long time. Other people say to me they still struggle to get responses from the department. But of course I have also been in this Assembly a little while and before I make any comment on any of those people and members of the general public, I like to get my facts straight. It is always worth speaking to the other side of the fence, and officers in particular, and find out exactly the detail behind any application before commenting too far.

10.1.13 Deputy H. Miles:

When he was Minister for the Environment in 2015 the Deputy said he was in favour of building a tower at least 3 times taller than the current high buildings in St. Helier, so that would be at about 25 to 30 storeys high. Is he still in favour?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I think the fundamental answer probably is yes, and that was done for a reason. I look at all sorts of capital cities, towns, large cities around the globe, around Europe, around England, where each of them has an individual building which immediately identifies where they are. The site that I had in mind then is still available, as it turns out, and I could see the benefit of an architectural competition and a building going on the site, so that we would stand out, St. Helier would stand out and people would know when they were a long way away or close by, they would look up and they would say: "Yes, that was a really good bit of architecture, that has made St. Helier a better place." It would be a standout building and would not encourage the rest of the building to come up alongside that; I am not looking to do that. But something like the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth, for example, is a classic example of that.

[15:45]

I think fundamentally, yes, I have not changed my view. I know it is controversial. I got ridiculed by some for saying it before but, hey, why not?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Supplementary in the next 14 seconds? No. I think that brings the allotted time to an end. As there were no other nominations and as the speech and the bit of questions has been completed, I confirm Deputy Luce has been selected for appointment as Minister for the Environment. **[Approbation]**

11. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development

The Deputy Bailiff:

Chief Minister designate, we now move to nomination for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am pleased to nominate Deputy Kirsten Morel for the role of Minister for Sustainable Economic Development.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations?

11.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am honoured to have been nominated by the Chief Minister designate for the position of Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, a role which I am passionate about and which I have been privileged to hold for the past 18 months. During that short time I have worked with an incredibly talented team in the Economy Department. They share my belief that Jersey's economy has a bright future ahead of it, despite the many challenges that we face today. I would like to thank all the officers that have worked with and supported me over the past 18 months as Minister. Since I was first appointed Assistant Minister by the Chief Minister designate in late 2020 I have adopted a collaborative approach to policy-making and working together with officers and Assistant Ministers, Deputies Alex Curtis and Lucy Stephenson, to whom I am incredibly grateful for their hard work and support. We have listened to the business community across a range of sectors. All of those sectors had asked for Government to provide direction to their industries; direction that, in many cases, had not been provided for decades. My immediate aim as Minister was to provide that direction and then start delivering on those strategic visions for the Island's economy. Adopting this methodology has enabled us to build close relationships and, I believe, developed a level of trust between the Economy Department and the local business community that many felt they had not experienced for some while. I am proud of this and I am grateful for the support that I know has been shown for me continuing in this role by farmers, fishermen, hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers, artists and entrepreneurs, to name just a few of the occupations that I and my colleagues have worked closely with since I was first elected as Minister. I am also pleased to have developed good relations with sector organisations, such as the Jersey Hospitality Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Jersey Farmers' Union, the Jersey Fishermen's Association, and Luxury Jersey Hotels. I have also worked closely with organisations such as SCOOP (Sustainable Co-operative) and ReGen, as we further develop the ground-breaking rural support scheme. It is not only being looked at for adoption in other jurisdictions, but has already attracted 20 more small-scale farmers into the industry. Trust is vital to building confidence in the future of Jersey's economy, while stability and continuity are crucial to maintaining that confidence. At a challenging time for virtually all Western economies, I believe we need to do all we can to give our Island's businesses every advantage as they compete both locally and globally. Political stability and continuity in those government departments that represent the economy is crucial if we are going to enable Jersey's entrepreneurs and investors and financial institutions to be successful on the global stage. When I last stood before this Assembly seeking its approval to act as Minister, I explained that I believed we need to develop a truly sustainable economy in the Island. That is an economy which will be long-lasting, because it respects the need to deliver for Islanders today while leaving the Island's resources available for future

generations, so they can enjoy living and working in the Island of the future. That vision has been delivered as the future economy programme, a strategic approach to developing our economy that is the answer to those Islanders who have rightly been demanding strategic direction; a north star, if you will, that helps them understand how we, as political leaders, would like to see the Island's economy developing. That vision is to be a consistently high performing, environmentally sustainable and technologically advanced small-Island economy by 2040. It is underpinned by 5 themes: a resilient economy that is able to withstand shocks, global trends and is agile to change; an innovative economy with a culture of entrepreneurialism and innovation; a skilled economy that embraces a culture of life-long learning, supporting the future needs of the Island; a fair economy with growth that benefits all Islanders; and it must be an international economy that protects our global reputation and diversifies our export opportunities. The future economy programme is designed to enable us to prepare for the needs of the future with the known demographic challenges that we face, while giving us the flexibility to address short-term issues that we all know are making it more difficult for all of us. The rising cost of living is making it genuinely difficult for Islanders to continue living here. Combined with external factors, such as Brexit and COVID, this has led to a reduced ability to find the people we need to create a vibrant economy. Providing affordable housing and goods is, therefore, vital to maintaining the success of our Island. I will work closely together with my fellow Ministers to achieve this. It is important that the Assembly understands that my approach to economic development starts with one simple idea: that the economy is about people. While we often talk in terms such as productivity or economic output, the truth is that people, Islanders, make our economy. For the economy to thrive, Government needs to enable an environment in which we, the people, can thrive. There is nothing I like more than seeing Islanders coming up with amazing ideas and turning them into real enterprises that provide work and incomes for more Islanders. Jersey is beautiful, there is no doubt, but it needs to be more than that. If young Islanders are to see themselves living here for the rest of their lives then Jersey needs to be innovative, bold, international and affordable. It needs to offer possibility and excitement; a range of careers to suit different people; and offer us all the possibility of learning throughout our lives, so we can remain fulfilled at work as we all develop as individuals. Enabling Jersey to become more entrepreneurial is at the heart of the Barriers to Business work which we have begun with the publication by Jersey Business of a report which has, for the first time, enabled us to hear the voice of the business community and so has provided direction for Government to change those areas of process and regulation where they are hindering not helping business. It has also highlighted the fact that the lack of staff is the most important barrier that we need to overcome. Working with the Home Affairs and Education Ministers, I will work tirelessly to address this issue. There is no shortcut to economic development, but by working with the relevant sectors and our delivery partners, the A.L.O.s, Digital Jersey, Jersey Business, Visit Jersey, Jersey Sport, as well as those in the arts and heritage sector, we are making a difference and people outside the Island are seeing a place in which they would like to invest. Over the coming year, we expect to see a feature film about our own Claude Cahun, made in the Island. Not only will this bring new opportunities for Islanders, but it will put Jersey on the map, boosting tourism and leaving behind a filmmaking infrastructure that can be used into the future. We can also look forward to a prominent TV series being made in Jersey. It takes time. We are working with international hotel groups that are seeking sites in Jersey. We are also working with Government and state-owned entities to see whether publicly-owned sites can be developed for both housing and the visitor economy. Similarly, I have invested significant time and energy in building relationships with politicians and business leaders in Normandy and Brittany. As a result, we can expect to see development in the retail sector and the resurrection of a fish and shellfish export route via Granville, as well as increased freight via the southern route. This year and next, we will see the culmination of the tender process that we have begun, which will ensure we find the best ferry services for Jersey. Working closely with my colleagues in Guernsey, we are testing the market for the first time in more than 20 years to ensure that going forward we have frequent and reliable passenger and lifeline freight services that Islanders can be proud of. Jersey's economy is an ecosystem. While I talk about sectors,

there is no doubt in my mind that every sector merges into and supports other. To that end, we are seeing sports, the arts, culture and heritage sectors directly supporting the visitor economy by building an events programme that offers interest and excitement to visitors outside of the summer season. The delivery of the Opera House and the reopening of Elizabeth Castle will provide huge boosts to achieving this aim. This drives great efficiency and productivity in the sector and helps build greater resilience in our air and sea transport links. I will continue to work with Ports of Jersey to deliver new air routes to Europe and make Jersey a significant player in the TransManche economic region that links the south of England with the north of France across the Channel Islands. With regard to removing barriers to business, we have already begun work to simplify the hotel and licensing laws, ensuring that Jersey's regulatory regime is fit for the 21st century. In the 2 years left of this Assembly, I will work with the Minister for Health and Social Services on creating a regulatory environment that can enhance the nascent medical technology sector that is already emerging in Jersey. It is high-value, low-footprint industries like this that can transform our economy and ensure that we are able to meet the demographic challenges that lie ahead. I look forward to working with the Minister for the Environment on developing renewable energy technologies that will see Jersey enter the energy export market. In a world that will need increasing amounts of electricity, it makes sense for Jersey to become a small but significant player. Similarly, we will work together to address challenges in the Island's planning system that are in danger of slowing investment in the Island. With the Minister for Infrastructure and the Connétable of St. Helier, I look forward to continuing work on the transformation of the central market and improving the public realm in St. Helier. This will bring a new sense of optimism and confidence to Islanders, visitors and businesses alike. This year we will also deliver the digital economy strategy and continue to review arm's length organisations, following the review of Jersey Sport. This is a précis of the work that I have started alongside officers and my Assistant Ministers. I thank the Assembly for its time. I humbly ask Members for their support in continuing the work I have begun as Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. We now move to 20 minutes of questions. The first question is from Deputy Scott, then the Connétable of St. Brelade, then Deputy Jeune.

11.1.1 Deputy M.R. Scott:

The Minister said that Islanders make our economy, which of course they are a part of it, but acquiring technology generally involves purchases off-Island and leads to an outflow of what could be up to millions of pounds. Would the Minister please outline the extent to which he will be looking to his department being more outward looking in order to attract more in the way of inward investment, please?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am sorry to be awkward, Sir, I could not hear all of that question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Could you repeat your question, Deputy Scott?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I am sorry. Can you hear me better now, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, it was just a little bit of background noise. We almost heard you.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you. The Minister said that Islanders make our economy. On the other hand, the investment in technology will involve an outflow of funds from our economy towards those who supply it. Would the Minister please outline his intentions to make his department focus outward in order to attract more inward investment?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for her question. There is no question that the Island imports most of its resources, at the end of the day. That includes nowadays human resources as well. There is no question in my mind that we need to see inward investment into the Island. We already have a new framework for inward investment in the Island. That will help support both the development of sectors and also the development of individual businesses, as they use technology to enhance their own performance in the economy. There is no specific set amount of how much you must pay out in order to bring in, but one of the beautiful things about being Minister for Sustainable Economic Development is that it is the innovation of all those private sector organisations, from private businesses through to private charities and social enterprises, that they will make their investment decisions in many ways. They will choose how much they wish to spend on technology, often which will go outside the Island. We also have a digital economy strategy, which will help us develop our own technology sector as well. There are no set limits and no set numbers around it, but I have no doubt that we will be able to attract inward investment at the same time as buying in technology.

11.1.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:

The Minister, having mentioned the need to ... planning, would his department be becoming more proactive in examining planning applications, particularly with respect to the visitor economy outside hotels?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy. I do not think that is quite a supplementary question, as opposed to another question, but I am more than happy to answer it. I am sure the Deputy will be pleased to know that I have already, many months ago, asked all my officers in the local economy section and asked the Environment Department to send all applications our way that affect the economy in any way, whether that is agricultural land, whether that is hotels, whether that is cafés, shops or even offices being turned into housing.

[16:00]

If there is any application which has an economic impact, whether positive or negative, I have already asked the department to be getting hold of those and commenting on them. We do not have a statutory role in most cases, but I do believe that we should and must continue to feed more into the planning system. One of the things I was going to ask the Minister for the Environment ... the last Island Plan had very little in the way of economic land provided through the Island Plan. That was a big mistake in my view and another reason why I believe we should review the Island Plan before the end of this Assembly. However, as a result of that, I had asked my officers to get hold of every application that has an economic impact.

11.1.3 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We presently do not have a tourism office in St. Helier. Does the candidate intend to reinstate it?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am also pleased to be able to advise the Connétable that I have asked Jersey Heritage to work with Visit Jersey on coming up with an alternative location for a tourism office; that being at Jersey Museum. I believe they have held productive talks. Obviously with the season starting in

March/April, I would like to see finalisation of that before then. I have not been told that those talks have been completed, but they have been entered into in good faith and optimism on both sides.

11.1.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Minister mentioned in his speech working with Ports of Jersey regarding links to Europe. Last year we lost the link with Amsterdam. While the Ports efforts might be one thing, we need to make considerable efforts to ensure the numbers are there to make the routes viable. Will the Minister be working with agencies in those other countries that will feed Schiphol, Amsterdam to ensure that route is sustainable in the future?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

An excellent question from the Connétable. I have personally taken a great deal of learning from the loss of the Amsterdam route. We both gained it and lost it within a year, pretty much. It was a fantastic opportunity for the Island. What I was able to identify, as it became clear that the numbers of passengers from the Netherlands to Jersey were not high enough, in my opinion, there was not a sufficiently joined-up approach between the gaining of that route and then the marketing of that route to the Netherlands side of things. For any future European or U.K. routes, because we will not be getting the Amsterdam route back sadly, I have made it clear that we need both Ports of Jersey and Visit Jersey to be working very closely together to make sure that when a route is gained it is sufficiently marketed.

11.1.5 Deputy H. Jeune:

When the candidate was last asking the Assembly to back him for this role, I asked him about cutting of red tape and the importance of ensuring this does not lead to the rollback of environment and sustainability standards, health and safety standards, and employee rights. In his answer, the candidate acknowledged this and that his focus of cutting red tape would be about the way we implement the bureaucracy around regulation. Could the candidate state what specific measures he took in the last 18 months on this issue?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As the Deputy will know, I have been working on the Barriers to Business report with Jersey Business. That was to identify those areas of red tape where businesses felt that they were being stifled by Government. It is very interesting, because in most parts it is not areas such as the types of pesticides or the types of fertilisers you cannot use. It does tend to be in areas such as the speed of the planning process. Again, making the point that it is not the rules that are wrong, it is the way they are implemented. The 2 areas that we will absolutely be focusing on in the year ahead are the hotel laws and the licensing laws, including events licensing. It is important they do that. The Barriers to Business work was the opening gambit, for want of a better word, in understanding exactly where ... it is one thing to say "red tape", what we need to know, as Government, is where businesses are experiencing problems with red tape. That work has now been done.

11.1.6 Deputy H. Jeune:

I thank the candidate for that. Unfortunately, it took about 18 months to publish this report. Now that the candidate does have that, and I know that the candidate has just mentioned 2 priority areas, but in the next 2 years, what impacts on specific areas that the report highlights would he like to see as the end of the candidate's term as Minister in this term of Government?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There are probably 2 or 3 areas, not just about red tape. The biggest problem and the most important aspect of the Barriers to Business report was staffing. There is no question we need, as an Island, to gain much more control of the ability to bring people in to staff our businesses. In the short term that is definitely the case. That is putting pressure in all sorts of areas of the Island not having those staff.

The other area is in planning. It is also in licensing, et cetera. Those will be the areas that I will focus on in the year ahead.

11.1.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

What has been done since the Deputy became Minister to address the reduction of visitor accommodation and ensuring increase of beds availability?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy. The reduction in visitor accommodation sadly does not have ... I cannot, as Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, stop a hotelier leaving the business. That is entirely their affair and that is entirely correct. What we have been doing is encouraging and speaking with hotels who are interested in investing in the Island. The other side is we have developed the visitor economy strategy. It is interesting that people in this very Assembly, as well as the media, often criticise the bringing in and development of strategies. However, through my work in Scrutiny and then as Assistant Minister, it was made clear and very plain to me by the business community across all sectors that what they lacked from Government was direction. That starts with policy direction through strategy making, and that is exactly what we have done. We have done it most specifically in the visitor economy, where the visitor economy strategy, which was published a month ago, was created absolutely in collaboration with the industry. That strategy is now available to them. They, as an industry, are able to take confidence that Government is backing tourism and backing the visitor economy sector; which is exactly what we are doing. Through that confidence, we expect to be able to help those businesses that are already here, as well as attract new businesses to this Island to develop hotels and hotel sites. From my perspective, we have done the single most important thing, which is give confidence to the sector that the Government wants that sector to succeed and has a clear direction for that sector.

11.1.8 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Through the visitor economy strategy and also working with Visit Jersey, how do you see they can contribute to this aim of increasing bed availability?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have been incredibly pleased with the work of Visit Jersey, particularly since the new chief executive took office in that role. Visit Jersey has, in my estimation, not been using the qualities that Jersey offers in quite the way that it has needed to in terms of advertising of the Island. I believe that now Visit Jersey is in a good shape to market the Island in the best way possible to bring visitors to the Island across the year. We will still have ups and downs within that year, but we can expect to begin to see more tourists coming here in the shoulder and even the winter months as Visit Jersey markets the Island and has more tools to market the Island with. It is about such things as the arts and culture strategy and sports strategy and sporting events and cultural events that will help bring visitors to this Island in those months where we will not get such sunshine or very much of it.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any more questions for Deputy Morel? Deputy Kovacs, then Deputy Renouf, and then the Connétable of St. Clements.

11.1.9 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

What does the Minister see as the correct balance between publicly-owned and private facilities for sport on the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not believe there is specifically a correct balance in terms of 20 per cent/80 per cent, 60 per cent/40 per cent. It is vital the public sector provides sporting facilities, because I do not believe that

all sporting facilities can be delivered by the private sector from the perspective that they may not always make a profit, that sort of thing. However, I do know of at least 2 different developments or proposed developments in the Island around sporting facilities which are in the hands of the private sector and, should they come to fruition, will have a fantastic impact on the Island. They are around racquet sports and around general sports viewing and conference facility. The private sector has an incredibly important role to play in developing a range of facilities, including sports facilities in the Island. I do not believe Jersey should ever be scared of the private sector in that respect, because to be scared of the private sector means that we deny the use of one of the most important tools that this Island have, which is the entrepreneurialism of the very Islanders that live here.

11.1.10 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Will he promote a new national stadium for Jersey and, if so, where does he have in mind?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have yet to be convinced of the argument for a national stadium in the Island. We have Springfield, which is a very fine stadium. I believe that we need other sporting facilities first. Multipurpose in terms of larger projects is quite important, so a large indoors centre which could, say, hold netball tournaments and gymnastic tournaments, as well as hold business conferences. That sort of facility would be more important than a stadium. However, I am always open to ideas and always open to people coming up with those ideas, particularly if they are from the private sector.

11.1.11 Deputy J. Renouf:

The Deputy in his statement said that he felt that there was not enough focus on economic development land in the Island Plan. I wonder if he could give a little bit more detail about what he means by that, given that the Island Plan has a whole section on the economy and, in particular, highlights 8 different sites where there is light industrial use and identifies a further 5 options for that kind of use, including, for example, La Collette and other States land, existing light industrial sites, the use of existing agricultural premises and so on. I am wondering if he could state where he feels the Island Plan is deficient.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for an excellent question. The Island Plan may point to sites, but they are not necessarily sites that are specifically available. When talking about agricultural buildings, we have a rural economy strategy which wants to make use of those agricultural buildings, so they are not available for light industrial use or storage. Storage is one of the things that many businesses lack. Workshop spaces for both light industrial and also office commercial space in different areas is also lacking. As far as La Collette is concerned, we, as a Government and as a States Assembly, need to understand that there is a large quantity of land at La Collette, which even if it cannot be used at the moment because it is being used for other purposes, we need to have a view on, because that is a large area of land that could be put to use for economic use. At the moment it is being used principally as a dumping site because that is building up the land within it. We do not seem to have a view on the use of La Collette that enables the use of that land for economic use for private businesses at least.

11.1.12 Connétable M. O'D. Troy of St. Clement:

Deputy, there is an untapped resource running through all our Parishes. I am referring, of course, to the derelict greenhouses that exist and have been redundant for many, many years. Do you attach any value to their resurgence and, if so, what would that be?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Connétable for his question. I do remember, it must have been about 2019, saying that we need to make better use of these greenhouse sites. This was in the media. It saddens me hugely when I see overgrown glasshouse sites which are not being used, neither for agriculture, nor for

housing, or any other use. I am personally completely open to the use of that land or at least some of that land for non-agricultural use, if that is what it takes to bring that land back into use.

[16:15]

I have a simple principle around this: land is one of Jersey's scarcest resources, if we do not use it efficiently then we are going to struggle as an Island to keep up and keep going economically. I am very open to the use of disused glasshouse sites for non-agricultural use, whether it is housing or economic, if that is the right thing to do for that specific site. Each site does stand on its own and has to be assessed on its own merits. I do not have a blanket "do not use them". What is sad is to see the brambles and see broken glass and see large areas not being used.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Scott, we only have 20 seconds left. Do you have a very short question?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

No, sorry, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We will move on. That brings that period of questions to a close. As there were no other nominations and as the speech and period of questions have completed, I can confirm that Deputy Morel has been selected for appointment as Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. [**Approbation**]

12. The Minister for Treasury and Resources

The Bailiff:

Chief Minister designate, would you like to make your nomination for the Minister for Treasury and Resources?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, Sir. Thank you. I am pleased to nominate Deputy Elaine Millar for that role, thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? [**Seconded**] Are there any other nominations?

12.1 Deputy E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Firstly, I would like to thank the Chief Minister designate for nominating me for this important role in the Council of Ministers. I have served as Assistant Minister in Treasury with Deputy Gorst since July 2022, so I already have some grounding in the challenges facing Treasury and its work. If you support my nomination as Minister for Treasury and Resources, the priorities and challenges that I see as needing action are these. First and foremost, we need to ensure that we maintain financial stability. That is good for public finances and for our economy. Overall, our finances are in good shape. The Ratings Agency, Standard and Poor's, confirmed last week that Jersey's credit rating remains stable at AA-. S.&P. commented that Jersey has a long history of consensus-driven, long-term and fiscally-prudent policymaking. It is important that we continue that approach. I do not think any of us would argue that we have to respond to the here and now and the challenges that Islanders are facing today, but we must do so for keeping an eye on future needs and on the interests of future generations. To specific priorities, and in no particular order, as they say, first to ensure that we comply with international tax standards we need to implement Pillar 2 taxation by 1st January 2025. Pillar 2 seeks to align minimum global corporate tax rates for the world's largest multinational groups. Implementation includes finalising our strategy and then bringing forward and seeking the Assembly's approval of the necessary legislation over the course of this year. Members will be aware that we have been working on this for some time and keeping a close eye on how other countries are going to approach this. We have already committed to adopting the same approach as Guernsey and

the Isle of Man. It is important that we continue to respond positively to global changes. Any tax change brings some risk, but we will retain our commitment to ensuring a competitive business environment and we will continue to engage with diverse and widespread stakeholders across a broad range of sectors. Once we have the legislation in place, the Treasury team will also have to work on platforms and process for this tax. We must ensure that we provide businesses with administrative certainty and simplicity as this change is implemented. Secondly, we need to finish the work started by earlier Assemblies and complete the introduction of independent taxation. The team in Treasury have listened to what Members had to say in our debate on this last year. We have developed revised proposals to maintain the principles of independent taxation, but which recognise the concerns of Members and Islanders about the completion of tax returns. These changes will allow Islanders who are married to continue filing a single joint return. After this week we will restart our programme of briefings for States Members to allow you to ask further questions before the debate on the revised legislation. Independent taxation will move Jersey's personal taxation into the modern age. It is a change which most of us recognise is long overdue. Third, we need to decide how we pay for the new hospital. There are a variety of options open to us; from debt, to draw down from reserves, to a combination of methods. The financial environment now, with increased interest rates and continuing volatility, means that proposals developed in 2021/2022 no longer work for us. We need to be clear on cost and the best way of meeting it. Of course, it is not just about the hospital. There are a number of other long-term infrastructure projects to be considered. I will work with all relevant Ministers to ensure that we fund those projects effectively. Fourth, an enhanced focus on customer service. We have, I am sure, all heard complaints about long waits to speak to somebody in Revenue Jersey on the phone. I am sure we all agree that that is not good enough and that we need to address this issue. It is in the nature of taxation that calls to any tax authority may be more difficult and may take longer to answer than they are in other services, which itself creates queues of impatient customers. We will, however, consider how we can divert more resource to ensure good service to taxpayers who have questions and concerns about their tax affairs. We will also look at how we can spread the load, establishing different deadlines perhaps, so that we are not the cause of our own problems by creating timescales that result in a bulk of inquiries at the same time. Better use of technology and clear communications will also help. Fifth, ensuring value for money and control of public spending. During the election I spoke often at hustings about the need to get best value for Government spending. I feel strongly about this. Governments do need to spend money; sometimes very large sums of money. That is part of our role. What matters is that we get the best value from our spending. This is a huge area. The public say they want us to control spending, but they want us to do that without a reduction in services and it is important to get that right. There is not an easy answer. It may sound simple to say: "We can do without so many consultants," but we need to be clear what we mean by that. If a consultant is anyone who provides services and is not an employee then it might mean a nurse doing a bank shift, a supply teacher, a person on a temporary contract covering sickness absence or a specialist software developer working on a new system who will not be needed once the system goes live. We do sometimes need specialist experience and the most cost-effective way of obtaining that experience and skill may be to contract for it on a short-term basis, rather than employing someone who will command a high salary but be unable to use their skills to their full advantage due to lack of day-to-day need. What is important is that the costs are kept under review and that contracts are not allowed to drift long beyond their stated time periods and budgets. Work is already underway to improve controlled spending. To do that, we need better data on our spending and better management and oversight of contracts. The department has already reviewed strategy and set priorities. It is important that all government departments participate fully in this. We may be able to do that by allowing them to keep some of the benefit of savings they may make by managing costs more carefully. We need to look at our purchasing catalogues and framework agreements. We need to make sure that the social value we ask to be included in contracts is delivered in our local economy. We also need to make sure that our suppliers are treated fairly and that there is a greater focus on their experience of government as a customer. The new Connect system is

bedding down and moving into a phase of continuous improvement. Once suppliers are using this system, they should be paid within 7 days of their invoice being raised. Part of the role of the Minister for Treasury and Resources is, of course, about keeping an eye on our reserves and the future, on making sure that we do not spend unwisely. It is also, however, about making sure that when we do spend we do it well and we achieve positive outcomes and effective delivery of Government objectives and policies. I will aim, in particular, on getting the most of the money we have available. We know that we need a new hospital. We know that our healthcare system will have to provide health and social care to an increasing number of older people in the future. We know that we need more homes and major improvements to our waste infrastructure. We want to play our role in combatting climate change. To deliver on these demands, we need care in our policymaking on spending. We need to control actual spending. We need a rigorous approach to budgeting. We need to be satisfied that the money we are spending will bring the outcomes we want. An obvious example of this is the work that is already underway in Health, to help us understand our requirements and vision for future healthcare, which will enable us to plan for future funding, which will be another discussion with the Minister for Health and Social Services in due course. The turnaround team is already making good progress in achieving savings in the Health budget. All Ministers must understand the need for prudence, control and appropriate use of funds. We must all ensure that when we spend money we are achieving policy objectives. I will work with all Ministers to make sure that this happens. Government departments are not alone in this, however. We have a number of States-owned entities and arm's length organisations. I will aim to work with them to reinvigorate our shareholder and stakeholder relationships to clarify what we want them to achieve and what our expectations are. Working with all relevant Ministers, I will be seeking to ensure that they are delivering in line with Government objectives and policies and that they are doing so in an efficient and cost-effective way. I am happy to take questions from Members. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. I will move to up to 20 minutes of questions. The first question is from Deputy Ozouf.

12.1.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I congratulate the Minister for her de facto appointment as Minister for Treasury and Resources? The last Ministerial elections, the candidate will recall that the Chief Minister designate proposed the Minister for External Relations and Financial Services, but with the same asterisk that we have today that the actual Financial Services portfolio is going to move back to the Minister for External Relations. As no other Minister has faced questions about Financial Services, but I hope you will find it appropriate for me to ask that. Does the candidate have any views about this move? It is a big move. Is she concerned about it? Is it a done deal? Does she, with her wealth of experience, having done that job, have any observations?

Deputy E. Millar:

Because of the proposal to move it back with Deputy Gorst, who is more than capable of fulfilling that role, I have no concerns. I would sincerely hope that Deputy Gorst ... Deputy Gorst and I have worked very closely over the last 18 months and I would hope that he will continue to involve me in the Financial Services arena in some capacity.

12.1.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

If there was one thing that the Minister was worried about with Financial Services, because we have no questions to it, what would it be? What is the biggest thing, based upon her experience and wanting to work with Deputy Gorst? Is it because we are in a big global change, you can access markets ... elections across the world that access to market could be compromised? Is she worried at all?

Deputy E. Millar:

The Deputy is quite correct that this is a challenging time for Financial Services. I am confident that with the right support from Government, with the right regulatory approach, that it will continue to thrive. It is very important to us that we support Financial Services as much as we can to thrive in this Island. If you spoke to Financial Services themselves, they would tell you that their concerns will be about the nature of regulation. It will be particularly about issues that everybody is facing with staff recruitment and retention and with competition elsewhere. I firmly believe that Jersey's strategy, which is to be a well-regulated jurisdiction, which will attract good quality money. That is the best approach for Jersey. The more we can offer political and financial stability the more we will, as an Assembly, continue to support that industry into the future.

12.1.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Given the need for investment in childcare, is the candidate prepared to prioritise funds towards this area in the next Government Plan?

[16:30]

Deputy E. Millar:

Clearly childcare is an issue. I have to confess I have not read just yet a report from within the Financial Services industry, and they have also identified lack of childcare as being an issue to their recruitment of staff and retention of staff in the workplace. It is something clearly we have to consider with all the other demands on government expenditure, but it clearly will serve multiple purposes, both in terms of the health and well-being of children and the health and well-being of our economy as a whole. Yes, I will be happy to discuss in due course.

12.1.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

The Government Plan was passed just before Christmas, can the candidate tell us if the new Government plans to operate within the Government Plan framework or will it be bringing forward a new Government Plan or amendments to it?

Deputy E. Millar:

We have not had that discussion, but I am not aware there is a plan to completely overhaul the Government Plan. It took a long time to get to the one we have. I would imagine there will be new Ministers who may wish to make some tweaks, but I have not been party to any discussion on the Government Plan just as yet.

12.1.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

I noticed that during several of the nomination statements and answers to questions money was raised as being desirable from, say, the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Health and Social Services, who both referenced items where they might want to see more money. What would be your attitude to requests for more money?

Deputy E. Millar:

Everybody always wants more money, do they not, to be fair? All demands on government spending have to be considered very carefully. It is quite clear, as I said, the hospital and the new healthcare facilities have to be priority. That may not be wise to bring that from reserves. We will have to consider how we fund the hospital and how we consider other infrastructure projects. That really is something that we need to sit down with the Treasurer and look at the best way of funding. As I say, there are lots of things. We may have to use debt and debt is not necessarily ... we all make debt decisions every single day. You would not buy a house in cash. You would effectively enter into debt obligations when you buy a house, most of us do anyway, and possibly when you buy a car. We have to use debt wisely. We have to use our reserves wisely. We have to be cognisant of the

recommendation from the Fiscal Policy Panel that we should be topping up our reserves. That is a big question and one which will, I am sure, involve hours of debate.

12.1.6 Deputy H. Jeune:

The Public Finances Law 2019 requires the Council of Ministers to take into account the sustainable well-being of current and future generations when they develop the Government Plan. What concrete steps will the candidate make to embed this requirement into decision-making when deciding how to spend Jersey's public finances?

Deputy E. Millar:

As the Deputy points out, it is part of the role and all Ministers must have sustainable well-being of current and future generations in their minds when they are planning their spending. It would be unwise to exhaust a budget completely in a year or 2 knowing that in 20 years there will be other people needing support from Government. Sustainable well-being is something that all Ministers have to take into account, thank you.

12.1.7 Deputy H. Jeune:

Part of looking at the sustainable well-being of future generations is focusing on developing a budget that is focused on prevention, focused on developing policies preventing difficulties for people, the economy and the environment before they arise. The Welsh Government, for example, has published a Budget Improvement Plan to help improve the budget process based on the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Does the candidate believe that there needs to be an improved process for how the Budget or Government Plan in Jersey is created?

Deputy E. Millar:

I have not seen the Welsh model. I am very happy to look at it. It is good that we look to small jurisdictions as comparators. The government planning process is difficult. It will always be difficult. We are running a country as well as providing services to our local community. Things are always capable of being improved, I will say that.

12.1.8 Deputy M.R. Scott:

With reference to the Deputy's reference to arm's length reviews and States-owned entities and the intention to look at those relationships, would she envisage that the Comptroller and Auditor General's recommendations are taken into account? Would she be considering measures to avoid any conflicts of interest in terms of those reviews, for example, by taking it outside departments?

Deputy E. Millar:

I am not sure I fully understand the question, Deputy, sorry. I am aware that the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) will be looking at States-owned entities and A.L.O.s in her current plan. Her audit plan will include certainly States-owned entities. That work is important. I am not suggesting by any means that it should not continue or that I would seek to interfere with it in any way. C. and A.G. is an independent body and must be given the ability to carry out such reviews as she thinks fit in the manner she thinks fit. My reference to stakeholder relationships is wider than that. It is about sitting down with the boards and making sure that we think they are spending the money wisely. Also, it is more than how they spend the money, it is that they are doing what we want them to do and that they are working in line with government policy and objectives and not in advertently perhaps against us.

12.1.9 Deputy M.R. Scott:

How would the Minister look at the value for money in a way that the States-owned entities are conducting themselves?

Deputy E. Millar:

Value for money, as I said earlier, comes back to how they spend and what their objectives are. Are they achieving their objectives? Are we satisfied with their objectives and are they doing so within a budget that we think is acceptable? It is a big subject and I have not fully applied my mind to it, but we will be doing so in the Treasury team.

12.1.10 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I understood the Minister for Social Security designate when she spoke this morning to say that she may look favourably on the non-refund of overpaid income support payments. What is the Deputy's view on that, please?

Deputy E. Millar:

It was my response she was critical of. It is quite risky ground. If she does so, she will be doing so from her own budget and she will have to manage those budgets.

12.1.11 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Does the Deputy see any potential conflict on this around the Council of Ministers' table?

Deputy E. Millar:

It will be a matter for discussion. There are 13 Ministers, so it will be a matter for discussion. The Council of Ministers have to consider that policy. There are very wide issues of policy arising from it. It will need considerable discussion.

12.1.12 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am sure the candidate will know it is a tradition for candidates for Minister for Treasury and Resources to be asked about their red lines, about which taxes they are going to favour and which ones are absolutely out of the question. Seeing the Deputy has been following on from that very good question about the Social Security, she has been subjected to many tough questions, which is fair enough, from Social Security. Now the Social Security is a Reform candidate, agreed, there are some red lines. Their manifesto is very different from what hers have. Is she going to maintain her position on 20 per cent rate of tax, 5 per cent G.S.T., and has she got any views about the Health Insurance Fund?

Deputy E. Millar:

There were quite a number of questions there. My initial proposal would not be to change personal tax. Social security contributions sits with the Minister for Social Security and ultimately with this Assembly and it will be a matter for the new Minister for Social Security to persuade the Assembly that changes need to be made. Social security contributions are not tax and they do not sit with Treasury. The Health Insurance Fund, yes, we know the Health Insurance Fund is beginning to run dry. I am sure the Minister will be considering that when she has looked at the reports in due course.

12.1.13 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I just kindly press the Minister? Is that a red line on 20 per cent tax? Is that what she is going to say because she is going to be faced with, we have all heard, a number of challenges? Where is she going to go first in terms of tax increases? Is the 20 per cent sacrosanct under her Treasury Ministership?

Deputy E. Millar:

It is not something, to be honest, I have fully considered. I have not considered that amount of detail, I am sorry. However, the 20 per cent rate of income tax is something that is very important to Jersey, to its competitiveness; and it is not just about the rate of tax. It is about the environment that you create for business. It is about the environment you create for people coming to the Island. It is

about the messages you send about how welcoming Jersey is, whether it is open for business. All of those things have to be taken into account. Scotland has just introduced a new tax rate at £70,000 of 45 per cent. People earning over £120,000 will now be paying 48 per cent tax. There are people in Scotland who are deeply, deeply concerned about what that will do to attract business into Scotland. Tax changes have to be very carefully considered. I am certainly not going to launch into anything without very careful consideration. I have not considered red lines, because I did not know that question was going to come.

12.1.14 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Noting the independence of regulation by the Jersey Financial Services Commission is an important prerequisite. Does the candidate agree that such regulation should be conducted within a framework that pays regard to the need for the financial services industry to be competitive and indeed free to innovate and that the Government should ensure the existence of that framework? Will the Minister, if she continues with that responsibility, undertake that role?

Deputy E. Millar:

I am not sure whether I will undertake that role, but if Deputy Gorst includes me then, yes, I agree. I will be very happy to assist. I agree that it is important that we have a regulator that serves Jersey well, that adopts appropriate risk-based regulation. It would be unusual to have a situation where the regulated are entirely happy with the regulator. There will always be, I suspect, a degree of tension between a regulator and the people in businesses it regulates. It is important to get that balance right. I absolutely agree that Government's relationship with both the regulator and with industry are critical to future success and I would be very happy to support Deputy Gorst in that.

12.1.15 Deputy J. Renouf:

The question about the shareholder representative with the A.L.O.s, I asked earlier about the role of the J.D.C. and Andium, in terms of pushing forward developments. Of course, their response, if they are asked to accept a lower return, for example, in order to develop with more public good or in other ways that do not maximise profit, might be we are tied by our requirements to Government. What attitude will the candidate take to that debate? Is she prepared to consider greater flexibility in terms of Andium's paying back to the Government or J.D.C.'s finances in order to further public realm or wider community good in terms of development?

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes, they are all things we have to consider. We are all clearly agreed, we need more homes built. If Government needs to make some accommodation with Andium to allow that then that is something we have to discuss within the realms of how we fund that. Andium has been hugely successful in delivering new homes in the Island. It appears to me that the J.D.C. has not had quite the same success rate. Perhaps a discussion with J.D.C. is needed to clarify what Government's expectation is. That discussion will have to be had.

[16:45]

Clearly cost is a factor for all developers. The question is: does Government say: "We will not take a dividend. We will not take a cut." Or do we just say that if you end up in the position of Government subsidising the building of homes, then that is another question in terms of funding. We clearly need to discuss all of these things. I will keep an open mind.

12.1.16 Deputy J. Renouf:

I have only been in politics a short time, but I have already noted a ritual where it is common for people to promise to be tougher in Government control of the A.L.O.s, but for it not to necessarily transpire. Can she commit to taking that role on and being able to report back to the Assembly on what she has been able to do in terms of those discussions with the A.L.O.s in the future?

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes, I will commit to build a closer relationship with A.L.O.s and make sure that we are satisfied that they are delivering what we want them to do and that they are doing so effectively.

12.1.17 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

In view of the shortness of time and the very good words the Minister's given to the industry about 20 per cent. Is Zero/Ten safe in the Minister for Treasury and Resources' hands?

Deputy E. Millar:

It is not as simple as Zero/Ten. It is Zero/Ten and 20. It is slightly more complex than it appears. Zero/Ten has served us very well as an Island. It has supported our biggest industry, our biggest employer and our biggest taxpayer, because while the tax take is very important, it is also important that we recognise competitiveness.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. As there were no other nominations and as the speech and period for questions have expired, I confirm that Deputy Millar has been selected for appointment as Minister for Treasury and Resources.

13. The Minister for External Relations

The Bailiff:

Well, Chief Minister designate, last and not least, your final nomination for Minister for External Relations.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Thank you. To that end, I am pleased to propose Deputy Ian Gorst for the position of Minister for External Relations.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations?

Deputy K. Wilson of St. Clement:

Yes, Sir, I nominate Deputy Ozouf, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Thank you. In accordance with Standing Order 117(6), I invite candidates to speak and answer questions in the order of which they were nominated, starting therefore with Deputy Gorst. There will be 10 minutes of speech, then 20 minutes of questions. Therefore, I invite Deputy Ozouf to leave the Chamber.

13.1 Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

As Members know, post the 2022 election, Deputy Moore asked me to be the Minister for Treasury and Resources and I found that I have grown to enjoy the work of Minister for Treasury and Resources and the work of the Treasury Department. I want to start by thanking all of those staff who have helped and supported me in that role but I am grateful today to be standing as the Chief Minister's nominee for the position of Minister for External Relations. Today, the international outlook looks more complex and uncertain than ever in troubled times, maintaining Jersey's international reputation as a stable, outward looking and tolerant Island community is of critical importance. The confident, robust and successful representation of the Island on the international stage is a cornerstone of Jersey's success, underpinning the jobs and growth that sustain our prosperity and quality of life. We need to stand up for our economy, for our identity and for our

values, and this requires experience, knowledge and good international networks. It means delivering on the common policy for External Relations by protecting Jersey's core interests and promoting new opportunities for collaboration with international partners across a wide range of shared interests, whether it is in tackling climate change, addressing labour shortages, promoting cultural and economic links with our neighbours in Normandy and Brittany, none of the challenges we face is purely domestic. I will seek to continue to position the work of the External Relations Department to help my fellow Ministers to deliver on their domestic priorities in balancing change and continuity. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the previous Minister and other Ministers, whose efforts have been considerable. I will do so by maintaining and building on our key partnerships in the U.K., in Europe and around the world, working through multilateral forums and focusing on Jersey's strengths by promoting what we do best as an Island and as an economy. We live, of course, in an ever-changing world and one that is unfortunately more dangerous and less stable in 2024. We face the human tragedy of wars in Europe and the Middle East. Global politics has changed over the last decade and this is evidently a more turbulent period. Western democracies are under pressure and the one certainty is that there will be significant change ahead. As I said last week, there are elections across the U.K., across the United States, to the European Parliament and to other European countries. The world will change again before the year is out and we do not know whether that will be for the better or otherwise. In the current climate, Jersey can benefit from being a reliable and trusted partner and one where investors can be confident of stability and where we believe in the importance of innovation and international trade. The core of our economy and our ability to pursue global partnerships all rely on the strength of our international standing and confidence in our Island. We have a developing network of bilateral tax and investment agreements with countries and markets across the globe and I will negotiate more of these agreements over the next 2½ years. I will also help position the Island to obtain maximum benefit from participation in the U.K.'s network of free trade agreements covering goods and services. We have played an important part in implementing the U.K. sanctions regime following Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and will continue to do so. We have felt the impact of tensions and conflicts across the globe, including through the added pressure they have placed on global trade and the price of commodities. Climate change continues to pose huge threats and we can only tackle these by working in collaboration with our global partners. There is no role for Jersey in this decade and at this time which involves us hiding away and trying to ignore what is happening around us, even if that is what some might prefer. In a turbulent world, investors will be looking for responsible, stable and trusted markets for investment and for jurisdictions which are clear on the values they protect and promote. That is where Jersey has traditionally and must continue to come into its own. In Financial Services, we will move forward from the findings of the MONEYVAL review and continue to implement our strategy for growth, working with the industry to maintain our core strengths and make the most of new opportunities, including the huge future that exists for sustainable finance. I have also been a long-time advocate for our agriculture and dairy sectors. In conducting my role as Minister for External Relations, I will continue to represent all these industries and stand up for their interests. Being Minister for External Relations requires a rapid assimilation of knowledge, a sound judgment of how to mitigate the risks and challenges we face and how to make the most of the opportunities we seek. The new Minister will need to hit the ground running immediately, to meet the pressing demands of a diary that has been on hold now for the best part of a month. I believe that I have the necessary experience to meet that burden, to carry out those engagements and to ensure the continuity of our Government's relationships. I believe that I can use my knowledge and experience to help fellow Ministers find the right international partners for delivering on their domestic priorities, whether on housing, the future of the Island, healthcare and tackling the cost of living. The role of Minister for External Relations requires a carefully balanced mixture of diplomacy, tact and mettle. It requires the ability to build and sustain relationships to personal level with political leaders and officials worldwide. The success of those relationships is critical to the success of our Island as a whole. I have shown that I will stand up for Jersey against threats or intimidation, I will do so against any challenges to our constitutional

autonomy, our economic freedoms, or our right to self-government. As Chief Minister and Minister for External Relations, I have previously worked to ensure that we have access to U.K. Ministers, parliamentarians and officials with real influence on policy that will affect our Island. I have made our voice heard in Westminster, in Whitehall, in Downing Street and Brussels. Our relationship with the U.K. across departments is as strong as it has ever been, and I will build on that, especially with a new Government after the U.K. election. I formed enduring and productive alliances with colleagues in the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories. We will continue to work together effectively where it is in our interests to do so. As well as developing our political, diplomatic and economic ties, I will ensure that we vigorously pursue improved cultural links with global partners, bringing increased value to our community and that we promote our cultural identity. I recognise the work of the last Government, especially the Minister and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, in forging even closer relations with our European neighbours, especially in France. That work must continue. I also recognise the excellent work of the Minister for International Development and the Jersey Overseas Aid, and the need for alignment and co-operation between that work and the Department for External Relations. When I previously did this role the support of my colleagues on the Council of Ministers was key; you cannot do the job without it. The support of this Assembly was equally key. I need consensus and support from across the Assembly to represent Jersey successfully. I hope that Members will agree that I am suited to this role of representing Jersey across the world and I ask for their support this afternoon. Thank you.

[Approbation]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. The first question is from Deputy Bailhache.

13.1.1 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Does the candidate agree that our constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom Government requires the U.K. to consult with Jersey before inserting in a U.K. Bill a clause enabling the extension of that Act to Jersey?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Yes, it does. I think the questioner is driving at, I think it is fair to say, a need to reset that relationship and that understanding. We have seen, in a largely post-Brexit world, an attitude which is unacceptable to us. I have stood up previously to make that clear. I think there are potentially other instances whereby apparently there was an administrative mistake, but I am extremely clear and will continue to be clear, they absolutely are required by our constitution to seek our approval and only include it once we have agreed to it.

13.1.2 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

I thank the candidate for that encouraging reply and would simply ask him whether he is aware whether the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill led to consultation with the Island?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That is the particular Act to which I was referring. My understanding is, I have not had this first hand from U.K. Ministers, one of the first tasks for me will be - if I am supported by the Assembly this afternoon - to clear that very issue up. If it is still there, it ought to be removed. If it was an administrative error on the part of the U.K. Government, it ought to be removed as well.

13.1.3 Deputy H. Jeune:

Both the Government of Jersey and Jersey Finance have highlighted the importance of Jersey becoming a leading sustainable finance centre if we are to retain our appeal to overseas investors. Unfortunately, there has been significant delay from Government to move this work forward. When will the candidate bring forward a consultation on a sustainable finance policy roadmap for Jersey,

and can the candidate give clarity on the type of policies or regulation he believes is needed to support the finance industry to adapt to the ever-increasing number of new global standards being introduced around sustainable finance?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

It is my understanding that that document is ready to be lodged. I have taken a very... launched, sorry, not lodged. I have taken a very pragmatic view that what we have seen some from some of our competitor jurisdictions is the development of a sustainable product, and that gets people started. It is something that one can use to market.

[17:00]

It is something that one can promote to investors and they can start using Jersey for a sustainable product. We have to do that while also agreeing the framework that we will use. We do not need to reinvent the wheel, others have developed frameworks, it is never good for us to do so. Once we have done that, we can then put in place the appropriate regulation.

13.1.4 Deputy H. Jeune:

Does the candidate recognise that as part of being a world class, sustainable finance centre that will retain and attract new business, businesses are looking to locate to finance centres that are also decarbonising so that they can meet their own net zero requirements as businesses? Will the candidate ensure that he will advocate for continuing with the targets in the carbon neutral roadmap, the first one being - and that is not far away, in fact, it is the next election cycle - reducing Jersey's emissions by 68 per cent by 2030.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy is right, those wishing to use centres like ours are looking for 2 things. One is that we have sustainable financial products that meet the best practice, and the other is that we are walking the walk. That is why I have always been a supporter of the carbon neutral roadmap. It was why I was pleased to be the Minister responsible for having Paris extended to Jersey as well. It goes hand in hand and, to my mind, it will continue to do so.

13.1.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North:

I was wondering whether the candidate could allude to his views on the U.K. Government and the pressures that have been applied on the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man for a beneficial register of ownership to be in place?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

There are sometimes totemic issues which Governments from elsewhere have views on. One's first duty is to defend Jersey's position when one thinks that Jersey's position is correct and is a standard that others could accede to. One also has to understand the move of international standards and where the European Union might be going or where the international bodies might be going. That is why I fully support the statement that was issued by Deputy Moore, together with the other Crown Dependency colleagues, around the quality of Jersey's longstanding register of beneficial ownership, longer than virtually any other place I can think of, that it is vetted, verified and regulated. But also recognising that A.M.L.5 (Anti-Money Laundering) from the European Union, and now going to be 6, does start to change what that standard should be. That is why I fully support the next move, which will be to allow those interested parties to access it, but there is still a lot of water to go under the bridge before that is developed and the mechanism, with appropriate safeguards, has been put in place.

13.1.6 The Connétable of St. Mary:

As the candidate said, he was in the last Assembly as both Minister for External Relations and for Financial Services. From my viewpoint as the chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee towards the latter stage, that seemed to be the correct synergy. Does the Minister agree, in fact, that those 2 roles work well together, if only that he is able to fulfil both on his trips overseas? Does he actually therefore welcome their coming together in his new appointment, if it comes to pass?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I thank the Deputy for his question, which is slightly the mirror opposite of a question that was put to my colleague sitting in front of me earlier. There are 2 schools of thought and on balance I come and am aligned with the school of thought of the Connétable of St. Mary, that there is such a synergy and such a symbiotic relationship that a Minister for External Relations will have to have when talking on the world stage about the issues that face Jersey and the interests that other people might have. I do think they work closely together. You could take a much more purist view and say that you do not want the Minister for External Relations talking about financial services so you keep them separate. I think in practice that does not work. My experience is it does not work. One of the things I would really like to do, and I have had conversations with the Minister for International Development ... while they have to be kept separate because Jersey should be proud of its aid, which is pure aid, it is not linked to trade in any way, shape or form, and that is how we need to keep it. But I do think that there are also synergies with the work of the Minister of External Relations and the Minister for International Development, because equally, on the international stage, people want to know, yes, about financial services but they do want to know about our aid programme. They are interested in Jersey cows, they are interested in financial inclusion, they are interested in environmental projects. I think working together closely there as well is important.

13.1.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

What countries would the Deputy want to expand on having closer collaboration with or agreements with in the near future, and in what areas?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy will be aware that post the election there was a common policy for External Relations, which was debated in the Assembly in an in-committee debate. There were a number of suggestions during that debate I will be coming back to in the post of being Minister for External Relations, if I am successful. There are a number of bilateral investment treaties and double taxation arrangements which I will wish to continue. The reality is, any incoming Minister would want to refresh the work that looks at the countries that we might wish to engage with. There is a matrix that we go through, much like happens in international development about rule of law, corruption index, human rights issues, all of those good things. I would want to, if I am elected this afternoon, refresh that work and then I will be able to give the Deputy a fuller answer about whether there is a change in any of those countries or not.

13.1.8 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

What is one main collaboration or work that he was not able to complete while he was the Minister for External Relations previously, and has not been continued, that he would like to see in place?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That is a good question. I think one of the things that was talked about a lot, and it really aligns with the Island identity work again that Deputy Labey was leading, was the diaspora. I think that the diaspora project is going to create 2 things. One is mini ambassadors for Jersey around the globe, where either Jersey people or people with Jersey connections are going to become mini ambassadors for us. But the other, I think, really positive output there is that there is the potential there in that

Jersey diaspora to help deal with some of our skills and Islanders returning back to Jersey, or people who love Jersey returning back to Jersey as well. That is something that over the next 2½ years, I would wish to see come to full fruition and make a really positive impact, not only globally but locally as well.

13.1.9 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I would like to thank the Deputy for the work that he has done in relation to the MONEYVAL review and wondered whether, once that review has been relatively done and dusted, he thinks that there is scope to introduce or improve the complaints procedure against the Jersey Financial Services Commission? Just bearing in mind the potential for perhaps overenthusiasm for enforcement against smaller players in the industry.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I thank the Deputy for her question. Some Members may have received an email prior to an election last week. It is absolutely right that Ministers made difficult decisions. This Assembly introduced changes to legislation to ensure that we can show that we comply with F.A.T.F. (Financial Action Task Force) recommendations and the standards that are absolutely necessary. In hindsight, we look back and see some of the way that those changes were implemented and they could have been done, I think, better. There could have been, in hindsight, more consultation. We have to learn from that going forward and we have to think about coming out of MONEYVAL, how do we develop a regulator which is truly regulating on a risk-based approach? That, to me, would be one of my priorities for the Financial Services Commission. I am not fully cognisant of their complaints process but I hear what the Deputy is saying and I think there would be value in working with the regulator on that complaints process if it is falling down, and generally people feel it is falling down. I also remind the Deputy what Deputy Miller said, by the very nature of a regulation and a regulator there will always be people who feel aggrieved at the actions that have been taken in some instances.

13.1.10 Deputy M.R. Scott:

During the MONEYVAL review, there was a transfer of responsibility to the Chief Minister and the question has been raised about the improvement of having a Minister who is responsible for financial services direct. Would the Deputy be prepared to comment on whether that would be regarded as a positive move within the department that is responsible for financial services?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I think the first move that the Chief Minister has proposed is the correct one for the reasons that I have just outlined. But, as ever, and I know the Chief Minister will, keeping portfolios under review so that the responsibilities of any given Minister or sector of the economy is reviewed and is given the oversight and support that it is needed is something that I think is a good standard practice. That, for my mind, should not mean that we could not do the same with financial services in due course.

13.1.11 Deputy H. Miles:

How will the Minister support fellow Ministers to negotiate a special arrangement within the Common Travel Area to enable the continuation and potential extension of the current identity scheme for French nationals once the electronic travel authorisation scheme is in place later this year?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Again, that is something that I would raise with U.K. Ministers as soon as is practical. The Deputy did what can only be described as a first-class job in pioneering what we now enjoy. I think I said last week that so first class was that scheme that the U.K. themselves are now following it, and it is us showing that we can act responsibly within the framework of protecting our borders, which we have got to remind ourselves is a very controversial theme in the Europe in which we are now residing, protecting our borders. That has to be at the forefront of our mind but I think the questioner

has shown that we can protect our borders and still be flexible to allow our French neighbours to come and visit us on an extended basis, and more than just day visitors. She knows, of course, the slight trap in the answer I am giving in that it is not the Minister for External Relations' job, it is the Minister for External Relations' job to support the Minister for Home Affairs as she develops that policy and takes it forward. I will do exactly that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Supplementary? Any further questions for Deputy Gorst? Okay, so that brings that session to an end. I invite Deputy Gorst to leave the Chamber and for Deputy Ozouf to be brought back to the Chamber.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like to raise the time because usually I am pretty flexible but today I have to collect my daughter and it was arranged with a 5.30 p.m. States sitting. I assume that Members would like to continue but I probably need to give my apology to leave at 5.30 p.m.

[17:15]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Your apology is noted, thank you. When you are ready, Deputy Ozouf, you have up to 10 minutes to address the Assembly.

13.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I will relieve Members by saying I will not be using my 10 minutes, I do not think. This new Government, which I hope is going to succeed, a unity Government, is entering, as all Members will know, a 2024 that is a year like no other. Elections in the United Kingdom; elections across the European Union; elections for President of the United States; the rise of extremism; blockading farmers of motorways in Paris, Frankfurt, Brussels; a continuing war in the Ukraine; the horror of war in the Middle East, now expanding in Yemen, now expanding across the Red Sea. I have no doubt that Deputy Gorst is going to be successful in this election. I wish him well. However, I have served also as his Minister for Treasury and Resources. He has been my Assistant Minister for External Relations. I know that he can do both jobs, but I am not sure that that asterisk that the Chief Minister has put forward of splitting it is an automatic *fait accompli*, if I may say. It is subject to an order and the job that Deputy Gorst has been nominated for is that of Minister for External Relations, but the asterisk says it is Financial Services, which is why we had questions about Financial Services, which has been moved from the Chief Minister's Department. Jersey is but a speck on a global map. However, we are an important speck. We are a proud speck. Sometimes we are described as a cork bobbing in the Atlantic Ocean. The importance of asserting this Assembly's constitutional position is something which I have taken really seriously. That does not mean getting on with just the Conservative Party. It means getting on with all parties. I doubt that any Member of any party would guess that I was a Member of any of them, because the Jersey Minister for External Relations and Jersey Assembly will get on with whoever the people of the United Kingdom will elect. I have prided myself in having access to being one phone call away from a Shadow Minister or Minister, and many know to do that. I want to make the point that there is a very great risk, if we do not continue to assert our international and ... if I do say, Deputy Bailhache in his work as the first Minister for External Relations extending and asserting that constitutional independence, that right that we are not to be dictated to by the U.K. Government ... our relationship with the Crown, they are not related to the U.K. Red lines, such as beneficial ownership registers, which will not be public, they are important. Jersey requires a relationship in a changing world. We are going to see a changed United Kingdom. A United Kingdom that does not know its place in the world yet. It does not have relations with Europe right. We are seeing that with supply chains. There have not been many questions in this question-and-answer session about the cost of living. The cost of living in Jersey is 1 per cent

higher than that of the U.K. The U.K. is higher than the E.U. What are we going to do? We have issues in relation to not just our relationships with the U.K. It requires, as some other questioners have said, creativity, innovation, seizing opportunities. I came up with the idea of fibre in Jersey. I was criticised at the time. Whether I am a Back-Bencher, Front-Bencher, all the rest of it, I want to see Jersey's digital trade in services agreements grow. I want to see the trade in services, those free trade agreements, which are so vital ... and Members may not have had the opportunity of asking me questions about them, and they do not have to; I will sit down and shut up in a minute. Basically, the free trade agreements that are so vital to our future. They can cut off our market access. They are going to command the attention. They need the time and dedication of a dedicated Minister for External Relations. Being interviewed on French TV, I am grateful for Members support about that. I was not asked one question about being the Minister for Financial Services, because we said that we were Jersey and Jersey is not just about financial services. What the Chief Minister is saying is that basically we are going to have a Minister for External Relations and Financial Services. I would very respectfully suggest that it is for this Assembly to decide on that order-making power. It is not a *fait accompli*. It should be thought about. I know, as being Minister for External Relations within being Minister for Financial Services, I have been able to do fantastic things, like working with the former Minister for the Environment. Have we seen a blockading French fleet of Norman fishermen that are unhappy? No, we have not. Have we had a Minister for Home Affairs that has charmed, after I did a bit of work, being able to get I.D. (Identification) cards? I said in my original speech to the External Relations I would find a solution to French visitors and we did. Did that take effort? I was the first Minister, I think, in 24 years to go to New Jersey gateway, where we are that bob in the ocean. We are that place that is in the time zone that is perfect between the dollar and the euro and we have the British pound. I would respectfully say that the new Government, if it is going to solve the recruitment crisis ... there have been hardly any questions in this question-and-answer session about the cost-of-living crisis. If we are going to secure the jobs and growth of the future then it needs more external relations and not less. It should be maintained as a separate Ministry. That is not a bid to say that Deputy Gorst should not be it. It is a signal to say it is this Assembly's decision of whether or not it is put back together with Financial Services. I would very respectfully suggest to Members that External Relations is better without Financial Services and you need a Minister for External Relations that is going to be tough enough (3 seconds of French spoken) and will be able to speak German or whatever. Just those other skills might be important. I will answer any questions. I am not going to be offended if there are no questions. I hope I have had my opportunity of saying and a bit of levity. If any Member wants to ask me a questions in the last few minutes of this Assembly where we will vote a new Government, a new Government which we wish success and we all want to work together in a united way. I say this with no malice, but with positive opportunity of what is possible. I believe everything is possible in Jersey, but we need to assert out international constitution and we need to be friends with everybody. That is a message globally, locally and in this Assembly too. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy Ozouf. Are there any questions for Deputy Ozouf?

13.2.1 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Does the candidate agree that our constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom Government requires the U.K. to consult with Jersey before inserting in a U.K. Bill a provision enabling the extension of that Act to Jersey?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Deputy knows the answer to that question: no, no, no, it does not. We should assert that constitutional right and if I was the Minister for External Relations I would be on a plane, on a telephone, doing that job straight away. If I have not done that because of events that happened to

me last year, I apologise, but the answer is absolutely yes; the U.K. should not dictate and we should have our red lines.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Any supplementary? Any further questions for Deputy Ozouf? There are no further questions. Then that brings that session of questions to an end. I invite Deputy Gorst to be brought back in to the Chamber. As both candidates have spoken and answered questions, we now move to the vote. As there were 2 candidates, the electronic voting system shall be used. Any Member wishing to vote for Deputy Gorst should press the pour button. Any Member wishing to vote for Deputy Ozouf should press the contre button. Members may, of course, abstain in the usual way as they wish by pressing the abstention button. I invite the Greffier to open the voting. Greffier have Members who are online been able to cast their votes? In that case, I ask the Greffier to close the voting.

Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter: 42	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: 1	Abstain: 4
Connétable of St. Helier	Deputy M.B. Andrews	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy I. Gardiner
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy D.J. Warr
Connétable of St. Peter		
Connétable of St. Martin		
Connétable of St. John		
Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of Grouville		
Connétable of St. Ouen		
Connétable of St. Mary		
Connétable of St. Saviour		
Deputy G.P. Southern		
Deputy C.F. Labey		
Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy S.M. Ahier		
Deputy R.J. Ward		
Deputy C.S. Alves		
Deputy I.J. Gorst		
Deputy L.J. Farnham		
Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		
Deputy T.A. Coles		
Deputy B.B.de S.V.M. Porée		
Deputy H.M. Miles		
Deputy M.R. Scott		
Deputy J. Renouf		
Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Deputy M.E. Millar		
Deputy A. Howell		
Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
Deputy M.R. Ferey		
Deputy R.S. Kovacs		

Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				

The Deputy Bailiff:

Therefore, in answer, Deputy Gorst has been appointed as the Minister for External Relations. **[Approbation]** In accordance with Article 19(7) of the States of Jersey Law, all Ministers have been appointed and therefore Deputy Farnham is formally appointed Chief Minister. That concludes Public Business for this meeting.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Sir, before we close, may I just say a few words?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

On behalf of the new Government, may I place on record a vote of thanks and recognition to the outgoing Council of Ministers for their work and their commitment to our Island over the last 18 months. **[Approbation]** May I also thank Members for appointing today a Government which is more inclusive of the Assembly, a Government that will foster unity, while embracing a diversity of opinions to always deliver the very best outcomes for Islanders. Thank you.

ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Deputy Bailiff:

That concludes Public Business for this meeting. I invite the Chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) to propose arrangements for future meetings.

[17:30]

14. The Connétable of St. Martin (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

The arrangements of Public Business, our next sitting is on Tuesday, 6th February. There will be some appointments in Scrutiny to deal with. I believe there may be 4 chair vacancies: chair of P.A.C., chair of Corporate Services, chair of the Economic, Housing and Infrastructure Panel, along with the chair of Economic and International Affairs Panel. There remain half a dozen propositions listed for debate. The new Council of Ministers may wish to defer some of this business in order to consider whether it wishes to proceed. Please be aware that we will probably be sitting for 2 days. I make the proposition.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. Is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any observations on the proposition made by the chair of P.P.C.? No. The Assembly is adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on 6th February.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:31]