

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 1st APRIL 2025

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER..... 9

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor 9

QUESTIONS..... 9

2. Written Questions..... 9

- 1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding “explicit approval” requests: (WQ.124/2025)..... 9
- 2 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding housing developments the States of Jersey Development Company has been responsible for: (WQ.125/2025) 11
- 3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding waiting times for scans: (WQ.126/2025) 13
- 4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding the current recruitment freeze: (WQ.128/2025) 14
- 5 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the control and use of smartphones in Jersey schools: (WQ.129/2025)..... 14
- 6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Field 579, St. Saviour and the proposed St. Saviour Health Village: (WQ.130/2025) ... 15
- 7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the pricing of groceries and food in Jersey: (WQ.131/2025) 16
- 8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding a framework and supporting policy in relation to the use of Artificial Intelligence technology in the public service: (WQ.132/2025)..... 17
- 9 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding bullying in Health and Care Jersey: (WQ.133/2025) 18
- 10 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding domestic sexual abuse: (WQ.134/2025) 19
- 11 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding prostate cancer: (WQ.135/2025)..... 20
- 12 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the criteria for classing a service as ‘essential’ and ‘non-essential’: (WQ.136/2025) 21
- 13 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Railway Walk crossing at La Rue de la Sergente: (WQ.137/2025)..... 21
- 14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Minister's reform of the health service: (WQ.138/2025) 22
- 15 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding Residential Space Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance: (WQ.139/2025)..... 24

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 16 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding policing Jersey roads: (WQ.140/2025) | 25 |
| 17 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the future St. Saviour Dementia Care Village: (WQ.141/2025)..... | 25 |
| 18 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding a review of apprenticeships, following the adoption of the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): Fifth Amendment (WQ.142/2025) | 26 |
| 19 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Portelet Bay Café: (WQ.143/2025)..... | 26 |
| 20 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding footfall at Fort Regent: (WQ.144/2025) | 27 |
| 21 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding single occupancy rooms on the maternity ward: (WQ.145/2025) | 27 |
| 22 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding teachers and teaching assistants requiring access to fertility treatment: (WQ.146/2025) | 29 |
| 23 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding Jersey Premium funding: (WQ.147/2025)..... | 29 |
| 24 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the provision of soft play facilities: (WQ.148/2025) | 30 |
| 25 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding sodium valproate: (WQ.149/2025) | 31 |
| 26 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for the Environment regarding regulation of the Island's Health Service: (WQ.150/2025) | 32 |
| 27 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Jersey's regulatory system for medicines: (WQ.151/2025)... | 33 |
| 28 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding an Environmental Impact Assessment for Les Minquiers: (WQ.152/2025) | 35 |
| 3. Oral Questions | 35 |
| 3.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the allocation of funding for Arts, Culture and Heritage (OQ.84/2025): ... | 35 |
| Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):..... | 35 |
| 3.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf: | 36 |
| 3.1.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North: | 36 |
| 3.1.3 Deputy I. Gardiner: | 36 |
| 3.1.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North: | 36 |
| 3.1.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier: | 37 |
| 3.1.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:..... | 37 |
| 3.1.7 Deputy M. Tadier:..... | 37 |
| 3.1.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: | 37 |
| 3.1.9 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 38 |
| 3.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:..... | 38 |
| 3.2 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the provision of play facilities for teenagers (OQ.90/2025): | 38 |
| Deputy M.E. Millar (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):..... | 38 |
| 3.2.1 Deputy D.J. Warr: | 39 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 3.2.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:..... | 39 |
| 3.2.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour: | 39 |
| 3.2.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet: | 39 |
| 3.2.5 Deputy I. Gardiner: | 40 |
| 3.2.6 Deputy I. Gardiner: | 40 |
| 3.2.7 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin: | 40 |
| 3.2.8 The Connétable of St. Martin: | 40 |
| 3.2.9 Deputy D.J. Warr: | 41 |
| 3.3 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Comité des Connétables regarding fitness to drive medical assessments (OQ.78/2025):..... | 41 |
| Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair, Comité des Connétables): | 41 |
| 3.3.1 Deputy K.F. Morel: | 41 |
| 3.3.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 41 |
| 3.3.3 Deputy J. Renouf: | 42 |
| 3.3.4 Deputy J. Renouf: | 42 |
| 3.3.5 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade: | 42 |
| 3.3.6 Deputy K.F. Morel: | 42 |
| 3.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Housing regarding proposed rent control measures (OQ.92/2025):..... | 42 |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South (The Minister for Housing):..... | 43 |
| 3.4.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 43 |
| 3.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the Skills Development Fund (OQ.79/2025): | 44 |
| Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning): | 44 |
| 3.5.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews: | 44 |
| 3.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier:..... | 44 |
| 3.5.3 Deputy I. Gardiner: | 44 |
| 3.5.4 Deputy I. Gardiner: | 45 |
| 3.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding a cap on energy prices (OQ.88/2025): | 45 |
| Deputy M.E. Millar (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):..... | 45 |
| 3.6.1 Deputy M. Tadier:..... | 45 |
| 3.6.2 Deputy J. Renouf: | 46 |
| 3.6.3 Deputy J. Renouf: | 46 |
| 3.6.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:..... | 47 |
| 3.6.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 47 |
| 3.6.6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 47 |
| 3.6.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 48 |
| 3.6.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 48 |
| 3.6.9 Deputy M. Tadier:..... | 48 |
| 3.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Social Security regarding exclusions for trainees or apprenticeships in the living wage (OQ.81/2025): | 48 |
| Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):..... | 49 |
| 3.7.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 49 |
| 3.7.2 Deputy J. Renouf: | 49 |
| 3.7.3 Deputy J. Renouf: | 49 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 3.7.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 50 |
| 3.7.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 50 |
| 3.7.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 50 |
| 3.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding bullying behaviour in young people (OQ.80/2025): | 50 |
| Deputy R.J. Ward: (The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning):..... | 50 |
| 3.8.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet: | 51 |
| 3.8.2 Deputy J. Renouf: | 52 |
| 3.8.3 Deputy J. Renouf: | 52 |
| 3.8.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 53 |
| 3.8.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 53 |
| 3.8.6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 54 |
| 3.8.7 Deputy M. Tadier:..... | 54 |
| 3.8.8 Deputy M. Tadier:..... | 55 |
| 3.8.9 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement: | 55 |
| 3.8.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson: | 56 |
| 3.8.11 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet: | 56 |
| 3.9 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding legislative drafting capacity (OQ.86/2025):..... | 57 |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):..... | 58 |
| 3.9.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:..... | 58 |
| 3.9.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 58 |
| 3.9.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:..... | 59 |
| 3.9.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis:..... | 59 |
| 3.9.5 Deputy A.F. Curtis:..... | 59 |
| 3.9.6 Deputy J. Renouf: | 59 |
| 3.9.7 Deputy J. Renouf: | 60 |
| 3.9.8 Deputy K.M. Wilson:..... | 60 |
| 3.10 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding data sharing rights (OQ.82/2025): | 60 |
| Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):..... | 60 |
| 3.10.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis: | 60 |
| 3.10.2 Deputy M. Tadier: | 61 |
| 3.10.3 Deputy M. Tadier: | 61 |
| 3.10.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 61 |
| 3.10.5 Deputy J. Renouf:..... | 62 |
| 3.10.6 Deputy J. Renouf:..... | 62 |
| 3.10.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis: | 62 |
| 3.11 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Social Security regarding the Community Cost Bonus and the Cold Weather Bonus (OQ.83/2025):..... | 63 |
| Deputy L.V. Feltham (The Minister for Social Security): | 63 |
| 3.11.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:..... | 63 |
| 3.12 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the impact of the closure of Fort Regent for 3 years (OQ.91/2025): | 63 |
| Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):..... | 63 |
| 3.12.1 Deputy D.J. Warr: | 63 |

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 3.12.2 | The Connétable of St. Mary: | 64 |
| 3.13 | Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for External Relations regarding the relationship between Jersey and Estonia (OQ.87/2025): | 64 |
| | Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Minister for External Relations): . | 64 |
| 3.13.1 | Deputy K.M. Wilson: | 64 |
| 3.14 | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding initiatives to reduce grocery prices in the Island (OQ.93/2025): | 65 |
| | Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development): | 65 |
| 3.14.1 | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 65 |
| 3.14.2 | Deputy I. Gardiner: | 66 |
| 3.14.3 | Deputy I. Gardiner: | 66 |
| 3.14.4 | Deputy M. Tadier: | 66 |
| 3.14.5 | Deputy M. Tadier: | 67 |
| 3.14.6 | Deputy S.M. Ahier: | 67 |
| 3.14.7 | Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour: | 67 |
| 3.14.8 | The Connétable of St. Saviour: | 67 |
| 3.14.9 | Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour: | 68 |
| 3.14.10 | Deputy R.S. Kovacs: | 68 |
| 3.14.11 | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 68 |
| 3.15 | Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding the High Value Residency scheme (OQ.85/2025): | 68 |
| | Deputy I.J. Gorst (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur): | 68 |
| 3.15.1 | Deputy J. Renouf: | 69 |
| 3.15.2 | Deputy A.F. Curtis: | 69 |
| 3.15.3 | Deputy A.F. Curtis: | 69 |
| 3.15.4 | Deputy S.M. Ahier: | 70 |
| 3.15.5 | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 70 |
| 3.15.6 | Deputy R.S. Kovacs: | 71 |
| 3.15.7 | Deputy R.S. Kovacs: | 71 |
| 3.15.8 | Deputy J. Renouf: | 71 |
| 4. | Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Health and Social Services | 72 |
| 4.1 | Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin: | 72 |
| | Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Health and Social Services): | 72 |
| 4.1.1 | The Connétable of St. Martin: | 72 |
| 4.2 | Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: | 72 |
| 4.2.1 | Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 73 |
| 4.3 | Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement: | 73 |
| 4.3.1 | Deputy K.M. Wilson: | 74 |
| 4.4 | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: | 74 |
| 4.4.1 | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 74 |
| 4.5 | Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade: | 75 |
| 4.5.1 | Deputy M. Tadier: | 75 |
| 4.6 | Deputy J. Renouf: | 75 |
| 4.7 | Deputy S.M. Ahier: | 75 |
| 4.7.1 | Deputy S.M. Ahier: | 75 |
| 4.8 | Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central: | 76 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.8.1 Deputy G.P. Southern: | 76 |
| 5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for International Development | 76 |
| 5.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: | 76 |
| Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for International Development): | 76 |
| 5.1.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 76 |
| 5.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: | 77 |
| 5.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 77 |
| 6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister | 78 |
| 6.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade: | 78 |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister): | 78 |
| 6.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier: | 78 |
| 6.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 78 |
| 6.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 79 |
| 6.3 Deputy J. Renouf: | 79 |
| 6.3.1 Deputy J. Renouf: | 80 |
| 6.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North: | 80 |
| 6.4.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier: | 80 |
| 6.5 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South: | 80 |
| 6.5.1 Deputy D.J. Warr: | 80 |
| 6.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 81 |
| 6.6.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune: | 81 |
| 6.7 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North: | 82 |
| 6.7.1 Deputy I. Gardiner: | 82 |
| 6.8 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement: | 82 |
| 6.8.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis: | 83 |
| 6.9 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée of St. Helier South: | 83 |
| 6.9.1 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée: | 83 |
| 6.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement: | 84 |
| LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED | 84 |
| LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT | 84 |
| PUBLIC BUSINESS | 85 |
| 7. Draft Westaway Trust (Transfer of Assets) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.10/2025) | 85 |
| 7.1 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Treasury and Resources): | 85 |
| 7.1.1 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier: | 86 |
| 7.1.2 Deputy M.E. Millar: | 86 |
| 7.2 Deputy M.E. Millar: | 88 |
| 7.3 Deputy M.E. Millar: | 89 |
| 8. Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202- (P.15/2025) | 89 |
| 8.1 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur): | 89 |
| Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central: | 91 |
| 8.1.2 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement: | 92 |
| 8.1.3 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 93 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 8.2 Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202- (P.15/2025): amendment (P.15/2025 Amd.) | 95 |
| 8.2.1 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 95 |
| 8.2.2 Deputy H.M. Miles: | 96 |
| 8.2.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement: | 96 |
| 8.2.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: | 97 |
| 8.2.5 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 98 |
| 8.3 Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202- (P.15/2025) - as amended (P.15/2025 Amd.) | 99 |
| 8.3.1 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 99 |
| 8.4 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 100 |
| 8.4.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis: | 101 |
| 8.4.2 Deputy L.J. Farnham: | 101 |
| 8.4.3 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade: | 101 |
| 8.4.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 102 |
| Mr. M. Jowitt., H.M. Solicitor General: | 102 |
| 8.4.5 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade: | 103 |
| 8.4.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South: | 103 |
| 8.4.7 Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter: | 104 |
| 8.4.8 Deputy R.J. Ward: | 105 |
| 8.4.9 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 105 |
| 8.4.10 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 107 |
| 8.4.11 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 108 |
| 8.4.12 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: | 108 |
| 8.4.13 Deputy M. Tadier: | 109 |
| 8.4.14 Deputy C.S. Alves: | 110 |
| 9. Increase Stamp Duty for properties that are not principal residences to 5% (P.16/2025) | 112 |
| 9.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North: | 112 |
| 9.1.1 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: | 115 |
| 9.1.2 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour: | 117 |
| 9.1.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: | 118 |
| 9.1.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South: | 120 |
| 9.1.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews: | 122 |
| 10. Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- (P.17/2025) | 124 |
| The Connétable of St. Martin (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee): | 125 |
| 10.1 Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- (P.17/2025): amendment (P.17/2025 Amd.) | 126 |
| 10.1.1 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter: | 126 |
| 10.1.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: | 127 |
| 10.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier: | 127 |
| 10.1.4 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South: | 128 |
| 10.1.5 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: | 128 |
| 10.1.6 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade: | 128 |
| 10.1.7 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North: | 129 |
| 10.1.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: | 129 |
| 10.1.9 Deputy K.L. Moore: | 129 |

10.2 Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- (P.17/2025) - resumption..... 131

10.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf: 131

10.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier: 131

10.2.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South: 132

10.2.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:..... 132

10.2.5 The Connétable of St. Martin: 132

ADJOURNMENT..... 134

[9:30]

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

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can I ask for a ruling on Standing Order 12 in relation to Written Question 139?

The Bailiff:

Yes, we would normally do that after we have welcomed the Lieutenant Governor to the Chamber

Deputy J. Renouf:

I do beg your pardon.

The Bailiff:

Not in the slightest.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

Members will join me in welcoming His Excellency to the Chamber this morning. [Approbation] Deputy Renouf, which is the question?

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

It is Question 139, and I apologise for jumping in too quickly. Particularly in regard to part (a). I have sent details to the Greffier who can perhaps forward them on, but it relates to a point that was made about an appendix that was referred to that contained information, and as far as I can see, it does not contain the relevant information.

The Bailiff:

In which case, I will review that over the lunch hour and make a ruling as soon as I can.

QUESTIONS

2. Written Questions

1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding “explicit approval” requests: (WQ.124/2025)

Question

Will the Minister detail how many “explicit approval” requests were received by her department to increase Government fees and charges in excess of 2.5%, as set out in the [Public Finances Manual](#), and how many were approved, for each of the years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 to date?

Answer

Under the Public Finances Manual, the Minister, or the Treasurer under delegation from the Minister, can approve increases in Government fees and charges that are in excess of 2.5%. Approvals given for the years 2022 to 2025 are set out in Table 1 below. This approval is not necessary if increases are already agreed by the States Assembly through the Budget. Where increases are approved by the Treasurer under delegation from the Minister, the Treasurer can raise these for discussion with the Minister at her weekly Ministerial Meetings. We do not have records of requests received but not approved.

| Year | Department | % increase | Description |
|------|---|------------|--|
| 2022 | Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) | 3.9 | Increases in school fees for Jersey College for Girls and Jersey College Preparatory. |
| 2022 | CYPES | 3.5 & 3 | Increases in school fees for Victoria College (3.5%) and Victoria College Preparatory (3%). |
| 2023 | CYPES | 8 | Increases in school fees for Jersey College for Girls and Jersey College Preparatory. |
| 2023 | CYPES | 8 | Increases in school fees for Victoria College and Victoria College Preparatory. |
| 2023 | Infrastructure | 8.3 | Increase in the public parking places unit cost to fund the Island Road Safety Review (R.185/2021); and additional expenditure budget for Operations and Transport equivalent to the additional fee income in 2023. |
| 2023 | CYPES | 5 | Increases in Higher Education Course fees. |
| 2023 | Health and Community Services (HCS) (now Health and Care Jersey (HCJ)) | 6 | Private Patient Tariff increase. This was last updated for 2021. |
| 2023 | Customer and Local Services (CLS) (now Employment, Social Security and Housing) | 18.26 | Increase in fees charged to persons granted Entitled status under Regulation 2(1)(e) of the Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 2013. |
| 2023 | CLS | 5 | Increase to the fee for Non-Resident Undertakings (NRU) applications. This was to help mitigate the revenue lost to tax exemptions within the 'Budget Measures for Innovation and Enterprise', relating to the 60 day threshold for short-term visitors. |
| 2023 | Infrastructure | 3.5 | Increases in Sports facilities fees (a global update across sports services and facilities). |
| 2023 | Infrastructure | 2.73 | Increases in Driver & Vehicle Standards fees to address the lagging of previous fee increases. |
| 2024 | CYPES | 8 | Increases in school fees for Jersey College for Girls and Jersey College Preparatory. |
| 2024 | CYPES | 8 | Increases in school fees for Victoria College and Victoria College Preparatory. |
| 2024 | Infrastructure | 7.22 | Increase in the public parking places unit cost. |

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| 2024 | Infrastructure | 7.5 | Increases in fees and charges (to include commercial tipping fees, asbestos containing materials and organic waste). |
| 2024 | HCS | 6.6 | Increases in the Health & Community Services Non-Eligible Patient Tariff. |
| 2024 | CYPES | 8 | Increases in Highlands College course fees. |
| 2024 | HCS | 9.5 | Private Patient Tariff increase. This is to keep the tariff in line with Jersey RPI and industry-wide medical costs inflation. |
| 2024 | Judicial Greffe | 415 | Fee increase for Enforcement Appeals in 2025 to bring the fee in line with other appeal fees and reflect the cost of handling those appeals. The increase was requested by the Infrastructure and Environment Department but income is received by the Judicial Greffe. |
| 2024 | CLS | 5 | Increase to the fee for Non-Resident Undertakings (NRU) applications. |
| 2025 | HCI | 7.95 | Private Patient Tariff increase to keep up with industry-wide medical costs inflation which runs ahead of Jersey RPI. |

2 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding housing developments the States of Jersey Development Company has been responsible for: (WQ.125/2025)

Question

Will the Minister state the number of housing developments the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC) has been responsible for since 2019 and, for each development, indicate –

- (a) the number of units sold to first-time buyers;
- (a) the number of units sold to buy-to-let investors; and

will she advise what plans, if any, there are to restrict the future number of SoJDC units that can be sold to buy-to-let investors?

Answer

Since 2019, SoJDC has delivered the following residential developments:

| Development | Number of Homes | (a) Number sold to first- time buyers at initial SoJDC sale | (b) Number sold to buy-to-let investors at initial SoJDC sale |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|---|
| College Gardens | 187 (all sold) | 89 | 43 |
| Horizon | 280 (276 sold to date) | 88 | 129 |

The States Assembly has debated the tenures on SoJDC's future housing developments on four recent occasions: 10 February 2021 ([P.165/2020](#)), 22 July 2021 ([P.69/2021](#)), 26 November 2021 ([P.96/2021](#)) and 25 June 2024 ([P.37/2024](#)).

Following these debates revised guidance has been formally issued to SoJDC that the Company must follow:-

R.139/2021 states the following with regards SoJDC's South Hill development:

In advancing their plans for the development on the South Hill site, SoJDC will:

F. Ensure that buy-to-let investors are prevented from acquiring units on the Development at the initial point of sale.

G. Take such steps as are necessary to provide that the Development and the units thereon are structured by way of Flying Freehold.

H. Ensure that a minimum 15% of the units eventually constructed are provided for a first-time buyer shared-equity scheme, for which access and eligibility criteria will be established by the Minister for Housing and Communities.

In negotiation with the Minister for Housing, the following allocation of new homes at South Hill has been agreed:

- 25% available via a Shared Equity scheme (with 25% equity retained)
- 35% of the open market homes to target first-time buyers with SoJDC deposit payment incentive
- 20% of the open market homes to target right-sizers with SoJDC incentive to encourage down-sizing
- Remaining 20% to be sold to Owner Occupiers (upsizing or downsizing) without incentive.

R.157/2021 states the following with regards SoJDC's Waterfront development:

Specific Principles

21. In advancing their plans for the Waterfront development, SoJDC will:

F. Take such steps as are necessary to provide that the development and the units thereon are structured by way of Flying Freehold, thereby ensuring no foreign buy to let sales.

G. Control any necessary use of buy to let sales in the following way:

- *Ensure units are brought forward for sale in tranches that are made available to different categories of buyer prioritised in discussion with the Housing and Communities Ministers*

- *Ensure that buy to let sales are reserved to the final tranche of sales, and only made available on decision of the Housing and Communities Minister and after a reasonable period has passed to allow those prioritised groups to access sales. In releasing any tranche of buy to let sales, ensure that:*

- *the maximum number of units that can be bought by any local investor is capped to 1 in the first instance, subject to demand, which can be reviewed in line with demand data as the Developments is progressed.*

- *those units are sold with appropriate restrictions that require they be let for stable, medium-term tenures within a framework of stable rental increases, in perpetuity (recognising that exception provisions will be required to accommodate certain family or other circumstances).*

- *Rents and annual rent increases will be determined within the terms of the lease*

H. Ensure that a minimum 15% of the units eventually constructed are provided for a first-time buyer shared equity scheme where homes will be sold at a discount to market value [specifications to be added], for which access and eligibility criteria will be established by the Minister for Housing and Communities. I. The requirement can be varied on a pro rata basis if, under the protocols established under principle I (below), an equivalent number of affordable homes can be developed elsewhere on the site. J. Any development surplus, as a result of Shared Equity purchase will be reinvested to fund future provision and regeneration, including the development of affordable housing, equating to a £24m subsidy

Furthermore, the adoption of [P.37/2024 Amd.](#) (debated 25 June 2024) requires SoJDC to deliver the following on the Waterfront:

- (a) *any such proposals must include a minimum provision of no less than 50% of the homes to be offered with an assisted purchase product for first time buyers, where the phasing of delivery is agreed by the Minister for Housing and the Regeneration Steering Group; and*
- (b) *any such proposals must include a minimum of 15% of housing designed to encourage and enable Islanders who are looking to right-size, in line with the delivery of the right-sizing policy set out in R.85/2024, where the phasing of delivery is agreed by the Minister for Housing and the Regeneration Steering Group*

Given the clarity and restrictions that have already been applied to SoJDC as a result of the aforementioned States debates, the Minister does not believe there is any need for further restrictions.

3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding waiting times for scans: (WQ.126/2025)

Question

Will the Minister state the expected and actual waiting times between a scan being undertaken and a report being submitted for private and public patients in each of 2022, 2023 and 2024, broken down by X-ray, CT, and MRI scans?

Answer

Despite the Care Quality Commission (CQC) recommending in 2018 that ‘The National Imaging Optimisation Delivery Board should advise on national standards for report turnaround times, so that trusts can monitor and benchmark their performance’¹, there were no national standards for ‘test to report’ turnaround times (TATs) until Q3 2023.

Jersey Hospital radiology turnaround times in 2022 and 2023 were therefore benchmarked against the NHS Getting it Right First Time (GIRFT) programme which showed that providers performing in the top quartile for TATs completed **75% of reports (across all modalities) by day three** after the test was conducted.²

In the Jersey Radiology department:

- 82.83% of reports across all modalities were completed by day 3 in 2023
- 87.05% of reports across all modalities were completed by day 3 in 2022

This can be further broken down by modality to show:

| Modality | % reported by day 3 in 2023 | % reported by day 3 in 2022 |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CT | 96.31% | 97.96% |
| MRI | 87.85% | 92.56% |

¹ Care Quality Commission (July 2018), *Radiology Review*, available at <https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180718-radiology-reporting-review-report-final-for-web.pdf>, accessed 16.07.21

¹ Halliday, K. Maskell, G. et al (November 2020), *Radiology GIRFT Programme National Speciality Report*, p.7

² NHS England (August 2023) Diagnostic imaging reporting turnaround times, available at [NHS England » Diagnostic imaging reporting turnaround times](#)

| | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| X-Ray | 68.38% | 79.24% |
|-------|--------|--------|

In late 2023 the Royal College of Radiologists and the Society of Radiographers, in conjunction with NHS England, developed the guidance around TATs which the CQC had recommended.

The fundamental basis of this stated:

‘No verified report should take longer than **4 weeks** to be provided after image acquisition’ⁱ

However the guidance is further broken down by exam type and urgency, with an emphasis on ‘differential targets according to urgency and referral source’.

The Jersey Radiology department are in the process of realigning the reporting of turnaround times alongside this guidance from the professional bodies and data for 2024 will be available shortly. Whilst there has been no requirement previously to split the data according to public or private status of the patient, it is likely that this will be included in future statistics.

4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding the current recruitment freeze: (WQ.128/2025)

Question

Following the publication of the [2025 Business Plan – People Services](#), will the Chair advise whether the current recruitment freeze will be extended and, if so, what criteria will be applied; and if not, why not?

Answer

Further measures to curb growth in the public sector are under consideration and updates will be provided in due course.

5 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the control and use of smartphones in Jersey schools: (WQ.129/2025)

Question

In relation to the control and use of smartphones in Jersey schools and the high use of educational technology, will the Minister advise whether –

- (a) his department has undertaken any assessment into whether educational technology has an impact on Jersey schools fulfilling the inclusion charter’s promises for all children to access the curriculum, particularly vulnerable children;
 - (b) any consideration has been given to ensuring recommended “tech detoxes” are included within the school day; and
- if any of the above have been undertaken, will he provide the relevant documentation, and if not, why not?

Answer

- a) The Digital Education Strategy (DES), published in late 2022, prioritises the development of a digital ecosystem that enhances inclusivity, equity, and positive educational outcomes in line with the Inclusion Charter.

JADE’s work aligns with the Inclusion Charter, ensuring that digital resources support, rather than hinder, access to the curriculum for all students. Assistive technologies, such as Voice-to-Text

applications and video feedback tools, are already being used to enhance accessibility and engagement.

The Jersey Association for Digital Education (JADE), established to drive digital innovation in education, has identified key priorities, including:

- Expanding access to digital devices to support learning in and beyond the classroom.
- Developing a Jersey Learning Hub, a centralised platform providing child-centred learning resources.
- Promoting the Digital Capabilities Framework, ensuring students develop essential digital skills.
- Supporting teachers with training on innovative technologies, including assistive tools for inclusion.

JADE's work aligns with the Inclusion Charter, ensuring that digital resources support, rather than hinder, access to the curriculum for all students. Assistive technologies, such as Voice-to-Text applications and video feedback tools, are already being used to enhance accessibility and engagement.

- b) Typically, Primary schools are not utilising technology prolifically enough to warrant the requirement for a technology detox in their schools. The advent of technology may determine an increase in devices in schools and, as this occurs, training to support learning and teaching will be embedded.

Each school will adapt their approach in line with the level of use of technology as appropriate.

6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Field 579, St. Saviour and the proposed St. Saviour Health Village: (WQ.130/2025)

Question

Will the Minister provide an update on the proposed 'St. Saviour Health Village', and use of Field 579, St. Saviour, including –

- (a) details on the intended use of Field 579;
- (b) whether any formal consultation with nearby residents and parishioners is planned and, if so, when;
- (c) the current status and timeline of any development associated with the St. Saviour Health Village project; and
- (d) whether any alternative sites were considered, and the justification given for the choice of Field 579?

Answer

The Government remains committed to delivering the St. Saviour Health Village as part of the broader New Healthcare Facilities Programme, ensuring improved healthcare facilities for the community.

(a) Intended Use of Field 579

Field S579 has been identified as a potential site for the St. Saviour Health Village project. However, currently, the field currently remains in private ownership and so no final decisions have been made regarding its use, as the St Saviour Health Village site is still in its early development stages. The healthcare services to be offered at the St Saviour Health Village is provided in the Feasibility Study published on the NHFP webpages in Summer 2023.

(b) Consultation with Residents and Parishioners

Public engagement is a key aspect of this project and the wider New Healthcare Facilities Programme. While there has been a necessary focus on progressing the Acute Hospital at Overdale, efforts will soon turn towards advancing plans for the St. Saviour Health Village and the ambulatory Facility at Kensington Place. As part of this, further consultation with residents and parishioners will be planned in Spring and Summer 2025, ensuring that local perspectives are considered. There was also public engagement in Summer 2023 on the release of the Feasibility Study. Public engagement events are always advertised well in advance using letter drops as well as social media in line with the Overdale and Kensington Place Neighbourhood Forums.

(c) Current Status and Timeline

As set out at the start of the NHFP, the priority has been securing funding Phase 1 of the programme and advancing the designs for the Acute Hospital at Overdale. The NHFP Phase 1 funding also includes a meaningful start of the ambulatory facility at Kensington Place as well as the Health Village in St Saviour. With key milestones now achieved in terms of funding of the whole NHFP Phase 1, as well as the approval of the Planning Committee for the proposals for the Acute Hospital, increased resource will be allocated to progressing the St. Saviour Health Village and the Ambulatory Hospital at Kensington Place. At St Saviour, concept designs will be further developed over the Summer, informed by previous feedback, before being shared with residents for further input.

(d) Consideration of Alternative Sites

At the inception of the NHFP, it was agreed that existing healthcare sites would be considered for future facilities, with the exception of Enid Quenault Health and Wellbeing Centre that was already underway. For this reason, the sites for major facilities have always concentrated on existing locations of healthcare services that can accommodate the level of development necessary for the NHFP: Overdale, Jersey General/Kensington Place and St Saviour, and immediately adjacent properties, including Field S579. At the time that stakeholders, including clinicians were asked about the best configuration of healthcare services in a multi-site solution, it was agreed that the optimal configuration would be to cluster acute and ambulatory services, as well as a health village (combining mental health and physical health services). At the time, the option of combining the Health Village with the acute and ambulatory hospitals was explored but was ruled out owing to the functional brief and requirements of the Health Village as well as the development capacity of the sites that can accommodate Ambulatory and Acute Services.

As was always anticipated with the programmatic approach to the NHFP, there will be opportunity over the coming months to review the functional briefs for both Kensington Place Ambulatory and the St Saviour Health Village to ensure that they remain relevant and appropriate. Development Control Plans (such as those presented as part of Feasibility Studies) may well evolve. Any changes would need to follow NHFP and GoJ governance processes.

7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the pricing of groceries and food in Jersey: (WQ.131/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise whether he has requested that the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA), the Economics Unit or any other body, investigates the pricing of groceries and food in Jersey, and if not, will he consider issuing direction under Article 6(4) of the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law 2001 to request the JCRA, or to otherwise instruct the Economics Unit or any other expert body, to assess the extent to which supply chain issues are potentially distorting competition and inflating prices disproportionately in the Island?

Answer

The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority launched a market study into groceries in November 2022 and released their final report on 25 September 2023. The study ([here](#)) found no immediate competition issues for

Jersey's grocery market and concluded that price differences between Jersey and the UK tend to reflect higher island specific operating costs (primarily freight and labour) and tax difference and not a lack of competition.

The JCRA study recommended that price transparency be improved via investment in the Jersey Consumer Council's price comparison service, to encourage greater price-based competition. Since then the Jersey Consumer Council has invested in an improved price comparison tool which is available on its website [Prices.je](https://www.jersey.gov.uk/Prices). This tool gives consumers in Jersey a central place to compare prices of everyday products sold at the main supermarkets with prices regularly collected by volunteers and Council members.

The 2021 JCRA freight logistics market study noted that the high concentration of freight logistics in Jersey was unusual and that because freight logistics is not a natural monopoly, the JCRA concluded that "it is other factors not economic fundamentals" that have produced the market structure and in turn "policy drivers can help improve the performance of the market". Partly in response to this, the new ferry contract with DFDS includes a flat-rate charge for freight (£/metre lane), replacing the previous rate card that included volume-based discounts.

The Economics Unit and Cost of Living Group are already monitoring prices and will continue to do so.

8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding a framework and supporting policy in relation to the use of Artificial Intelligence technology in the public service: (WQ.132/2025)

Question

Further to [Written Question 197/2024](#), will the Chief Minister provide an update on the adoption of a framework and supporting policy in relation to the use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) technology in the public service, and advise whether consideration has been given to A.I.'s potential for streamlining services and a consequential reduction in administrative roles and, if so, does he consider this will be achievable during 2025, and lead to public sector savings?

Answer

To support the safe, responsible and effective adoption of Artificial Intelligence across public services, the Government has established an AI Steering Group (AISG) comprising senior representatives from each Government department. The group held its first meeting on 21st February 2025.

The AISG will be supported by five specialist sub-committees, each with a focus on a key area of AI governance, policy, and implementation. These sub-committees have been tasked with developing frameworks and guidance to enable the secure, ethical, and timely introduction of AI technologies within the Government's technical estate.

The five sub-committees are focused on:

- AI technology policies and standards
- AI communication planning and guidelines
- AI security policies and standards
- AI data protection and information governance guidelines
- AI insights and learnings from other jurisdictions

The AISG met for a second time on 28th March 2025 and approved, in principle, the internal Government of Jersey AI Policy. This sets out clear principles and guidelines to support the responsible use of AI across the public service. In addition to the overarching policy, two draft AI technology standards have been developed and will be presented to the AISG for approval at a future meeting.

It is recognised that AI tools have the potential to streamline services and improve efficiency. The AISG is exploring opportunities to pilot specific technologies where there is a likely benefit.

While the potential of AI is recognised, there are no planned savings associated with the use of AI in 2025.

9 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding bullying in Health and Care Jersey: (WQ.133/2025)

Question

Will the Chair advise –

- (a) what actions have been undertaken in Health and Care Jersey (HCJ) to address any issues of bullying;
- (b) the number of managers in HCJ investigated for bullying over the last five years, and how many have been consequently dismissed; and
- (c) how many HCJ employees were signed off for each of the last five years due to stress caused by bullying?”

Answer

- a. What actions have been undertaken in Health and Care Jersey (HCJ) to address any issues of bullying;**
- Introduction of Freedom to Speak up Guardian.
 - Employees have access to a confidential *Speak up* line.
 - Mandatory Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training – including discrimination.
 - Access to Dignity and Respect training.
 - Undertaking fact finding and investigations to address complaints.
 - Instigation of disciplinary actions at appropriate level in cases where allegations were substantiated.
 - Restorative practice, including facilitated meetings and mediation.
 - Offering affected employees access to support, including the *BeSupported* helpline and counselling.
 - Introduction of a Health and Care Jersey dedicated wellbeing team.
 - Introducing the *People Committee*, as part of the Health and Care Jersey Workforce Board to discuss any emerging patterns and concerns and steps undertaken to address bullying.
 - Gathering feedback from employees, managers and Union representatives as part of the HR Lounge review.
- b. The number of managers in HCJ investigated for bullying over the last five years, and how many have been consequently dismissed**

| | |
|------|----|
| 2020 | 6 |
| 2021 | 5 |
| 2022 | <5 |
| 2023 | <5 |
| 2024 | <5 |

c. How many HCJ employees were signed off for each of the last five years due to stress caused by bullying?

Medical certificates for stress-related absences do not include a specific category that records bullying so the information is not available.

10 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding domestic sexual abuse: (WQ.134/2025)

Question

Will the Minister state the number of women and men who have reported domestic sexual abuse within each of the last five years, and of these cases, how many investigations resulted in prosecutions, and how many prosecutions resulted in convictions?

Answer

Domestic sexual offences account for approx. one fifth of all sexual offences. These figures would suggest it is under-reported.

It is crucial to consider the wider context of any offences reported by victims of domestic abuse and ensure any other relevant potential investigations/charges are considered.

This has become possible since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse (Jersey) Law 2022 as sexual offences can now be seen in the context of coercive controlling behaviour.

Most incidents/offences reported to the police are not isolated and it is well documented that domestic abuse in all its forms usually escalates over time.

Domestic Sexual Offences Recorded:

- Between 2020 and 2024, there are more female victims of domestic sexual offences (126 offences in total), compared to men (11 offences in total).
- There were 15 female victim offences in 2020, which increased to 18 in 2021. 2022 and 2023 then saw 30 recorded, reducing slightly to 28 in 2024.
- For each year between 2020 and 2024 between 1 and 3 offences were recorded with a male victim.
- The highest volume domestic sexual offence recorded is rape of a female, accounting for 89 of the 137 (combined male and female total).

| Domestic sexual offences - recorded, counted crime | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Sex of victim | | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Total |
| Male Total | | <5 | <5 | <5 | <5 | <5 | <5 | 11 |
| Female Total | | 15 | 18 | 30 | 30 | 28 | 5 | 126 |
| Grand Total | | 16 | 20 | 33 | 31 | 30 | 7 | 137 |

Prosecutions – Charged to Court:

- The overall charge rate for domestic sexual offences is 15% (both male and female victims). The charge rate for female victims is also 15%.

- For male victims, 1 of the 11 crimes recorded have been charged.
- 13 of the 89 (15%) rape of a female crimes have been charged.

| Prosecutions (charged to court) | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Sex of victim | | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Total |
| Male Total | | | <5 | | | | | 1 |
| Female Total | | <5 | <5 | 8 | 5 | <5 | | 19 |
| Grand Total | | <5 | <5 | 8 | 5 | <5 | | 20 |

Convictions at Court (Judicial Sanction):

- 7 of the 137 total domestic sexual offences received a judicial sanction at court – amounting to 5% of reported crimes.
- 4 of the 89 rape of a female crimes received a judicial sanction – which is 4%
- No male victims' offences received a judicial sanction – all 7 offences were female victims.

| Convictions at Court | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Sex of victim | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Total |
| Female Total | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | | 7 |

11 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding prostate cancer: (WQ.135/2025)

Question

Will the Minister provide information on the rates of prostate cancer in Jersey compared to the UK for the past 5 years and advise –

- whether Jersey follows the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for the treatment of prostate cancer; and
- whether Abiraterone, a drug available in Scotland and Wales for high-risk prostate cancer patients whose cancer has not yet spread, is available to patients in Jersey, and if not, why not?

Answer

- Jersey follows, as a minimum, the NICE clinical guidelines for prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment. These evidence-based standards ensure that patients receive care consistent with best practice across England. In addition to NICE-approved treatments, Jersey also follows recommendations from the Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF).
- Abiraterone has been available to eligible Jersey patients for over five years, in line with best practice in England and NICE guidelines. High risk patients with localised disease, that would benefit from Abiraterone or newer **androgen receptor inhibitors**, like **enzalutamide** and **apalutamide**, are offered these. We have a process that is called Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) which allows us to request treatment that are outside of NICE guidelines

Additional information

- Approximately 62 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year in Jersey.
- The age-standardised incidence rate in Jersey (193.3/100,000) is slightly higher than in England (~186/100,000).
- The median age at diagnosis for prostate cancer in Jersey is 71 years, which is identical to England's average.
- Over 90% of cases are diagnosed in men aged 60 and above, consistent with national trends.
- Jersey's slightly higher prostate cancer incidence rate compared to England most likely reflects enhanced case detection, particularly due to greater PSA testing uptake, improved access to diagnostics, and earlier diagnosis through routine monitoring by primary care.
- What is the Cancer Drug Fund? The CDF enables early access to innovative cancer treatments that have demonstrated significant clinical benefit but are still undergoing full NICE appraisal. This approach ensures patients can benefit from promising new therapies without unnecessary delay.

Channel Islands Cancer Report

12 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the criteria for classing a service as 'essential' and 'non-essential': (WQ.136/2025)

Question

Further to [Written Question 118/2025](#), regarding charges for health services, will the Minister outline the criteria for classing a service as 'essential' and 'non-essential'?

Answer

My understanding is the definitions of essential (or necessary) and non-essential health care services vary and can be context based (for example, decisions as to whether it is necessary to provide a service to a non-resident under a reciprocal health agreement as opposed to providing that service to a resident) or person specific (for example, the some treatments may be considered essential or non-essential based on a person's individual circumstances) or outcome specific (for example, in relation to the cost versus outcomes decision-making associated with the provision of high cost drugs and treatments).

As set out in my answer to WQ.118/2025, I am considering the potential introduction of new charges for non-essential services (or conversely not providing those services) but this work is in its initial stages and criteria to support decision-making have not yet been developed.

Furthermore, as set out in WQ.118/2025 any new charge for an existing service would be approved by the States Assembly prior to introduction in accordance with P.63/2003.

13 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Railway Walk crossing at La Rue de la Sergente: (WQ.137/2025)

Question

Will the Minister provide an update on plans to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists using the Railway Walk crossing at La Rue de la Sergente, and advise what schemes, if any, he is considering to improve –

- (a) the safety of pedestrians on the road heading to, and coming from, the west; and
- (b) the crossing for pedestrians and cyclists;
- and will he advise the timetable for, and any barriers to, the implementation of these improvements?

Answer

In line with the States' Sustainable Transport Policy, the Department is committed to enhancing strategic walking and cycling routes to improve both safety and accessibility. This includes key crossing points such as the Railway Walk crossing at La Rue de la Sergente. The Department is also dedicated to creating safer routes to schools within this area and others, reinforcing the need to improve footway access along La Rue de la Sergente.

I have visited this site with officers. While an initial feasibility study has explored options for highway improvements for this location, including the potential of an upgraded crossing, progress is dependent on addressing the lack of a continuous footway on the north side of La Rue de la Sergente's western approach. This gap not only obstructs pedestrian access but also obscures the visibility lines required to install a crossing. Consequently, advancement of any wider highway improvement scheme remains on hold until this issue is resolved. To that end, the Department is pursuing necessary land purchases.

Subject to the completion of land purchase and budget availability, the Department plans to implement highway improvements in two phases over the next two years:

- Phase 1: Land purchase and construction of a new link footway on the north side of La Rue de la Sergente on the western approach.
- Phase 2: Railway Walk crossing enhancement with footway upgrade to east up to Route Orange.

The timeline for these improvements remains contingent on the successful acquisition of the necessary land and the availability of the required funding.

14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Minister's reform of the health service: (WQ.138/2025)

Question

In relation to the Minister's reform of the health service, will he publish any information used to inform the development of the proposals, and advise –

- (a) what formal goals were established for the reorganisation of the service;
- (b) what analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current structure was conducted;
- (c) what data was used to establish a baseline against which to measure success of the reorganisation, and the proposed criteria and process for measuring success;
- (d) any alternative options for the reorganisation that were considered; and
- (e) what potential improvements in patient outcomes have been identified and how they will be measured?

Answer

Based on extensive discussion throughout our health and care system and with the Health Advisory Board, I have proposed two key changes to improve efficiency and deliver better quality care:

1. Proposed establishment of a Partnership Board: a Board of health and care service providers (government and non-government) whose purpose is to come together to plan how to improve the health and wellbeing of people who live in Jersey. Also, to create a forum where all major contributors to the health service are able to contribute, more equitably, to policy development and

decision-making. The Partnership Board proposal will be brought to the Assembly for full consideration.

2. Strengthening internal arrangements: bringing GoJ health and care resources (public health, policy, ambulance) together into a single Health and Care department, in addition to refocusing or restructuring a small number of existing roles to focus on services across the whole system (especially Digital and Finance), as distinct from primarily focusing on government's service provision alone.
- (a) Formal goals: To strengthen joint working to help identify and address barriers that hinder / potentially hinder delivery of draft principles set out below, improve efficiency and deliver a more seamless service.
 - (b) Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of current structure: This is evidenced in discussion with providers across the system and in the Comptroller and Auditor General's 2018 and 2021 reports on Governance Arrangements for Health and Social Care.
 - (c) Baseline against which to measure success of the reorganisation, and the proposed criteria and process for measuring success: To be determined in discussion with the Partnership Board if/when established.
 - (d) Alternative options considered: The following were considered:
 - do nothing
 - further embed existing split model with public health, policy, system wide advisory functions and Partnership Board operating from the Cabinet office (acting as equivalent to Department of Health) and provision of services in separate government department (acting as equivalent to NHS)
 - establishment of an independent arms-length providers organisation outside of government (as per Isle of Man)
 - incorporation of key external providers into GoJ and / or independent arms-length body
 - (e) Measure of improvements in patient outcomes: measure for improvement against the draft principles and patient outcomes are to be determined.

The resources available to all Ministers require us to look at and learn from other jurisdictions and to listen to our local experts i.e. the health and care professionals who are delivering services to Islanders. We cannot undertake detailed, comprehensive analysis of all options due to associated costs. To do so extensively would also be unnecessary as Jersey has a range of individual, specific problems which differ from elsewhere, but which, in many cases, can be addressed by accessing the extensive skills and knowledge already present within our existing local service

As stated previously by Deputy Renouf when voting in favour of the Health and Care Advisory Board (P19/2023) – The key question - *“is a simple one: does this proposal make it more or less likely that the Health Department and the Government is able to deliver better healthcare to our people?”*.

In relation to the current proposals, the answer goes without saying.

DRAFT principles (subject to discussion with partners)

Fair, affordable access: The plan looks to provide all Islanders to have fair, affordable access to the core health and care services they need, whilst not creating an unsustainable financial burden for the Island. This will require safe, effective services that are necessary to people's health and wellbeing. This may limit patient choice and may also mean that some Islanders pay to access some services, as happens in some instances, today.

Prevention first: We will require more investment in services that help Islanders stay healthy and well. This will involve supporting Islanders to use prevention services, and incentivising providers to provide them.

A working Island: We need to support Islanders to stay economically and socially active. It is good for them, good for the economy and essential if Government is going to raise the monies needed to provide health and care services and mitigate the effects of our aging population. Safe, efficient, effective and affordable health and care services will help attract future employers and employees to Jersey.

Right service, right place, right cost: We want people to access the right service, and we want that service to be delivered efficiently, in the right place at the right cost. This may mean some services being delivered across the Island (including in people's homes) and some being brought together into single centres. In Jersey, no-one needs to travel far.

Best use of people, data and technology:

- Our health and care workforce needs to be supported to act at the top of their profession. In order to capitalise on their skills and knowledge and make best use of equipment and facilities we must invest in connecting all the data currently accumulating in remote silos, right across the service.
- Appropriate investment will help Islanders to care for themselves and help health care professionals to assist them.

Strength in partnership

A small Island workforce cannot do everything. We need to build strong, effective partnerships with other professionals and organisations (on and off-island) who have the knowledge, skills and capacity to support us to deliver safe, effective services. According to all the health professionals consulted, the current plans will make that a great deal easier.

15 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding Residential Space Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance: (WQ.139/2025)

Question

Further to his answer to [Oral Question 64/2025](#), in relation to [Residential Space Standards](#) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), will the Minister –

- (a) state what views, if any, were expressed by other Ministers in relation to his review of the SPG in relation to very large homes;
- (b) advise whether the Government was approached by any stakeholders to express opposition to the SPG, and, if so, how he was made aware of any such approaches; and
- (c) explain, following his assertion in his answer that he wants “more economic value to be put into decisions when it comes to planning applications”, why he considers that there is greater economic value in the construction of a single very large property than in a number of smaller homes?

Answer

- (a) As set out in the Ministerial Decision ([MD-ENV-2025-94](#)) it is evident that the Minister for Housing provided comment in relation to the review of the 3,000sqft parameter, set out in supplementary planning guidance. This is set out in an appendix.
- (b) As set out in the Ministerial Decision ([MD-ENV-2025-94](#)) the provenance of this review was a request from the High Value Residency Engagement team in the Economy Department, the details of which are set out in appendix 3 of the associated report.

- (c) To infer that ‘there is greater economic value in the construction of a single very large property than in a number of smaller homes’ from the answer given to [Oral Question 64/2025](#) is a misrepresentation.

The answer simply sought to acknowledge and recognise that the economic value and impact of development proposals ought to be given the same consideration to that already given to the social and environmental aspects of planning applications.

16 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding policing Jersey roads: (WQ.140/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise the number of officer hours spent policing Jersey roads, for each of the last 3 years, and the associated cost of this work?

Answer

Improving the safety of the roads, by working collaboratively with partner agencies, is a key area of focus for the States of Jersey Police as set out in the [Policing Plan 2025- 2028](#).

It should be noted that the States of Jersey Police do not have officers solely dedicated to Roads Policing. As part of their normal duties, response officers conduct general patrols when not committed to other tasks. These patrols include various aspects of Roads Policing, such as speed checks and monitoring for moving traffic offences (e.g., traffic sign infractions, mobile phone use, seat belt violations, etc).

Response officers can be tasked to perform Roads Policing duties as part of their tour of duty however they will remain available to be diverted to other incidents. Alternatively, when not tasked to any particular duty, officers will remain vigilant during their patrol for any Roads Policing matters that need to be addressed or reported.

There is currently no process or mechanism in place to quantify the amount of time an officer spends per day, or per tour of duty, performing these tasks. It is therefore not possible to directly answer this question.

Whilst it is not possible to accurately quantify officer time spent, the States of Jersey Police do hold data on the numbers of road related offences dealt with which could be made available if the Deputy wishes.

17 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the future St. Saviour Dementia Care Village: (WQ.141/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise what land purchases, if any, the Government has made or intends to make to accommodate the future St. Saviour Dementia Care Village, and the associated costs of any such purchases?

Answer

The Government remains committed to delivering the St. Saviour Health Village as part of the broader New Healthcare Facilities Programme (‘NHFP’). It is important to clarify that this is not a standalone dementia care village, but rather a comprehensive Health Village designed to co-locate mental health inpatient services with rehabilitation and step-down care. The inpatient element of the Health Village will include a combination of mental health services, rehabilitation, step-down care, and dementia care, ensuring an integrated approach to supporting patients with a range of needs. The intention is to create a facility that enhances continuity of care, fosters recovery, and provides appropriate support across different stages of treatment and rehabilitation. This was determined at the time of feasibility studies and the preference of services users and clinicians. The Government is in the early development stages of the St. Saviour Health Village project, as outlined in the Feasibility Study published in Summer 2023.

At the present time the Government is currently prioritising the advancement of Phase 1 of the NHFP, which includes the Acute Hospital at Overdale, the ambulatory facility at Kensington Place and the St. Saviour Health Village, with stakeholder engagement progressing in addition to concept designs being further developed and shared with the public for input.

As I have previously stated to the Assembly and in the Written Question of last week, land in the surrounding area of Clinique Pinel has been identified as a potential site for the development of a St Saviour Health Village. At present, the land remains in private ownership. As no land purchases have yet been made for the St. Saviour Health Village, there are no associated costs to report at this stage. Any future acquisitions will follow appropriate Government procedures and be subject to necessary approvals and financial considerations. From a commercial perspective, declaring intentions regarding the anticipated cost of any land sale in advance of any such negotiation is unlikely to result in a successful outcome.

The Government remains committed to transparent engagement with the public and the States Assembly and will provide further updates as plans develop.

18 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding a review of apprenticeships, following the adoption of the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): Fifth Amendment (WQ.142/2025)

Question

Further to the adoption of the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2025-2028 \(P.51/2024\): Fifth Amendment](#), which incorporated the requirement to review the scheme available for apprenticeships and increase the funding and support available, will the Minister advise what plans are in place for such a review in 2025, whether increased individual funding is now available, and whether further increases are planned for September 2025?

Answer

I can confirm that officers have started a review of the current apprenticeship system. The intent is to move to a scheme that is demand led, with a tuition grant available to those who meet a published criterion. Inflation protection for grants will also be considered with an appropriate rate against which grants can be adjusted in the future.

The review process will be completed this year and focus on:

- Understanding experience of current 16 plus students
- Engaging apprenticeship providers in identifying real cost of providing apprenticeships
- Consulting industry representatives to develop a criteria for a future apprenticeship scheme
- Confirming an appropriate legislative mechanism to support the scheme and entitlement

I will be working closely with Council of Ministers to consider additional funding requirements through the government budget process 2025. Successful implementation of a revised scheme for 2026 will be contingent on approval by the Assembly to increase expenditure.

19 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Portelet Bay Café: (WQ.143/2025)

Question

Will the Minister detail in full the planning requirements imposed on the Portelet Bay Café (the Café) for urgent maintenance works required to secure the safety of the infrastructure of the building and land used for public enjoyment, and will he also advise why the Café has been asked to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment, when this requirement does not appear to apply to the Government for planning permission to carry out similar emergency works or maintenance?

Answer

The application submitted for this site includes, in a single application, works which may be capable of being considered as works of repair or maintenance, as well as works which propose the creation of rock armour to the west of the café in order to protect an area of public land, constituting an engineering operation. This rock armour is proposed to be created using existing rocks from the public beach. Given the nature of the application, and as was set out in my Ministerial Decision of 10 February 2025, the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002 and associated Planning and Building (Environmental Impact) (Jersey) Order 2006 require that the application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement compiled by a person with the relevant qualifications and experience, on two counts. Firstly, the construction of coastal works to combat erosion and, secondly, as development on land covered, or, in the normal course of tides, from time to time covered by sea water.

The requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement to support an application applies equally to works undertaken by the Government as it does to any other applicant, where the relevant legal provisions are triggered. There are Permitted Development Rights available to statutory undertakers under the Planning and Building (General Development) (Jersey) Order 2011, for example Part 6, Class C.1 grants planning permission for the placing and fixing of moorings, and for repairs and maintenance of ramps and other equipment.

20 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding footfall at Fort Regent: (WQ.144/2025)

Question

Further to the Minister's response to [Oral Question 68/2025](#), where he stated that no footfall records exist for Fort Regent, will the Minister advise how the number of people on site at any one time is monitored to ensure the building adheres to Fire Safety regulations?

Answer

Building operators are generally not explicitly required by fire safety regulations to keep footfall data. However, fire safety regulations require building operators to assess fire risks and plan for safe evacuation. To that end, Fort Regent has an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place which is used in the event of an emergency. Within this plan the Fort is zoned and if the fire alarm is activated, staff are trained and tasked to evacuate those specific spaces.

Fort Regent requires a minimum of 4 staff to be able to operate and evacuate safely with current user levels. It should be noted that each tenant is responsible for vacating their own area/demised premise.

21 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding single occupancy rooms on the maternity ward: (WQ.145/2025)

In relation to the single occupancy rooms on the maternity ward, will the Minister advise for each of the years 2023, 2024 and so far in 2025 –

- (a) the utilisation rates;
- (b) how many nights of use there has been by public (free) and private (paying) patients;

- (c) how much income has been generated by private use of the rooms; and
- (d) what policies govern the use of these rooms, including the criteria for when public access is given and when payment is required, and where these policies are published?”

Answer

The maternity refurbishment programme meant that there were no single occupancy rooms available until September 2023. All single rooms were out of service whilst the programme was completed.

- a) Occupancy data is not captured at room level. The utilisation of the totality of rooms on the maternity ward is presented below.
- b) Bed utilisation is calculated based on beds that were occupied at midnight. This approach provides information on overnight stays but does not capture daytime utilisation, in particular where patients return home on the same day that they give birth.

The table below summarises the estimated* number of nights occupied by public (free) and private (paying) patients for full years 2023 and 2024, and for January and February 2025:

| YEAR | PUBLIC NIGHTS | PRIVATE NIGHTS |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2023 | 232 | <5 |
| 2024 | 335 | 66 |
| 2025 (JAN–FEB) | 61 | 27 |

Data Sources: Electronic Hospital Inpatient Movement Reports (TrakCare ATD5PA, Maxims IP020DM)

Disclosure control has been applied where numbers are fewer than five, in line with data protection standards.

**Due to system limitations and how bed movements are recorded, these figures should be considered estimates rather than precise counts.*

- c) The price of the private maternity ward was £171 per night between 1 September 2023 and 30 June 2024. From 1 July, the price was adjusted to £250 per night. The total income generated by private patients in maternity was:

| Year | Nights | Income |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 2023 | 6 | £996.00 |
| 2024 | 102 | £22,399.00 |
| 2025 | 30 | £7,500.00 |
| Grand Total | 138 | £30,895.00 |

The difference between the figures (66 compared to 108) may be due to discrepancies in how the data was recorded in the system. It is possible that some instances were not reflected as private nights in the activity data, even though they were charged as private nights. This could arise from variations in data entry practices or how bed movements were classified at the time of recording.

- d) The public can access the Government of Jersey website which details the below information. When organising a private night, the patient is given a form detailing the costs of a private room.

[The Maternity Unit](#)

Private rooms

Our private, ensuite room with TV is priced at £250 per night and is subject to availability (price includes overnight stay, and will be charged in full, even if you go home early). We are unable to pre-book or guarantee use of the private room. It is decided on by the midwife in charge on a day-by-day basis.

22 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding teachers and teaching assistants requiring access to fertility treatment: (WQ.146/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise what policies, if any, are currently in place to support teachers and teaching assistants requiring access to fertility treatment, given that treatment cannot always be undertaken out of term time?

Answer

The Managing Attendance Policy has a provision for fertility treatment in section 7.2.3 “*Absence due to sickness does cover one cycle of IVF treatment but any subsequent cycles must be covered by annual leave, unpaid leave or flexi leave.*” The policy provides this guidance to allow managers, including school leaders, the discretion to apply a degree of flexibility with these arrangements.

23 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding Jersey Premium funding: (WQ.147/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise the number of students currently eligible for Jersey Premium funding, broken down into individual schools?

Answer

The table below details the number of children in receipt of Jersey Premium funding at the time of the most recent pupil census (Spring 2024/25). Disclosure controls have been applied to any numbers fewer than five to avoid the identification of individuals.

| School | Jersey Premium Pupils |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Beaulieu | <5 |
| Bel Royal | 41 |
| d'Auvergne | 129 |
| De La Salle Secondary | <5 |
| FCJ | <5 |
| First Tower | 133 |
| Grainville | 307 |
| Grands Vaux | 77 |
| Grouville | 99 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Haute Vallée | 255 |
| Hautlieu | 111 |
| Highlands | 176 |
| Janvrin | 133 |
| Jersey College for Girls | 32 |
| Jersey College Prep | <5 |
| La Moye | 71 |
| La Passarelle | 59 |
| Le Rocquier | 229 |
| Les Landes | 16 |
| Les Quennevais | 173 |
| Mont à l'Abbé Primary | 30 |
| Mont à l'Abbé Secondary | 27 |
| Mont Nicolle | 27 |
| Plat Douet | 144 |
| Rouge Bouillon | 155 |
| Samarès | 173 |
| Springfield | 84 |
| St Clement's | 46 |
| St John's | 23 |
| St Lawrence | 24 |
| St Luke's | 57 |
| St Martin's | 29 |
| St Mary's | 29 |
| St Michael's | <5 |
| St Peter's | 36 |
| St Saviour's | 59 |
| Trinity | 25 |
| Victoria College | 23 |
| Victoria College Prep | 5 |

24 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the provision of soft play facilities: (WQ.148/2025)

Question

In relation to the provision of soft play facilities being undertaken by the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC) on the waterfront, will the Minister, in her capacity as Shareholder Representative, advise –

- (a) what provision is being installed at the new site;
- (b) the spend to date;
- (c) the forecast spend, including land charges by SoJDC to the Government;
- (d) whether the Government will be running the facilities; and
- (e) the forecast staffing and associated costs to operate the facilities?

Answer

- (a) The former Arcadia unit and WYSIWYG bar is being converted into a new children's soft play facility. This is to enable the current operation at Fort Regent to be closed in readiness for the regeneration of Fort Regent. The total area of the facility is 14,251 sq.ft. The new facility will comprise a soft play area, a café and seating area for parents and guardians and a children's party room area.
- (b) £635,143 for fit-out, compliance with health & safety and fire standards and new play equipment.
- (c) Forecast total spend is £1,300,000 (£800,000 for part b of this answer) costs and £125,000 per annum for four years for rent and service charge to commence once the facility opens.
- (d) Government will not be running the facilities.
- (e) The operation of the new Children's play zone will be put out to tender and staffing will be the responsibility of the operator, in compliance with best practice. The lease income from the operator will be used to offset the rent, service charge and other costs incurred.

25 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding sodium valproate: (WQ.149/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) what steps, if any, the Government is taking to ensure that patients and healthcare professionals in Jersey are fully informed about the risks associated with sodium valproate, especially for women;
- (b) what measures are in place to support those affected by its side effects; and
- (c) how many people have been negatively affected by the use of sodium valproate in Jersey?

Answer

(a) Steps taken by the Government to ensure awareness of Sodium Valproate risks

In response to the National Patient Safety Alert (NatPSA/2023/013/MHRA) published on 28th November 2023. HCJ promptly designated Mr. Simon West, the current Medical Director, as the executive lead to coordinate the response. The target date for developing an "action and improvement plan" was set for 31st January 2024, which was successfully met, as per the NPSA alert.

A new clinical working group was established, comprising representatives from various stakeholder areas as outlined in the alert. This group developed a new Valproate policy (Doc ref HSS-PP-CG-0655-02) and created a flow chart to simplify decision-making for clinicians.

All primary care pharmacies, GPs, hospital doctors, and the hospital pharmacy were informed of the requirement to have an “Annual Risk Assessment Form” (ARAF) signed for females of reproductive potential and for males at initiation.

In February 2025, the MHRA issued further advice on valproate (ref MHRA Safety Update volume 18, issue 7: February 2025:1), amending the advice for males over the age of 55 years due to a perceived lower risk for older males. Following the revised MHRA advice in February 2025, the flow chart was further updated.

Other actions taken:

An audit undertaken in 2024 identified 263 patients across Paediatrics, CAMHS, Adult Mental Health, Neurology, Learning Disability, and Primary Care who had been prescribed a valproate. Of these, 71 (27%) are female.

Most hospital electronic prescribing systems have been updated to remind clinicians of the risks associated with Sodium Valproate and the necessity of annual reviews. Over the past five years, no prescribing errors regarding Sodium Valproate have been reported in the hospital.

For over a decade, Sodium Valproate packaging has included warning labels regarding females and pregnancy. The hospital dispensary will only supply valproate in their original packs to ensure all relevant medicines safety information is shared with patients.

Under the HCJ policy (Doc ref HSS-PP-CG-0655-02), when initiating treatment with Sodium Valproate, two specialists must independently agree that it is the best option for the patient. The patient must be provided with information regarding the risks and sign a consent form acknowledging these risks.

(b) What measures are in place to support those affected by its side effects?

There are a multitude of side effects associated with the use of valproate (exceeds 50) e.g. tremor, anaemia, weight gain.

Patients prescribed valproate medicines are monitored e.g. via blood tests (every 6 months at their GPs) and have an opportunity to discuss side effects and their management at specialist and GP appointments. Patients are counselled at initiation regarding side effects, and they will be receiving patient information leaflets at every dispensing.

The GPs EMIS prescribing system prompts GPs every 6 months to check patient’s bloods, weight and to remind patients about the importance of using “*highly effective contraception*”.

(c) How many people have been negatively affected by the use of Sodium Valproate in Jersey?

No Datix (HCJ’s health error/harm reporting system) reports have been submitted for sodium valproate over the past 5 years.

26 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for the Environment regarding regulation of the Island’s Health Service: (WQ.150/2025)

Question

Will the Minister outline the plans to introduce regulation of the Islands Health Service under the Regulation of Care (Jersey) Law 2014 (the Law), and set out the associated timeline, and detail –

- (a) any expected delays to the implementation of regulation under the Law;
- (b) whether any delays will be as a result of potential reprioritisation of the legislative programme referenced by the Chief Minister at the States meeting on 20th March 2025;
- (c) the cost of preparing for implementation of the Law to date; and

(d) the cost of delays to implementing the Law?

Answer

I remain committed to delivering legislation to regulate hospital and ambulance services as soon as practicable.

- (a) As set out in my answer to [Written Question 401/2024](#), the legislation was on schedule to be lodged in the Assembly by the end of 2024, subject to consideration by the Council of Ministers. Following CoM's consideration of the draft legislation, I approved further amendments to the legislation, and it is now anticipated that these will be ready for further consideration by CoM by the end of April/early May. The legislation would be implemented in Q2 2026, should it be approved for lodging and adopted by the States Assembly in accordance with current expectations.
- (b) There are no delays anticipated to this project as a result of the reprioritisation exercise which the Chief Minister referenced on 20 March.
- (c) The States Assembly provided funding to prepare for and to deliver regulation and inspection of hospital and ambulance services under the Government Plan 2023-26. Details of the funding provided to the Jersey Care Commission, the Department for Health and Community Services (now Health and Care Jersey), Department for Justice and Home Affairs and Law Officers' Department can be found under the [Government Plan 2023-26 Annex](#). These costs are summarised below:

| Government Plan 2023-26 | £'000 | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Department | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
| Jersey Care Commission | 751 | 940 | 890 | 840 |
| Health and Community Services | 452 | 596 | 485 | 485 |
| Justice and Home Affairs | 114 | 168 | 168 | 168 |
| Law Officers' Department | 75 | 115 | 117 | 117 |

However, due to a combination of deferred spending, deferred recruitment and overachievement of expected income from fees the Jersey Care Commission underspent its overall budget as follows:

- 2024 – total underspend of £217,000
- 2023 – total underspend of £338,000

Aside from these areas, it is understood that the full funding has been utilised for the purposes it was allocated for by the States Assembly.

- (d) Costs allocated to departments to prepare for regulation have gone towards improving the quality and safety of patient care in anticipation of being regulated. Therefore, delays to the implementation of regulation have no negative cost implications in respect of those costs, as the benefits should be felt by patients, regardless of when inspections commence. Where staff have been recruited to the Jersey Care Commission in expectation of conducting inspections sooner than the revised timetable there may be some additional costs as they could have been recruited later. However, it is not considered that additional costs have been incurred in this respect as those staff that have been recruited by the Commission are undertaking work to prepare for and to prepare services for regulation.

27 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Jersey's regulatory system for medicines: (WQ.151/2025)

Question

Further to [Written Question 39/2025](#), in relation to Jersey's regulatory system for medicines, will the Minister advise –

- (a) whether the absence of a National Regulatory Authority means that medicinal products manufactured in Jersey are subject to additional regulatory controls when exported, and if they are, how is this made explicit to those in the industry; and
- (b) how the Government intends to ensure that products developed under healthcare innovation initiatives, such as the CareTech Challenge, will meet the international regulatory standards for export?

Answer

- (a) I am – as the Minister for Health and Social Services – the regulatory authority for medicinal products in Jersey, including any manufacture of medicines. These regulatory functions are discharged by the Chief Pharmacist.

Any regulatory requirements for medicinal products manufactured in Jersey when exported will depend on several factors – including the importing country's requirements and the nature of the medicinal product itself.

By way of an example, if the medicinal product is also a controlled drug and controlled under the Misuse of Drugs (Jersey) Law – there may be additional controls and licence requirements on export from Jersey.

In order to manufacture medicines, a company must be licensed to do so. There are currently no medicines manufactured in Jersey and as such no manufacturing licences for finished medicinal products have been issued in Jersey.

Becoming a pharmaceutical manufacturer is highly complex. It involves rigorous regulatory compliance with medicines legislation and strict adherence to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards and multiple licensing requirements. Establishing robust quality assurance systems, managing extensive documentation, and undergoing regular inspections add to the complexity. Additionally, significant financial investment and specialised expertise are essential to navigate the evolving regulatory landscape and maintain continuous compliance.

The Government of Jersey provides guidance through the Office of the Chief Pharmacist, which works directly with applicants to explain any processes involved in applications.

- (b) The Government of Jersey is committed to ensuring that products developed under healthcare innovation initiatives, such as the CareTech Challenge, meet international regulatory standards for export. These standards are a range of **technical, clinical, data protection, and user experience standards** to ensure safety, efficacy, interoperability, and trustworthiness. With the NHS being one of the largest and closest market, the products must meet NHS standards as a minimum. These standards are set by bodies such as **NHS England, NHS Digital (now part of NHS England Transformation Directorate), NICE, and MHRA**. To achieve this, the Government mandates that all products must meet the following standards:

- 1. Adherence to International Standards:** Products developed under the CareTech Challenge will be designed and tested in accordance with international regulatory standards, including those set by the World Health Organization (WHO) for quality, safety, and efficacy. This includes compliance with guidelines on stability, packaging, storage, and bioequivalence.
- 2. Technical standards:** Interoperability and Integration: Must comply with Interoperability Standards such as: FHIR (Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources), NHS Spine integration for accessing patient data (e.g. Summary Care Records) and GP Connect and PDS (Personal Demographics Service).
- 3. Cyber Security:** Must align with the Cyber Essentials scheme or Cyber Essentials Plus and must undergo Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) assessment.

4. **NHS DCB Standards:** All healthcare products must meet the NHS Digital Clinical Risk Management standards, specifically DCB0129 and DCB0160. These standards provide a framework for manufacturers to evidence the clinical safety of their products, ensuring they are suitable for use within the health and care environment.
5. **Rigorous Assessment and Certification:** Once developed, products must undergo rigorous assessment and certification processes to verify their compliance with international standards. This includes obtaining necessary certifications from recognized bodies such as the WHO and evidence that products meet the NHS Clinical Digital Safety standards
6. **Collaboration with Regulatory Bodies:** The Government will collaborate with international regulatory bodies to stay updated on the latest standards and requirements. This will ensure that products are continuously aligned with global best practices and can be successfully exported to international markets.
7. **Continuous Improvement and Innovation:** The Government will foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, encouraging developers to adopt the latest advancements in healthcare technology and clinical practice. This will help maintain high standards and ensure products remain competitive in the global market.

28 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding an Environmental Impact Assessment for Les Minquiers: (WQ.152/2025)

Question

Will the Minister advise whether an Environmental Impact Assessment was undertaken for planning permissions granted for Les Minquiers, such site being a listed building within a Coastal National Park, a green zone, a Marine Zone, as well as being a Ramsar site and a shoreline zone, and if not, will he explain why not?

Answer

An application was received in July 2020 for reconstruction of part of the sea defence wall at Les Minquiers by The Crown. Department records show that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was not included with the application, although significant environmental information was submitted including a Species Protection Plan and an Initial Ecological Assessment. Given the time that has passed, I am unable to explain why an EIS this was not submitted with the application. What I would say is that this does not detract from the need to produce an Environmental Impact Statement for new applications, when required by relevant statutes. The Planning Applications Team is fortunate to now employ a senior planner that is a professional member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

3. Oral Questions

3.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the allocation of funding for Arts, Culture and Heritage (OQ.84/2025):

Further to Written Question 87/2025, will the Minister update the Assembly regarding the allocation of funding for Arts, Culture and Heritage and, in particular, will she explain how she intends to fill the gap between the A.C.H. expenditure proposed in the 2025 Budget and the reinstatement of the 1 per cent for Arts, Culture and Heritage that was approved by the Assembly in P.69/2024?

Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I thank the Deputy for his question. As set out in the 27th amendment to the Budget, which was approved by the Assembly, the Government continues a commitment to maintain funding for the arts, culture and heritage sectors. The report to the amendment explained that the shortfall will be met from within existing budgets and resources. There is no single Arts, Culture and Heritage budget as such. The Government is currently reviewing spending across departments to ensure that the total expenditure on Arts, Heritage and Culture is captured when considering the 1 per cent. Once the review has been completed, this will be published in a report presented to the Assembly.

3.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

When we had the debate about P.69, we had quite an impassioned debate and it was mentioned that £700,000 was the gap. Can the Minister confirm that rather than an increase in funding on Arts, Culture and Heritage, as was the clear intent of P.69, the Treasury is setting out to ensure that the Government will meet the 1 per cent target without spending any more money at all on Arts, Culture and Heritage, but simply reallocating money from existing budgets into the Arts, Culture and Heritage campaign?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think it was clear that we were not going to allocate new money to this, and that if the spending on Arts, Heritage and Culture was below 1 per cent over the year, then money would be reprioritised from within existing budgets and resources to meet the 1 per cent commitment. That may mean other budgets being cut to fill Arts, Heritage and Culture or reprioritised. There was no new money, and the report to the amendment was quite clear on that.

3.1.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister explain why she did not state it clearly that any spending that was for 3 years since the States adopted 1 per cent of spending ... actually 5 years since the States adopted 1 per cent on culture that anything existing in the budget would be cut and move to meet 1 per cent instead of?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

If I can clarify. The budget classified as Arts, Heritage and Culture totalled £11.5 million in 2025, and the shortfall following the amendment is around £750,000, which will take total spending to £12.3 million, which is 1 per cent. The £11.5 million budget consists of £10.6 million for Arts, Heritage and Culture grants. There is £0.6 million for the teaching of Jèrriais, and £0.3 million has been allocated for the Liberation 80 celebrations, which are being organised by the Bailiff's Chambers. There are other sums of money within Arts, Heritage and Culture spending that is not within that budget. We do not have a specific definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture. In our review, we will be looking at all spending across Government to make sure that the 1 per cent is being met.

3.1.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Has the Minister gained the agreement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development for this money?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and I had a meeting last week to discuss the progress of the review thus far. I think that there is no question that we spend vastly more than 1 per cent. If you take a wide view of Arts, Heritage and Culture, this Government spends vastly more than 1 per cent on it, but we are sticking within ... we will meet the 1 per cent. A report will be presented to the Assembly in the second quarter of this year.

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

The Minister mentioned the allocation of £12.3 million. As I understand it, the Department for the Economy receives £10.5 million. What oversight does the Minister have over that money that is allocated to the economy? Does she make a determination about where it is spent?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Deputy for that question because there seems to be a view gaining prevalence that I control the spending of every penny. I do not. Money is allocated to Ministers. It is for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development to be involved in how that money is distributed through grants and other mechanisms. That is his responsibility and he has oversight for that.

3.1.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

So the extra money, aside from the £10.5 million that is allocated to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, is that money available for the allocation to the Battle of Flowers and the Air Display? If extra money is required for those events, will the Minister be able to find that money?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is a matter for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development as to how he spends the budget. I am not involved in those decisions directly. If it is within his budget then he is the one who makes the allocation.

3.1.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Minister will be aware that the 1 per cent for Arts, Heritage and Culture was a pre-existing commitment of this Assembly, which the Government failed to amend, therefore the 1 per cent should stand. Does she agree that what she is attempting by trying to redefine what might come under Arts, Heritage and Culture spending is nothing more than political sleight of hand or perhaps spurious accounting?

[9:45]

That what should be happening is that the full 1 per cent - the £12 million or so - should be getting transferred directly to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, and it should be up to him or any future Ministers to decide exactly how that money is allocated?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I do not agree.

3.1.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister also says that they are looking at what else might be able to be accounted for under Arts, Heritage and Culture. Does she accept that there is a strong risk, if she is looking to redefine the definitions, that anything, for example, educational spending that is pre-existing when it comes to music, art - even history potentially - that could come out of the 1 per cent and that we would find that the £12 million that should be going to primarily those 4 arm's-length organisations would dry up very quickly?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, that is not the case.

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

Deputy Tadier has taken some of my questions, maybe I will ask it a different way. Will the Minister agree that this is more about creative accounting than a real commitment to the 1 per cent Arts, Heritage and Culture?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, it is not. There is no definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture in Jersey that we apply at the moment. As part of our review, we are looking to see how other bodies and statistical organisations define this, including the Arts Council of England and the U.N. (United Nations) Classification of the Functions of Government. As I say, if you put a very wide definition on it, we spend vastly more than 1 per cent on Arts, Heritage and Culture.

3.1.9 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

As the Minister has said several times, there is no definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture. Will she then be encouraging the Government to create a definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture to be able to fit into this creative counting for 1 per cent?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Not necessarily. We will consider that as part of the review when it comes out, but I can only assure Members that there is no sleight of hand going on, and that this Government will spend 1 per cent on arts and culture this year, per our Budget amendment, which was approved by this Assembly.

3.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:

This looks very much, I think, to most Members like a question of bad losers. The Government lost a debate on this, they have now somewhat cynically I think turned to a piece of accounting sleight of hand and, if we recall what the Minister said at the time of the debate, she said this money will have to be found from somewhere among the departments or we will have to consider increasing duties. It was not mentioned that we could potentially reallocate money that was already being spent.

The Bailiff:

There does have to be a question. That is rather a speech at the moment.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Will she accept that this is a very bad look for the Assembly in terms of public confidence in Assembly decisions when they can be so easily disregarded?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

We are only just into the second quarter. There is no sleight of hand. The cynicism is not from within Government. Government is committed to meeting Arts, Heritage and Culture budgets and it just seems to be our critics that are determined to find fault.

3.2 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the provision of play facilities for teenagers (OQ.90/2025):

Will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, was given to the provision of play facilities for teenagers, the lack of which was highlighted in the Jersey Youth Parliament “Right to Play” campaign, prior to the significant investment of £1.5 million in a new soft play facility at the Waterfront for younger children; and, if no consideration was given, will the Minister explain why not?

Deputy M.E. Millar (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

To go back to my previous remark, the Play strategy does not sit with Treasury, so I am slightly confused that this question has come to me. However, the provision of play facilities for teenagers was and remains a key consideration in deciding to make the investment into new soft play facilities at the Waterfront. The delivery of this new facility is a key step of the Regeneration Steering Group’s plan to deliver a new all-weather leisure facility at Fort Regent. Members received a detailed briefing on the proposals for a regenerated Fort Regent yesterday. It is clear that facilities for the Island’s youth, including teenagers, are at the heart of those proposals. The move of the soft play facility is an essential enabling activity towards the Fort’s imminent closure, ensuring continuity of this

important facility for the Island's younger children, while also ensuring that the major investment into the Island's leisure offer, to the benefit of everyone, including teenagers, can happen as quickly as possible.

3.2.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

A bit more jam tomorrow there in that answer. We have an Esplanade site, a Gas Place site, perfect for meanwhile use, which have remained unused for years. Why is it that instead of providing appropriate facilities in a timely fashion ahead of various closures ... there were provisions for teenagers as an afterthought rather than a strategic priority? Can the Minister explain to our teenagers why her department - I am saying "her/his" and I appreciate the Minister is unsure about answering this question - is so slow in providing adequate provision for the needs in a timely fashion?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Again, that is a question for another Minister.

3.2.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Will the Minister explain the process she goes through, in particular with the provision of the soft play, with S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) and how she works with or gets briefed by S.o.J.D.C., just so Members understand how she was involved in the decision-making process?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Again, I am not responsible for how other Ministers meet their objectives. However, I meet with the board or the executive team and some of the non-executive directors of S.o.J.D.C. and all the other States-owned entities quarterly. They update me on what they are working on and their plans. I am not sure that I specifically remember soft play coming up, because it is a relatively minor thing to help the Fort continue, but it seems to me entirely logical that we need a soft play facility, and moving it from the Fort to another venue in town with adequate parking nearby makes complete sense.

The Bailiff:

Supplemental question, Deputy Curtis? Supplemental or perhaps you could tell me if you are not going to ask a supplemental rather than discussing it with other Members.

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

Does the Minister not agree that, seeing as all Ministers are corporate parents, all Ministers should be aware of policies relating to children and take an interest in them? How will she ensure that there is sufficient funding for play facilities across the Island for children of all ages, including teenagers?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The Deputy will be aware that funding is approved in our Budget, which we approved in November. We discussed play facilities at some length in November. If a Minister wishes to follow a certain initiative, they will come to the Treasury and that will be prioritised alongside everything else. But to take the Deputy's analogy, if I am going to be responsible for every child I also have to be responsible for every patient in the hospital and every road crossing, and I cannot oversee every Minister's performance with their own objectives.

3.2.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for her answer. Given the lack of suitable play facilities across the Island, will the Minister support any bids in the next Budget for improved play facilities?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is a matter for the Assembly. Ministers have to come to the Council of Ministers with proposals. Once they are approved at the Council of Ministers, they will be part of our draft Budget and will be debated in the normal way.

3.2.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister clarify to the Assembly if she is responsible for ... as a representative of the Government, as a shareholder, the States of Jersey Development Company, she should ensure that the government policies and States decision are followed through and, if it is not her responsibility, which Minister is responsible that we will know who to ask?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I believe Fort Regent sits with the Minister for Infrastructure and the decisions in regenerating Fort Regent and how we take the preparatory work to get Fort Regent vacated so that work can be done quickly and efficiently sits with the Minister for Infrastructure primarily. It is not my job to oversee every single Minister for what they are doing, that is simply not feasible, but I think when the Minister makes a proposal to S.o.J.D.C. where it makes absolute sense. Clearly if I thought they were doing something idiotic I would question it but I do not. I think it makes absolute sense to move soft play from Fort Regent to the Waterfront so that that facility continues to exist for younger children. I really struggle to see why it is quite so controversial.

3.2.6 Deputy I. Gardiner:

There was a States decision in the Bridging Island Plan that each developer should ensure there are play areas in the big residential development. The S.o.J.D.C. presented plans that are lacking of facilities for play for teenagers. Is it the Minister's responsibility to ensure that the Bridging Island Plan policies will be incorporated in the S.o.J.D.C. planning?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I believe that the S.o.J.D.C.'s last consultation went down very well with the public. Anything they do will have to meet the Bridging Island Plan, and I do not think that I can say any more than that.

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

I appreciate that the Minister says this is not totally in her responsibility. But could I suggest that the £1.1 million for new soft play, if they have even £20,000 left, they can actually build a Viking swing, which the Jersey Youth Parliament is very keen on. Because we built one in St. Martin. I think for £20,000 you could get some really good facilities for teenagers and I have a good brochure with other things.

The Bailiff:

Connétable, that definitely is a speech and I think it is a request for action, which is a legitimate point of a question.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Personally I think it would be a great idea. Where this Viking swing is going to go in the middle of town I do not know. But it is a decision for another Minister. Again, that is a policy area that sits elsewhere.

3.2.8 The Connétable of St. Martin:

If they would like help with finding somewhere to put the Viking swing, I would like to help. Would she agree that that would be okay?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sure that the Minister will be delighted to have the benefit of your experience and expertise in play areas for older children.

The Bailiff:

Conscious as I am of the date [Laughter] I would just like to notify people sometimes it is quite difficult for the Presiding Officer to tell whether something is a joke or not. Read into that what you will.

3.2.9 Deputy D.J. Warr:

It is just interesting to see who is answering this because I think my basic question is: who carries responsibility for children's well-being and play? In my view it is clearly shared. Does the Minister for Treasury and Resources not feel that she plays a major part in that?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I could say, I play a part in that as part of the Council of Ministers. It takes me to the same question I had before. Is he suggesting that I take attention to the care of every patient in the hospital? I cannot do everything. It rests completely with the Ministers for Infrastructure and Children and Families directly. It is with the new portfolio, and they then have to account to the Assembly for how they fulfil their roles.

3.3 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Chair of the Comité des Connétables regarding fitness to drive medical assessments (OQ.78/2025):

Will the chair advise how many G.P.s (general practitioners), if any, are contracted or retained by an agreement with the Parishes to undertake medical assessments for fitness to drive?

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair, Comité des Connétables):

I am grateful to the Deputy for his question. The simple answer is none, but notwithstanding that answer I am happy to respond to any supplementaries he may have.

3.3.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Would the chair be able to advise the Assembly as to where responsibility for the fitness to drive process, for want of a better phrase, lies? Is it with the Comité des Connétables or is it elsewhere?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The responsibility lies with the Constable of the respective Parishes. I have to say at this point it is an area which exercises Constables quite regularly. It is a difficult decision we have to make. The last thing we wish to do is to remove people's driving licences but we have to be cognisant of safety on the roads, and we take professional advice from medical practitioners to guide us in making that decision.

3.3.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I did not know about this, so thank you to the Minister for raising this. My question to the Connétable is how do the Connétables know that they need to assess somebody? Is it for the person themselves to volunteer themselves to be assessed? Or how does this happen? Because if they are not willing to come forward ...

[10:00]

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy. I cannot let this question expand into a general review of how people's licences may or may not be removed by Connétable. The specific question was whether there were any general practitioners retained for that purpose. I think that question goes too widely.

3.3.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

Could the chair of the committee confirm that although there are no G.P.s contracted to work for the Parishes, do the Parish Constables, as a matter of course, consult with G.P.s or other relevant medical professionals when assessing fitness to drive?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, we do. Clearly, we have to consult an independent medical professional. It will be inappropriate for us to consult the individual's medical adviser, so we do take professional advice from a professional who works with the States of Jersey Police and provides us with, we like to think, a good balanced review of the circumstances which, as the Deputy will appreciate, are all different.

3.3.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

Just to confirm, the professional advice that is sought is from one particular individual employed by the police, not from G.P.s or other medical professionals?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, that is not quite the case. We use a private medical professional who is also used by the States of Jersey Police. He is an independent medical practitioner, well experienced in this sphere.

The Bailiff:

Connétable of St. Mary, I had you noted down as asking a question. That cannot be right of the Comité des Connétable of which you are de facto a member.

Connétable R.D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Yes, I appreciate that. I withdraw the ...

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

Would the Constable please expand on the communication channel between perhaps a concerned member of a family who has a concern about her ...

The Bailiff:

No, I am sorry Deputy. That again goes into the general process and not the retaining of medical practitioners, which is what the question was about.

3.3.6 Deputy K.F. Morel:

While the comité may not retain any general practitioners, the Connétable has said that one is used by Parishes. Is the comité happy or content that this is a sufficient number to ensure a swift process for those people who are referred to the G.P. for testing with regard to driving licences?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I would say we are perfectly happy with the present arrangement. In terms of the response from the medical practitioner to whom we are referring, it is likely that the response will be within a week. Clearly, there are different circumstances with every individual who might be referred to the Parishes. We are not doctors, so we rely 100 per cent on the advice coming from medical practitioners. But in my personal experience, there are lots of variations on the reasons, and there will be outside influences which will contribute to that particular doctor's report coming back to us. He, in turn, may well request further information from other medical practitioners or specialists. In my experience and experience of others that the time spent on referrals coming back is not great and quite acceptable.

3.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Housing regarding proposed rent control measures (OQ.92/2025):

Given the proposed rent control measures set out in the Draft Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Amendment Law 202-, and the Bank of England's decision to maintain interest rates at 4.5 per cent, what assessment has the Government made, if any, of the impact of these measures on the availability and affordability of rental properties in Jersey, particularly in light of evidence from other jurisdictions showing reduced supply under similar policies?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South (The Minister for Housing):

Just before I answer the question, is it possible to ask the Deputy to clarify which evidence from which jurisdictions he is referring to in his question so that I can address it in my answer?

The Bailiff:

I am afraid that that is the question as asked. It may be that the Deputy will ask further supplementals relating to other jurisdictions but if you are able to, as the question was asked, then you should do so, please, Minister.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Well in which case I am not aware of what jurisdictions he is referring to specifically because I think the version that I have come up with for Jersey is bespoke for Jersey and are particular circumstances. We have looked at other jurisdictions and been sure not to copy what does not work and take inspiration from that which does work. My officers work closely with officers in the Economics Department to assess different options for rent stabilisation, measuring them against critical success factors. It is true that because of the lack of data we collect on rents it is impossible for them to do a truly meaningful modelling exercise but I believe that we have done the best that we can in the circumstances. The advice that they gave me did help shape parts of the detail, including potential mitigations against unintended consequences that I could opt for which are all seriously considered by me when putting together a balanced package.

3.4.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Is the Minister not aware of the evidence from cities in Germany such as Berlin, jurisdictions such as the Republic of Ireland in Dublin, or the measures that were proposed in San Francisco that have all ended up, with the best of intentions - I absolutely understand that - of largely being scrapped because they do not work? Is he not aware of that at all? I come back to the issue about statistics.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes, I am very well aware of it which is why we are not copying them.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we come to question 5 ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I thought somebody else was going to ask a question.

The Bailiff:

Well they did not. We come to question 5 ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry, I did not see anybody asking ... I thought somebody would ask a question. I was going to ask a ...

The Bailiff:

But they did not and therefore we go straight to the next question. There is only one supplementary unless someone else asks questions, then there is a final supplementary. Those are the rules we have always applied.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I was going to put my light on but ...

The Bailiff:

Well that is not the point, those are the rules we have always applied, that if someone else asks a question, then you get a final supplementary. If you do not, then that is the end of it.

3.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the Skills Development Fund (OQ.79/2025):

Will the Minister advise the number of Islanders to date who have received funding through the Skills Development Fund?

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning):

Since its launch, 1,656 residents have attended courses subsidised by this scheme.

3.5.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I want to ask the Minister whether he will look to potentially expand the scope of the Skills Development Fund and, if so, will that happen before this term of office?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One has to remember that grants are paid to training providers, not directly to residents, as the question suggested, but we have dealt with that. The Skills Development Fund was reviewed in January 2025 and recommendations to use the funds more proactively by identifying priority skills gaps and tendering publicly for training to close them. To put that simply, yes, we are trying to improve its application to make it more proactive; I think the way that funds are allocated as well. Some very good work has gone on behind the scenes in identifying skills gaps from Skills Jersey who work with businesses, who I thank for their input. So, yes, I think we can be more proactive with that scheme.

3.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister clarify that he is committed to apprenticeships and the ethos that lies behind the Skills Development Fund and maybe outline what some of his commitments are to making sure that apprenticeships and skills for young people, and indeed for the working population, are fit for the future?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, absolutely. I do thank the Deputy for the question. "Apprenticeships" has become a term that seems to encompass absolutely everything, so work is being undertaken on working with us as to what apprenticeships will mean for the Island. I personally think there needs to be a statutory provision of apprenticeships, but that has to be done correctly, it has to be done effectively, and in a sustainable way. The other part of the question, is there a commitment? Yes, there is. I could read a list of the things that are going on but you would have to stop me by the time I got to the end, but I am happy to provide the Deputy with that. If Members are interested, perhaps we can do some sort of presentation on the skills gap analysis that has been undertaken because I think it has given us much more directive and - what is the word I am looking for? - enriched information in the way in which we apply this fund and, remember, it is not just this fund that deals with apprenticeships, there are other things that go on day to day and have been going on for years and years.

3.5.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister specify 5 top gaps that were funded from the skill funds last year and this year?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Five examples are: low carbon heating system design installation, general roofing insulation, solar panels and photovoltaic systems, wall and loft insulation design and installation, advanced fire detection and alarm quantification grounds work. I think that is 5 but there are more. It is a very wide-ranging area but what we have to do - and this is the work that is going on and I think will make it more successful - is to really identify where those skills gaps are, so we are not putting money into areas. It is easy to put money into areas to identify but then there are not the number of jobs there that we thought there were and perhaps there is not the gap that there was. We want to try and target that money as well as possible. It may not be perfect, sometimes we might target something and there is a very changing world of work, as the Deputy knows, but those are the top 5. Well, not top 5 but 5 of them.

3.5.4 Deputy I. Gardiner:

What was the maximum amount allocated per apprentice per trainer from the skills fund?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Again, this is money that goes towards the provider of the training, so it is difficult to allocate that. The maximum per apprentice from this, very difficult; I do not have that information in front of me. For example, there was £69,503 in 2024 that went towards digital upskilling courses, so if you divide that by the number of students, I suppose. But this money in the apprenticeship through the Skills Development Fund goes towards training, courses and skilling up, not towards individuals. I think the question itself was slightly misleading; that is not a criticism, it is an observation. This is a general fund; it is not as if we fund per student with it.

The Bailiff:

A final supplementary, Deputy Andrews. No?

3.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding a cap on energy prices (OQ.88/2025):

Will the Minister advise what powers she has, if any, to set or cap prices and charges for Jersey Electricity and advise in what circumstances she would consider exercising such powers?

Deputy M.E. Millar (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I thank the Deputy for his question. As a shareholder representative, I have no direct powers to set or cap the tariffs charged by Jersey Electricity. Energy prices are affected by international markets and are subject to global geopolitical factors which are entirely outside our control. Additionally, because J.E. (Jersey Electricity) is a listed company, the States of Jersey, as a majority shareholder, entered into a shareholder relationship agreement in accordance with U.K. (United Kingdom) listing rules. This agreement prevents the States from using its position to influence or control J.E. in a way that may disadvantage minority shareholders. Any attempt to impose tariffs that negatively affect the company's financial performance could arguably breach both the shareholder agreement and U.K. listing rules. Prices in Jersey, as you will have seen this morning from the news about increases in the U.K., are significantly lower than in the U.K. and Guernsey. Based on independent benchmarking, Jersey's electricity prices are currently 30 per cent lower than both the U.K. and Guernsey for domestic customers consuming comparable amounts of energy.

3.6.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Just to give very brief context, we have seen electricity prices go up by 19.5 per cent in the last 2 years, the same with gas, and I believe that constituents throughout the Island are feeling the pinch in many cases. Would the Minister confirm whether the Electricity (Jersey) Law 1937 is still in

power and, if so, that Article 22 of that law says that: “Where it appears to the States to be necessary to do so in the public interest, the States may by Regulations determine the tariffs to be made by the company in respect of electricity.” Is that something which is taken into consideration given the soaring cost of living and the initial answer that the Minister gave?

[10:15]

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, the Electricity Law clearly is still on the Statute Book and Article 22 does provide that the States of Jersey may determine the tariff set by Jersey Electricity when it believes it necessary to do so in the public interest. That said, Article 22(2) requires the States to have regard to several relevant factors which could mean that tariff reductions are not possible. One such factor is a need for further capital expenditure and, as publicly announced, J.E. is undertaking a significant capital investment programme to improve network resilience and support the Government’s carbon neutral objectives. I believe Article 22 was tested some 15 years ago when a proposition was lodged to intervene in electricity prices following a 24 per cent increase in tariffs. I do not know what period that increase took effect. As a result, an independent review was conducted which found that J.E. was fully justified in its pricing at the time. Had J.E. not been justified, tariffs would have been reduced under Article 22. However, I would also remind Members that the interest of the minority shareholders cannot be ignored and again that our pricing in Jersey is considerably less than it is in both the U.K. and Guernsey.

3.6.2 Deputy J. Renouf:

The Minister’s answers suggest to me that there seems to be a little dissidence between the position she has regarding the shareholder responsibility and the law. Could she clarify that a legal power does exist in principle to control prices of Jersey Electricity regardless of the agreements that she has spoken about in regard of shareholder interest?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I do not agree that there is any dissidence. The position of a shareholder is very different from the position of this Assembly and, as I have said, a majority shareholder by law in any company, regardless of a listed one, cannot behave in a way that is unfair or prejudicial to the rights of the minority. I am sorry, I am beginning to get into the A.G.’s (Attorney General) territory. The Electricity Law goes back to 1937, probably pre-dates the listing, and it does give this Assembly powers to seek to control tariffs. However, I think those powers would have to be exercised very, very cautiously, and although prices have increased in Jersey, they have not increased nearly as much as increases in the U.K. and Guernsey. Jersey Electricity have a very stable and low pricing, and this has protected us from the extreme market volatility and the rising costs in Europe, and I think we should be grateful to them for that.

3.6.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

The original question asked under what circumstances she would consider exercising such powers. Can she advise what those circumstances would be?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am not sure if the Deputy means my power as a shareholder, because I have none as shareholder, so there are no circumstances in which I can. I think it is a matter for the Assembly what circumstances they consider in which someone would wish to bring a proposition; however, I believe the States must have regard to a number of factors and I would suggest it is a very difficult thing. The whole reason we have some of these entities as separate companies is to try to divorce from political interference, and that is exactly what he is suggesting, political interference, which I think could be very unwise in very many cases.

3.6.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Just for our understanding because it is a complex topic, the difference between the Minister's role and the Assembly's role, is the Minister perhaps suggesting that in being shareholder representative she has to wear a different hat to the Assembly at large and as such, if Article 22 was used, does she anticipate it is prudent to abstain from any vote so she would be allowing the Assembly free use of that power?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I have not given the matter any consideration. If someone brought a proposition under Article 22 I would consider it like any other proposition. I would imagine I would find it very difficult to support a proposition to limit tariffs for all the good legal reasons that exist, but I think it is a hypothetical question which I would deal with at the time. I do not think being shareholder representative stops me in any way from voting as a Member of this Assembly in any proposition where I consider it right to do so.

The Bailiff:

I would just remind Members that it is quite proper not to answer a hypothetical question and, in fact, a question of a hypothetical nature should not be asked. Do you have a supplemental question?

3.6.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the Minister not agree - given as she explained, albeit the increase in electricity prices recently, the fact that Jersey Electricity prices are so much lower than that, even taking out G.S.T. (goods and services tax) and V.A.T. (value added tax) and all the rest of it - that energy and time, Ministerial time, should be directed at those energy costs which are going much higher than that of anywhere else comparable rather than electricity? As the energy review that was conducted in 2015 said, would she not agree that in fact it is not the problem with the electricity, it is all the others?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not know what the review of 2015 was. Energy is another Minister's portfolio and there is a limit to what we can realistically control. If you are talking about fuel prices, we have restrained the growth, we have restrained taxes on fuel prices. It is a competitive market and we are also affected by geopolitical global issues.

The Bailiff:

I think we are straying outside the ambit of the question, the original question, which was of course capping energy prices for Jersey Electricity. Very well, a supplemental that is within the bounds of the question?

3.6.6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Indeed. Would the Minister not agree that the experience that she, as the shareholder representative, has had about regulation in terms of it being effective and a good use of taxpayers' money, has come to the same conclusion that there is no case for issuing burdens and regulation on Jersey Electricity, that would be a waste of taxpayers' resources? Would she not agree with the evidence that she has kindly given to the Assembly?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Jersey Electricity is already regulated by the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority), I do not think there is any need for further regulation. Jersey Electricity, I do have to say as a shareholder, have done a very, very good job for this Island in the last few years. Because of their pricing structure, because of the very good contracts they have negotiated with France, that since the Russian invasion of Ukraine they have avoided costs in excess of £200 million, which is equivalent

to bills of £4,000 to £5,000 per household. We have seen numerous electricity energy companies become insolvent in the U.K. and I think we ought to be grateful for the work that Jersey Electricity has done to keep prices for electricity as low as it possibly can.

3.6.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Jersey Electricity, which is not regulated by the J.C.R.A. as the Minister has said, is a listed company and the Government has a shareholder relationship. Of course, that means then the board are the ones who are discussing about whether to increase prices or not. What role does the Government have on the board of Jersey Electricity, and if there is not a representative of the board, why not?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Firstly, I think J.C.R.A. does have a regulatory role in terms of the electricity company and that enables the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development to request market reviews and they can exercise other powers. We do not have politicians on the board of our States-owned entities for very good reason; those companies were established to try to keep them free of political interference. Having a States Member on the board makes them a director, it gives them all the obligations and liabilities of a director. States-owned entities all have independent, qualified professional boards who know what they are doing, unlike politicians sometimes who do not know about electricity industries; I certainly do not. But, as I say, I meet with the board of Jersey Electricity quarterly, or certainly the senior team; I met them this week. I have a regular programme of meeting with all the States-owned entities: Jersey Electricity, Jersey Telecom I have met in the last week.

3.6.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for her answer. Could the Minister then advise the Assembly what revenue the Government gets from being a shareholder within Jersey Electricity and where does that revenue go?

The Bailiff:

Well, I am sorry, that just is outside the ambit of the question. The question relates to the Minister's ability to set or cap energy prices and whether she would consider exercising that. What revenue the Government gets and how the revenue is spent is, I am afraid, well outside the ambit of the question in my ruling. Very well, a final supplementary, Deputy Tadier.

3.6.9 Deputy M. Tadier:

I was concerned by the initial answer that if I had not mentioned the 1937 law, which does give this Assembly powers, that I do not think the Minister would have mentioned it. Could she confirm, as a legal point rather than maybe an ideological point, that it is within the powers of this Assembly, if it is deemed to be in the public interest, to be able to amend or set tariffs for electricity?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The Deputy's question was clearly what powers I have and I answered that question. The States Assembly, the powers of this Assembly, are an entirely different matter and a different question. I have given the Assembly full details of those powers but I would find it very difficult to support any proposition to impose tariffs on Jersey Electricity, but those powers do exist and I have been quite clear about it.

3.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Social Security regarding exclusions for trainees or apprenticeships in the living wage (OQ.81/2025):

Further to the Minister's work to introduce the living wage, will she explain the decision to exclude specific provisions for trainees or apprenticeships, and advise whether the potential for businesses to be reluctant to hire inexperienced young people undertaking training was considered when making the decision, and if not, why not?

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):

The minimum wage and the trainee wage were harmonised as the result of a States Assembly decision in 2023 because of a proposition brought to the Assembly by Deputy Andrews. When taking decisions around the minimum wage and also the Better Business Support Package, the reluctance for businesses to hire inexperienced young people undertaking training was considered.

3.7.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

The Living Wage Foundation excludes apprentices in terms of under-18s from their living wage criteria. Could the Minister advise why she is doing something different and what is the evidence she has to ensure this is not detrimental to young people?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The States Assembly took the decision to do something different in 2023, as I indicated, arising from a proposition that was brought to the Assembly. Subsequent to that, the Employment Forum did undertake consultation and I have taken on board advice and evidence that have been given by organisations such as Skills Jersey and the Jersey Employment Trust. What became apparent is that by the provision of just a trainee wage, that was not meeting the skills gaps that were required on-Island. That piece of work, as evidenced earlier by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, better sits within that department to ensure that we are working on the provision of providing proper training that delivers on skills gaps that we need. It should not be the purpose of a trainee wage to ensure that businesses can access cheap labour and, as it was set previously, that was indeed a risk.

3.7.2 Deputy J. Renouf:

I thank the Minister for those answers. I think what I would be interested to hear is whether the Minister is prepared to consider bringing changes to the proposition that was passed by the Assembly in 2023, that it is indeed the case that she is following that, but does she consider that there have been unintended consequences which mean that it was worth revisiting that decision?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I have seen no evidence to suggest that there have been unintended consequences arising from that decision. I do firmly believe that if we are to encourage traineeships and apprenticeships that reducing the wage is not the way to do it. It was not targeted and it was open to abuse. We are much better providing targeted incentives for employers for proper training and apprenticeships. We are of course providing a payment of £2,000 per apprentice per year to support employers through the Better Business Support Package.

[10:30]

As the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning indicated earlier, there is a lot of work being undertaken by his department and Skills Jersey to ensure that traineeships are available.

3.7.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

I accept that this is a very delicate balance but it does seem to be considerable pushback on the question of particularly young people working in holiday jobs being caught up in this. I wonder whether the Minister has considered that area as one where there could be some flexibility.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

You mentioned what day it was earlier, Sir. It did not take me long to get reminded this morning when I opened up the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* because they seemed to have surpassed themselves today with their April Fools' joke and unfortunately perhaps the Deputy has fallen for it. It is not the purpose of the trainee wage to enable young people to be employed for less money, and I do have to correct some inaccuracies in today's paper. Fourteen and 15 year-olds are not subject to the minimum

wage. The Employment Law quite clearly states that the minimum wage starts after school-leaving age at the age of 16. Also, it is not within the employment legislation that people have to be paid double time on bank holidays. It was never the intention of the trainee rate to be used to supply businesses with cheap, young labour. I want to make that absolutely clear. So, no, I am not concerned around young people and their ability to get holiday work. That was never the intention of the trainee work and everybody deserves an equal day's pay for an equal day's work.

3.7.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

While it is perhaps unfortunate that it is 1st April, this is no joke. While the Minister says that she has taken soundings from the Employment Forum and other places in response to the earlier question that she does not think there is anything to do, now that we are seeing the first step up into the two-thirds median, will she be committing to keeping a very close eye on the labour market because what people thought might happen might not be the case when it is going to happen. Would she agree that it is going to be the evidence of her policies that is going to be important and she needs to review what is going on backwards from 3 months and at 6 months, not just what in theory could happen?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, of course. I will be keeping an extremely close eye on the labour market; that is my job.

3.7.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

She says it is her job, and I agree, but it is all Ministers' jobs. Is she not aware of the concern that this question arises, that there is real concern about the implications about businesses and other business in various different sectors about the government's policy on the living wage? Does she have no worries about the concerns of businesses being unable to get labour?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

We have a very buoyant labour market at the moment, I am not concerned about businesses not being able to get labour. I did consider the concerns that were raised, which is why we have taken a much more slow and measured approach to introduce it or working towards the living wage. I remind the Assembly, we are not yet at the stage where our minimum wage is equal to a living wage. We will not be there next year. We are taking a very, very measured approach to this.

3.7.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Could the Minister commit to reviewing the impact of the living wage on apprenticeships, trainees and especially under-18 year-olds after implementation and, if necessary, supporting adjusting the policies to support businesses and young people if it does negatively affect them?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As I said previously, I believe that that is firmly an area that sits within the remit of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. If the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning comes to me with advice that I need to take action as Minister for Social Security to support traineeships and apprenticeships, then I will indeed take that advice.

3.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding bullying behaviour in young people (OQ.80/2025):

Will the Minister advise what actions, if any, he intends to take in schools following the recently published statistics in the Jersey Children and Young People's Survey Report 2024 relating to the engagement by young people in bullying behaviour, including but not limited to using mobile phones, tablets, online gaming and social media; and, if none, why not?

Deputy R.J. Ward: (The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning):

I thank the Deputy for her question. I am mindful that the report was published last week. The findings of this survey provide valuable data and as such we need time to properly consider and review the report. Statistics Jersey will present key findings from the survey at the next meeting of the Children's Outcome Executive Committee on 16th April, and this will enable wider Ministerial review because it is an issue that extends beyond education. I would like to make some points regards use of mobile phones because we have looked - I have looked - very carefully at what is happening there. If I may, I will try not to go over the minute but there is some information. I will do my best.

The Bailiff:

Well, the normal is one minute, 30 seconds is the test, so you have a ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Put the stopwatch on and I will make it, I promise. In primary schools, no primary schools allow phones in schools. If children are given a phone by their parents, usually in year 6 because they are walking to school and back, it is given in at the office or to the school teacher; so we do not see mobile phones in our primary schools. In secondary schools, Haute Vallée, La Passerelle Secondary, Le Rocquier School and Les Quennevais have a rule where the phone must be in the bag or locker all day and if it is seen it is confiscated. On the first confiscation it goes to the office and returned, second confiscation, parents have to come in to get the phone. Grainville only allow use at scheduled break times in a permitted area. I believe that is also under review. Victoria College, year 11 cannot use at any time; it must be switched off and out of sight. Years 11 and 12, who are 16, 17 and 18 year-olds, are allowed to use their phones in the sixth form area for educational purposes. Jersey College for Girls are allowed phones at scheduled break times and lunch times but for year 7, parents must request permission by completing a form to ensure that all apps are age-appropriate and users must adhere to the acceptable use policies across schools.

The Bailiff:

I am going to have to ask you to finish your answer.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. I just wanted to give an overview of what is happening in schools and how we are extending that in terms of mobile phones.

3.8.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for his answer and it is clear that there is a lot going on in schools. One of the statistics was that 6 in 10 of the year 6 children believe the school took bullying seriously but that decreased as the children went into secondary school. Would the Minister commit to, once he has done the reflection on this data that he mentions is coming soon, considering what additional resources or programmes or training might be needed to go into schools similar to what the U.K. Government invested a few years ago in anti-bullying campaigns and whether we need this in Jersey given the voices of young people in this survey have shown that it is a significant problem to them?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I think ongoing training in schools is vital in terms of bullying and it is an issue that is taken very seriously, and it is an issue that is very serious. There is a slight decrease but I am not even going to mention that because we do not want to be complacent in any way, so I do agree with the Deputy. I think there was also some work to be done around social media, and I know the question mentioned social media. I think we need a bespoke policy for Jersey in terms of social media. I would point people to Common Sense Media which is a really good resource online. It suggests to parents some of the recommended ages for, for example, Snapchat should be above 16 years of age, Instagram should be above 15 and TikTok above 15. This is good, sound advice for people who are looking at internet use, so I just mention that in regard to bullying, but I do agree, yes, schools will

work really hard to do that. Again, I extend an invitation to any States Member who wants to come into school with me and talk to teachers and children about their experience in school, please, please contact me because I think that is the best way for us all to understand modern schools and the challenges they face.

3.8.2 Deputy J. Renouf:

I thank the Minister for those answers. I have been contacted by parents who are exceptionally concerned about the use of phones in schools and in particular the way that they essentially lose control of their children because other students can show them mobile phones even if they have been banned. Will the Minister, therefore, commit to taking very seriously the issue of access in schools to mobile phones where it is often the case that the rules - although the rules he read out exist - are ignored?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have been through a list of what is happening in schools and I would again extend the invitation to the Deputy to come into schools and talk to students and staff. We have a lot of rules in society that may not be obeyed and then they have to be dealt with. Schools are on the front line of mobile phone use. To some extent, they have been asked to put the genie back into the bottle, and they have taken a very measured but controlled approach to doing this with the rules that they have. I cannot see a single school on our Island that allows unfettered access to mobile phones during the day. I would suggest that the advice is that parents know the rules of the school. Please support the school in those rules, and that is the way forward. Other than that, I do not want to see children scanned and searched every day on the way into school. I do not think that is a feasible approach. I think the increasing awareness will help us to control this more and more as we go forward.

3.8.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

I have children at 2 schools and both of them report to me that those rules on mobile phone use are completely ignored. I do think that it would help if there was leadership from the centre and that is why I repeat the question really, which is: will the Minister commit to showing leadership in this area and taking very seriously the concerns that are raised by parents?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Absolutely. In terms of leadership from the front, we absolutely support schools in the policies that they have to put forward every day. I think I am being asked to ... I know the rules are there in every single school, phones, if they are confiscated, they are taken in. If the Deputy is suggesting that it is illegal for a child to bring a phone to school, fine, that has to be policed. We will be here in 6 months' time with people saying: "That is not being adhered to." I get that but the schools are working incredibly hard, with support from myself essentially, and I absolutely support the policies that they are putting forward to not have mobile phones in the classrooms and to stop their uses around school. I do not know what more schools can do apart from ... essentially, I can say: "Yes, I would advise parents not to send their child to school with a mobile phone" that would be what I would say to parents, but if they want to send their child because they are walking home and they feel that they are not safe walking home, there is a difficulty there. But schools at the moment, as I have listed, do not allow mobile phones to be used and they are confiscated when seen. If there is an issue with any particular school, I would strongly suggest the head is contacted at that school, go into the school and talk about it, and they can re-establish their rules, if that is what is happening.

The Bailiff:

Again, Minister, I must ask you to stop your answer. Thank you very much. I have seen the lights of Deputy Jeune, Ozouf, Tadier and Wilson and then a final supplementary Deputy Doublet. I will not take any more questions.

3.8.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I strongly suggest to all States Members to watch Netflix “Adolescence” that highlights the devastating effect of cyberbullying on young people’s mental health.

The Bailiff:

This really does have to be a question, Deputy, we are running out of time. If you could just ask a question.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

What support services are there to help teachers spot the effects of online harassment in schools if they spend most of their time with children in the daytime, and how can they support children with online harassment and cyberbullying?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Training is undergone repeatedly with staff in terms of safeguarding and part of safeguarding is to identify online harassment. I will say that I have watched that series, just to mention it, because it is about mobile phones.

[10:45]

I will say that the school that is in the second episode, there is not a school on the Island that would give unfettered access to mobile phones as that school is portrayed. If that is happening in schools, then there is an issue because they are not following their own rules. That is something that has to be acted on and I would support that but, yes, there is online safeguarding training. Schools also identify more than just online harassment, they identify all sorts of issues with regards to safeguarding and the well-being of children every single day.

3.8.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Minister says that there are bans, and if I did not hear everything in the answer, there are effectively policies for all schools. Is he unaware of one school that is an outlier in their mobile phone use?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Could the Deputy name ...

The Bailiff:

I am afraid, even I did not understand that question, Deputy.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry, the Minister said he is aware that there are bans in all schools. I am particularly asking about the Jersey College for Girls, which I have received a number of representations from parents, which is the outlier. If he is unaware of it, does he not think he needs to be aware of it because there is a very significant amount of - I should declare an interest, I have a goddaughter there but it is not my own child - but I hear from a lot of schools. I know the issue is very difficult for the Minister; however, is he unaware of the outlying situation and the real concern of parents of Jersey College for Girls about their children’s and their girls’ safety?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Jersey College for Girls do allow at break times and lunch times. Year 7 now have to request permission by completing a form to ensure all apps are age-appropriate and the users must adhere to the acceptable use policy, so they do have a policy. If there is concern with parents, then I would invite the Deputy to come in and speak to the head with me, or I will go in and speak to them, that would be a very good thing to do. In terms of an outlier, yes, it is compared to the 11 to 16 schools

and much of the others. There is a particular approach from the headteacher there and the staff who want to believe that the girls need to learn to use mobile phones effectively at times. It is a States-assisted school, so it receives a grant; it has more autonomy, I suppose, than some schools. I think it would be a good idea for the Deputy to come in and speak to the headteacher, and if there are other Deputies who seem to be supporting that approach, to come with us and let us have a meeting with the headteacher so that we know exactly what is going on. I have had contact with parents. Again, I would say to parents, do not send your child with a mobile phone. If there is an issue, contact the school, talk directly to the school. Schools identify this every day, it is their role to do that. Schools have a job to do of course, so do parents, and working together is the best way to solve those problems. Yes, I am sure the headteacher would be happy to speak to the Deputy.

3.8.6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Does the Minister not understand that it is not the issue of the parents themselves, responsible parents, allowing a non-Smartphone phone - you can have a phone which is Smart-enabled for all the safety reasons - is he not aware that it is the other students in the classroom that are showing the girls, in this case, horrendous pornography, beheadings, and other things like this, that that is the concern? It is not the parents that are being seemingly responsible, it is the ones that have decided that they should be allowing their girls in order to develop learning with Smartphones, and it is damaging them. I am most concerned about it, is he not?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I take the notion I would not be concerned about that as really quite offensive. I have spent my life in education, I have spent my life protecting children and safeguarding, and to score a political point, let us move forward, shall we? Second, if that is happening in a classroom, that is directly against the rules of that school. Speak to the headteacher; that should be dealt with. I would also add, if that material is being shown, I would report it to the police because it is illegal. **[Approbation]** There is a law behind that. We could set a law and that is firmly in that ground of a law. I would suggest, yes, if that is the case, please contact the school, please contact the headteacher, and that has to be dealt with. What I am being presented here with are scenarios which, if they are happening, yes, absolutely need to not be happening. Absolutely. Yes, I completely agree with the Deputy but, again, I really strongly suggest we meet with the headteacher to talk about what is happening in that school and the reasons for that. There is a parent/governor body as well, that is a vehicle for that information. If the Deputy does not think they are good enough, then he does need to speak to the headteacher about that. I am a bit concerned that we are isolating one school in this Assembly but there we go.

3.8.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

I would perhaps ask for a different angle. I sympathise with the Minister because, first of all, children spend a minority of their time, but an important amount of time at school. I am sure he wants to get a balance between making sure that students are safe - that is the overriding message - but also not making schools like a prison which it can sound like they might be becoming. What regard does the Minister have to human rights of children, specifically U.N.C.R.C. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) when it comes to Article 12 so that when adults are making decisions about children that they should take into account children's views? Does he think that in this area that children's views have been sufficiently taken into account about the use of mobile devices at school? Would he perhaps add whether he thinks that on the way to school and also school buses is an area, because it seems ludicrous that children might be able to hand their phones into school but they are allowed to take them to school on the way. They are allowed to see whatever they want on the school bus on the way home - presuming they get the bus - I am sure not all students get the bus. Would the Minister give a more rounded answer about where the balance lies between authoritarianism and safety?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think the Deputy has just summed-up the dichotomy we have in our society with mobile phones. Schools can address what they can directly control during the day on school premises, when they arrive and when they are on school premises. As I have detailed to people, there are policies and rules in place. Whatever rule this Assembly makes, if it wanted to ban everything, it would have to be policed. Schools are doing that. They are doing it to the very best of their ability and they are doing it every single day, plus teaching subjects and dealing with all the other issues that come forward for schools. In terms of school buses, I do not think we can ask the bus driver to supervise 25 children as to whether they have their phones on the bus. I simply do not think it is within their remit. I have to say, the safest way to do this was for parents not to buy their child a mobile phone, to have parental controls on that mobile phone, and to work with the school in what is the best way to do that. Schools cannot control what happens outside of school and at home at weekends and other times. They can work with parents to advise. I can advise parents that we are very aware that unfettered access to the World Wide Web is a dangerous place if it is not controlled, and I would urge all parents really to take parent controls seriously. If you are not sure, go and talk to the school and they will help. That is the best way forward; I think I have answered the Deputy.

3.8.8 Deputy M. Tadier:

Given that this is not an issue about schools necessarily, this is an issue about safety of children and perhaps accessing online harm, does he believe that this responsibility needs to be shared and perhaps even led by the Minister for Children and Families, given the fact that, as I have said, children spend most of their time outside of school? Therefore, would he perhaps assist with that dialogue with the many interested parents in our community to speak with both Ministers and develop a meaningful policy but including the voice of the child in that?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I would say what was said earlier, we are all in this Assembly corporate parents, and so we all have a responsibility for the well-being of the children in our constituencies when they are not in school. I wonder how many constituency drop-ins will have leaflets about online safety. Perhaps that is something that could be circulated, there is a vehicle there to get those out. I will mention that the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel are currently conducting a Scrutiny review on online safety and any information on that would be useful because that is a good vehicle. We do listen to the Scrutiny Panel a great deal, we have briefed them, and we have I think a positive relationship there, so that is a good thing to do and we will be listening to that. This is a real challenge for us as a society. What I will say today is I can stand here and say that schools are really trying to stop the use of mobile phones in school lessons. We have asked the schools to take this on and they have done so with aplomb and they have moved forward with this, to turn the tide back. The next step, whatever that will be, has to be thought through very, very carefully. I think it is as much about education on online safety and what that means which links to so many other areas of our education system and our society as well. Otherwise, I think we cannot let 16 year-olds get to a stage...

The Bailiff:

I must ask you to close your answer, Minister.

3.8.9 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

Just as we have seen legislation to control smoke-free in areas of school, would the Minister consider of a way forward maybe to mandate schools and youth services as Smartphone-free zones? Would he allocate, or consider allocating, some specific time to deal with this issue, given the weight of concern, both locally and internationally, on this issue, particularly for the children in his care?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I think that is perhaps inevitably where we are moving to. Schools have enabled that anyway. The vast majority of schools have enabled that anyway, so it will not be a huge step after that. In

terms of legislation, I am not too sure, it might be bumped by the Senators' legislation, so I cannot guarantee that any legislation will happen; we have to decide on that. How that legislation will work and how that will police, I do not know, and there is a balance between human rights. Are we going to get to a situation where a child is arrested in their school for having their mobile phone? That is not a flippant comment, it is a realistic comment. I think we need to get to a stage where we have controlled use and much more information over this topic for parents so that we can all move forward together. If there is a co-operation between the school, parents and young people, we know where we are going, that would be much more successful. When my teenagers were teenagers, telling them to do something was really challenging. Getting them to do that because it was the right thing to do, and convincing them of that and working with them meant it stayed there, it was sustainable, and it worked way into the distance. I would like to see that balance between the 2 but, yes, it is a very good question, I think inevitably we will be in that place.

3.8.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I welcome the Minister's comments on that. I think what he would also appreciate is that there is the will of Members of the Assembly to work with him on this issue. Would he give some consideration to providing some initial policy direction as soon as possible?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, the online safety policy is being reviewed anyway. That policy already exists but it was from 2021. In the world of online, 2021 was another epoch, let alone another year, so of course we do have to undertake that. I am pleased that the Assembly is behind that. I would urge Members, do come into schools and have a conversation, particularly with young people, because I think that is really important that we have those discussions. When we spoke to year 9s, for example, in one school, in Le Rocquier School, they were very, very good, and when we mentioned online safety and said: "Have you had any training?" I was told that they have training in online safety in every single year since year 5, and so it is happening. If that dialogue helps us understand what is happening there and it becomes less of a conflict between 2 supposedly opposing ideas - which it is not, I do not believe - I think we are all going in the same direction. Schools are trying to get there but this has been challenging for schools. They have had to do things that many parents would really find challenging, to say no to their children, and they have had to say no to a whole cohort in one go, and schools have been successful in doing so. Let us give them a bit of credit, let us move forward together. I absolutely understand that and share those things and let us have less of the: do we take safeguarding seriously? Yes, of course we do and I hope everybody in this Assembly does the same. Thank you.

3.8.11 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for all of the answers. He has shown that he understands the harms associated with social media and indeed screen time generally. There are stats within the report that show that the more screen time a child has, the more likely they are to experience bullying. Does the Minister agree that this is a public health issue in terms of the harm being caused to children's health and well-being? Would he agree that what schools and parents and us in the Assembly need is some expert guidance and some teamwork around establishing some expert guidance on what is a safe usage, generally for screens, but also for social media in terms of time on screens, what types of apps are suitable for different ages, et cetera, and boundaries? Does the Minister agree that that is important and would he agree to work with other Ministers and any departments necessary to help establish those?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy. I will say to the Deputy, the notion that that does not exist already is not the case, there is an awful lot that is going on but, yes, of course, anything that we do for it as we move forward because it is an ever-changing world, there is greater recognition.

[11:00]

In terms of it being a public health issue, that is a very good question. I look back to COVID, and as we entered COVID, one of the big criticisms of education was that children did not have access to online learning and screens, et cetera, so there was a big push there. We are now at the aftermath of that and think: “Yes, okay, so where do we need to be?” I do agree - and I am quite pleased and I thank the Assembly for the questions today and the approach - because I think there is a shared concern. There is a shared reality of the challenge that we have got ahead and there is a shared recognition that, yes, we do have to act, the schools are acting, but anything else we can do in conjunction with parents, schools, children and essentially with C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) I think will be very beneficial for our young people into the future, and that is what we want to do. We want them to be safe online, healthy online, and use every education opportunity possible where we can because then we get the best outcomes in the modern world.

The Bailiff:

I think I should inform Members it perhaps has been the case that I have been a little bit too lax on this occasion but at the rate we are going at the moment, we will not finish all the questions that have been lodged. Could I remind Members if the Presiding Officer is talking, then nobody else does, Deputy? Could I remind Members that Standing Orders require that questions are succinct and not the opportunity for making political statements other than absolutely necessary to contextualise the question and, similarly, answers should be disciplined. The fact that there has been a practice to allow answers to extend to a minute-and-a-half does not mean that they always should.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

A point of order?

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would you consider making an order to put the timers on the thing so that we can see the amount of time that Ministers are answering in order to guide us? I think that might be helpful. Would you make an order for that?

The Bailiff:

Well I would consider that that might be helpful but I do not propose to do it on this occasion. It is something I will certainly give consideration to.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I just say as well, sometimes some of the questions we are getting are quite large questions, and this is not the first time that it has been mentioned that the time that I was answering questions went over. I am happy to answer questions but I am only answering what I am given.

The Bailiff:

Well, we will leave that for a discussion, arguably, on a different occasion, Minister, but the fact is that I will have to be more disciplined going forward. I will allow, because of this exchange, an extra minute or 2 of injury time.

3.9 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding legislative drafting capacity (OQ.86/2025):

Further to his answer during Questions without notice on 18th February 2025, regarding legislative drafting capacity, will the Chief Minister provide clarity on what discussions, if any, have taken place with individual Ministers regarding the delivery of their legislative programme, and if no discussions have taken place, why not?

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

The current legislative programme was agreed last year and annexed to the published Cabinet Office business plan. The policy officers worked with the Legislative Drafting Office and individual Ministers to prioritise the law drafting programme. This culminated in a Council of Ministers' meeting on 5th November 2024 where the programme was approved. The recent States decision to reinstate the office of Senator will require legislation and it has been confirmed by officials that this will not disrupt or delay the current law drafting programme.

3.9.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Can he tell us whether or not, even though there is no delay, there will be a reorganisation in the schedule of the legislation, particularly given that Scrutiny Panels are engaged in scrutinising the work of the legislative programme and whether there will be any change to the Scrutiny process in that regard?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

There are currently no changes planned to the existing programme.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we come to question 10 ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I had my light on.

The Bailiff:

Well, not until I called question 10, Deputy. You cannot ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I had my light on.

The Bailiff:

Very well, I will accept that from you. I did not notice it but I accept that you had your light on.

3.9.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful. Would the Chief Minister agree to ensure that every aspect of his officials' time, the term "law drafting", there are law drafting instructions, there are all the policies used before, would he commit, just so that everybody in this Assembly would agree that a democratic decision has been made, would he give comfort from all of his Ministers - because some Ministers have said something about this this morning - that no impact is going to be taken on any of the work programmes in any way because the Senators are doing it? Would he be able to give some concrete examples, otherwise we are going to be here wasting time, worrying about things that we should not, where he clearly is, presumably, not doing anything to stop delivering.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I have already given that assurance, but for the purposes of transparency and to put some context around it, the law drafting programme was communicated formally to Scrutiny - the Scrutiny Liaison Committee - in my letter to them of 18th November. The full programme is also featured in the Cabinet Office business plan as an annex. The chief officer of the Cabinet Office, the principal

legislative drafter and Law Officers' Department meet on a monthly basis to review progress of the 59 items that are on this and advise Ministers of any concerns. The Executive Leadership Team reviews delivery on a quarterly basis, with the last sessions held on 26th February. It is intended the Council of Ministers will next receive a progress update on delivery in April. I reiterate, there are no planned delays or changes to the current programme.

3.9.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Very quickly, just a yes or no. Would he please kindly ask all his Ministers to confirm that their work programme is going to be unaffected by Senators, so we do not have to have question times where Ministers are saying that they could be impacted because they cannot do something because of Senators? For the avoidance of doubt, could he just say yes, he will ask all Ministers to confirm that?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I have already given that assurance on behalf of the Council of Ministers.

3.9.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Will the Minister confirm whether the published legislative programme in the annex of the Cabinet Office delivery plan is everything Ministers originally wanted to do, or whether a prioritisation exercise for the legislative drafting capacity was done? So, Ministers, in essence, have work they would have liked to have done this year but it was already cut to make a more deliverable programme?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think so. One of the things we had to accept is that the previous law drafting programmes were undeliverable. The original longlist of legislative bids amounted to 128 separate projects, but we know historically that there is a capacity limit of between 50 and 60 pieces of legislation, depending on the type of legislation. The business plan, I have a copy of it here; it is quite straightforward. Sitting behind the pieces of legislation we have planned is annex B, the strategic policy development work where other pieces of work are being undertaken. As we get through existing pieces of work, those new pieces of work will be fed in.

3.9.5 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If the Chief Minister could just reconfirm that while there is no change to the current legislative plan for law drafting, Ministers already did have to sacrifice some of their work schedule to deliver? So while they can fit in Senators now, if he could confirm that Ministers do have more on their plates they would have liked to have done, that was the work of Government, that was deprioritised.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I can reconfirm there will be no disruption or delay or change to the programme based on this decision of the Assembly to reintroduce the Island-wide mandate. I am not aware of any changes or any Ministerial concern from any Ministers in changes to the current programmes. Like I said, we are due to receive an update towards the end of April at the Council of Ministers meeting. But I will stress, the law drafting programme is now realistic, everything on there - we believe, having worked closely with the Law Drafting Office - can be delivered as scheduled.

3.9.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think what Deputy Curtis is driving at is that there must have been slack in the programme in order to fit in the Senators. Can you confirm that there was slack in the programme to allow the Senators to fit in without any changes being made to anywhere in the legislative programme?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

There is no slack in much of what we do. We are a busy Government, and I would like to think we have timetabled things to be as productive as we possibly can. I held a meeting with the Legislative Drafting Office, the Greffier and the Attorney General last week, and at that stage, and now I am assured, there will be sufficient drafting capacity to develop the legislation. That is not existing capacity; the Law Drafting Office is putting on some extra capacity to deal with this, as the will of the Assembly has dictated.

3.9.7 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can the Chief Minister therefore confirm that, when necessary, extra law drafting capacity is available, and therefore the answer that is sometimes given in this Assembly that there is no law drafting capacity available is not a valid reason for not taking action?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I do not agree with that. We have a law drafting programme; the Law Drafting Department has its resources; it has a budget. But on occasion, at the will of the Assembly, it is instructed to produce new legislation and that is what has happened on this occasion. I thank the Law Drafting Office for their co-operation with that.

3.9.8 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Can the Chief Minister just confirm if any further discussion has taken in place with P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) since the decision was reached to introduce the legislation?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Not directly, although I do keep in informal and formal communication with the chair of P.P.C., who has appropriately asked that we leave them alone to get on with the work, and that is what we are going to do. It is my hope that we can see this lodged and debated before the summer recess. That is quite tight, but I am informed we are going to try for that, but it could be perhaps the first sitting when we get back after that. The sooner we can get that done, the better, on the back of the decision.

3.10 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding data sharing rights (OQ.82/2025):

Will the Minister advise whether Jersey Business will have any data sharing rights to be able to publicise the recipients of the Better Business Grant, both for transparency and to promote business improvement in Jersey, and if not, why not?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

As the Deputy will appreciate, the appropriate governance for such grant schemes requires commercially sensitive information to be submitted; Jersey Business has clear parameters set up to protect the confidentiality of the applicants. Once grant projects have been completed, Jersey Business plans to promote case studies - with the consent of the organisation cited - to demonstrate the impact of the grants and encourage others to make the most of this opportunity. Our priority has to be removing barriers, increasing investment and improving productivity. As such, the programmes have been keen to ensure all asks of business are appropriate, proportionate and certainly not off-putting. The Government will also publish delivery updates regarding the grants and the wider Better Business Support Package later in the year.

3.10.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I declare that my business would be eligible for such grants, although that is shared with a wide range of businesses across the Island. Would the Minister advise, then, how he expects the success of the package will be understood across the Island, if in all likelihood most recipients and therefore examples of investment to deliver a return are not published? Notwithstanding that only the most successful will likely be those that are case studies.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As I said, we will seek case studies and we will seek permission to use case studies in order to encourage other businesses to engage with the programme. There is no question that we do not have and cannot seek permission to have a general catch-all publication of all applicants. I think there is a duty to commercial confidentiality and there is a duty under data protection that data sharing rights are only sought for matters which are directly pertinent to the programme in hand in this case.

3.10.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am mindful of the fact that we are talking about loans here rather than grants, which may affect the level of intrusion that one could reasonably expect. But does the Minister agree that just because somebody has received a loan, does not necessarily mean that if it was done with their consent, that that is commercially sensitive? Would the Minister agree that rather than just relying on pre-selected case studies, which have been successful, to then publicise as perhaps some kind of propaganda exercise - as it might be perceived - that it will be much more beneficial to ask for permission in advance, saying: "We would like to monitor your progress as a company with this loan, before we know whether it is successful or not, so that we can have more balanced approaches to looking at the success of the scheme"?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think it is important to clarify these are grants, not loans. I think it is also important to clarify that we do request data from those organisations, but we are not seeking to make it public. That is the part that is not appropriate from Deputy Curtis's question. Jersey Business does seek data sharing, but not data sharing rights. We will continue to monitor the applicants, and that is part of the agreement they enter into with the grant, but that information would not be made automatically public.

[11:15]

3.10.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for the clarification; I think I am confused with another loan scheme which is operating on a 50/50 basis. I think that perhaps changes things, but given the fact that this is public money that is being given out, the question remains, what will the measurables be and the mechanisms to make sure - whether as Scrutiny or whether as just taxpayers who are seeing their money going to these companies - that the scheme is successful and that money is being spent and providing the taxpayer with good value for money?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

While I would happily argue that that is not pertinent to the actual question that was first asked, I am happy to say that Jersey Business will work with all the organisations who apply and they will work to monitor their use of the grants and the success of the investments that they make in their businesses.

3.10.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I understand the Minister's difficulty with data confidentiality, but he will recognise the concerns that the public and States Members have when dealing with public money; ergo, the Innovation Fund. For example - and this relates particularly to what the Deputy is asking - there are rumours, and this is not an April fool, that there is a grant going to a magic mushrooms entity. Maybe it is a sub-sector of the cannabis industry, I am not sure, but it is doing some psychedelic research. If it is true that there is a magic mushroom business or mushroom export business going on, could he give some guidance which stops short of breaking data, but just some policy guidance as to whether or not we think it is sensible for Jersey to be putting public money into magic mushrooms.

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, that falls ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, that has absolutely nothing to do with the question.

The Bailiff:

Thank you. I think I was going to express that view, Deputy Morel. Frankly, asking the Minister for policy is nothing really to do with data-sharing rights between Jersey business and anyone else.

3.10.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think the Minister has answered this, but I would like absolute clarity. Is it the case, because of this data sharing rights issue, that the public will not know a complete list of who has received money through this scheme at all, never mind how much money each business has got?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will say, I think it is dangerous if we just continually publish lists of recipients of grants. I think that creates a really difficult situation for all Islanders, and so I do question the motivation for that. What I would say is, that is also one reason why we have a Scrutiny function. That sort of information can be passed to Scrutiny in confidence and Scrutiny can then ask questions themselves. That is one of the reasons why we have a Scrutiny function, so that confidential information can be looked over and then the public can take comfort from Scrutiny's views. I do not think it is right to go publishing the names of people because, sadly, as we have just seen from the previous Deputy speaking based on rumour, rumour does a lot of harm in this Island.

3.10.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

Rumour would obviously be out of the window if we had clarity and transparency. I do think that it is interesting that we will not have that information; it is not about a victimisation thing of those companies. Will he explain, therefore, how the public will know whether the money has been well-spent, when it will not be possible to publicise the names of businesses that have received it and therefore may have not used it well?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I would actually counter that with a question myself, to some extent. How would the public know, just by publishing the names of businesses, whether that money has been well-spent or not? All they would know is the name of the business and the amount of money they received. They would not have any information as to whether it was well spent or not.

3.10.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I am slightly confused because the Minister approved a CXTech programme in Impact Jersey on the exact same match funding in which all recipients will be published. My question is: will the Minister, despite his current position, commit to working with Jersey Business urgently to ensure both the website and terms and conditions, in essence, seek that approval from Members that, where public money is given out, at least a level of information - which may not include the quantum - is published so that Islanders and other businesses who may not be successful at least have some awareness of the scheme?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, I will not make that undertaking. What I can say is that recipient organisations will be consenting to Jersey Business, the Department for the Economy, Revenue Jersey and other administrations of the Government or States of Jersey to share data and information received from that organisation for the purposes of and in connection with the grant package they receive and those terms and conditions. I am not going to seek any further requirement for data from them than that.

3.11 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Social Security regarding the Community Cost Bonus and the Cold Weather Bonus (OQ.83/2025):

Given the continued rise in the cost of living, will the Minister advise whether consideration has been given to increasing the Community Costs Bonus and the Cold Weather Bonus to keep pace with prices, and if no such consideration has been undertaken, will she advise why not?

Deputy L.V. Feltham (The Minister for Social Security):

I did consider the current value of the Community Costs Bonus for 2025 because that is not a formula-driven amount and I have agreed to maintain the higher level of payment, given the current cost-of-living pressures. The Community Costs Bonus was doubled in 2022, so I have agreed to retain that higher level rather than reverting to the lower level. With regard to the Cold Weather Bonus, that within the legislation includes an automatic uprating every year, so that does happen automatically to keep pace with increased prices.

3.11.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Has the Government conducted any recent assessments on whether these bonuses are effectively alleviating financial hardship, and if not, why not?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I, of course, need to consider any uprates in the round of all of the benefits that we provide, and it is a constant challenge that I do give to my officers to provide me with necessary information. This is one of the reasons why I am so keen to get the work done that we have funded in this year's Budget on minimum income standards, so that we can get some more detailed data around cost-of-living pressures for households at the moment.

3.12 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the impact of the closure of Fort Regent for 3 years (OQ.91/2025):

Will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, was given to the potential detrimental impact on the physical, mental and social well-being of Islanders, that the closure of Fort Regent for 3 years will have, and explain why a phased approach that would not require closure, as suggested in 2014, is no longer feasible?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. To support the physical, mental and social well-being of Islanders, we are investing £8.4 million in a new purpose-built sports facility at Oakfield and it is on track to be finished on time. I am also strongly of the view that mental well-being is not only impacted by one's current surroundings, but also through having hope and optimism for the future. Our proposals for the Fort Regent offer that hope, whereas the current condition of the Fort is hardly conducive to good mental well-being. Successive Governments, including the Government and the Regeneration Steering Group, of which Deputy Warr was a Member, took decisions to close and then renovate Fort Regent. Having reviewed those plans carefully, we are continuing with that approach through to delivery. As I have said previously, having a clear site will enable the regeneration of Fort Regent to be safer, quicker and more cost effective, enabling the reopening of a 21st century facility by the end of 2028. A phased approach would add significant complexity and cost to the work, which would almost certainly mean that large parts of the Fort would be closed to the public for longer.

3.12.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

It was reported today that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service saw 934 new referrals in 2024. We have a mental health crisis among our young people; we have an obesity crisis. To

paraphrase, we appear to know the price of everything, but the cost of nothing. Why has there been ...

The Bailiff:

Could we have a question, please?

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Thank you, Sir. I was just starting that. Why has there been no real engagement with the community prior to the announcement of the decision to close the Fort? Why is engagement only taking place after a decision has been made? Does this not undermine trust in Government?

The Bailiff:

Whichever of those questions you can ...

The Connétable of St. John:

I would just like to correct the Deputy in as much as that we have been consulting with users of Fort Regent for many years. We have officers dedicated to that task and we are engaging with those user groups to find better alternatives. If the Deputy heard the radio last week, he would have heard a great example of the ballet who were a tenant at the Fort and they are now delighted to be tenants of a better facility.

3.12.2 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Very briefly, noting that this question was originally directed towards the Minister for Treasury and Resources, will the Minister kindly confirm that in matters relating to development at Fort Regent, that the proper course for Scrutiny to follow is to ask questions of him as Minister rather than the Minister for Treasury and Resources?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, that is not within the 4 walls of the question, which was related to detrimental impact on the physical, mental and social well-being of Islanders. Final supplementary, Deputy Warr.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sorry, Sir, I am not sure I get one.

The Bailiff:

So, you are quite right. Thank you, Deputy. **[Laughter]** That was an altogether positive intervention. Thank you very much indeed.

3.13 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for External Relations regarding the relationship between Jersey and Estonia (OQ.87/2025):

Given the positive relationship that has developed to date between Jersey and Estonia, will the Minister advise what impact, if any, the U.K.'s decision to reduce its military footprint in that country will have on our future relations with Estonia?

Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Minister for External Relations):

Jersey's external relations are constitutionally distinct from those of the U.K.; however, they remain closely aligned, particularly in areas of shared interest. Decisions regarding the footprint of the British Armed Forces in Estonia are a matter of U.K. defence policy. While the broader impact of this decision is not yet known, Jersey will continue to value its strong and positive bilateral relationship with Estonia.

3.13.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Does the Minister foresee this decision affecting Jersey's broader diplomatic and strategic relationships within the region and elsewhere?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I can only reiterate the answer that I gave to the opening question: that our interests are distinct and we maintain those interests. Matters of defence and the footprint of the British Armed Forces are matters for the United Kingdom Government.

3.14 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding initiatives to reduce grocery prices in the Island (OQ.93/2025):

Will the Minister advise what initiatives, if any, are being supported to enhance competition and reduce grocery prices in the Island, given Jersey's ongoing cost-of-living pressures and the U.K. flat inflation rate of 2.5 per cent in February 2025?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

It is important, first of all, to point out that Jersey's inflation rate is not vastly dissimilar to the U.K.'s inflation rate, as is suggested or implied by the question. But I am pleased to say that further to my answer to Oral Question 46/2025, the new ferry concession agreement includes price caps on the cost of freight. It also includes a flat-rate card, which is aimed at removing an artificial barrier to competition; price caps limit the cost of freight importation to the Island in the long-term future. The sale by Sandpiper to Morrisons of Morrisons Daily, Iceland and Checkers Xpress stores will also mean that there are now 4 large grocery retailers on-Island. While that has not come about through Government action, it should have the effect of reducing market concentration and enhancing competition. The Jersey Consumer Council, which I am pleased to support, has also invested in a new and improved price comparison website. This tool makes it easier for Islanders to compare across grocery and fuel retailers. It improves price transparency and encourages greater price-based competition, meeting one of the J.C.R.A.'s recommendations from its Groceries Market Study in 2023.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Given the time, if you want to finish Questions, no, Sir.

The Bailiff:

No, in fact, we have caught up, so ... The last 2 questions were models of brevity, Deputy. Do you have a supplemental?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Only if the last question can be ... if there is time for last questions.

The Bailiff:

Well, there are other Members who wish to ask questions.

3.14.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful for the Deputy's answer, both his written answer and the issue there. Is he planning to do anything going forward? Because the repeated refrain on doorsteps and among chattering people that Members speak to is across all types of household - pensioner households, families, all the rest of it - it is the issues of food and grocery prices are the Islanders' seemingly number one concerns. He says that the inflation rate in Jersey is not the same. Whatever the statistics are - which are not actually comparable anyway - would he understand that the real lived experience of people in Jersey is that there are grocery prices which are going up and up, and is he going to do anything to either assuage their concern or do something about it?

[11:30]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The comparison I make with U.K. pricing is entirely because the Deputy himself made that comparison in the question, and then he says they are dissimilar. It is a reality that 80 per cent, if not more, of food in Jersey is imported, compared to around 45 per cent in the U.K. We saw a recent food resilience report that I received in November 2024 and it provides several recommendations to help improve food resilience on the Island; these are going to be incorporated in the updated Rural Economy Framework due later this year. We saw in 2023 that the J.C.R.A. identified a number of Island-specific factors which influenced the higher cost of groceries in Jersey when compared to the U.K. or mainland Europe. I will continue to work with the J.C.R.A. to see where we can make a difference, because I do agree with the Deputy that the cost of groceries in Jersey is always of importance to all Islanders. As the Deputy does know, Jersey does sadly have limited levers with which to tackle inflation directly. Monetary policy, which is considered by most economists as the best tool to manage inflation, is not set by us; it is set by the Bank of England. That said, I will continue to use all the levers that I possibly can. That does include the importance of competition in the Island, and that is why it is important that we have seen the introduction recently of a new supermarket chain to the Island. I will continue to work to see if we can attract European supermarkets, and new supply chains are likely to bring about ...

The Bailiff:

I have to ask you to stop your answer.

3.14.2 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister advise what his action could be when it was reported that the new Morrisons introduced to the Island, their price is 45 per cent on average higher than in the U.K., which obviously does not drive any reduction in the cost of living?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think that is slightly specific to 2 supermarket chains and I therefore cannot really answer it because I do not have an action plan for this specific supermarket.

3.14.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

What work is the Minister going to do to engage with the chains on the Island to ensure that Jersey prices are not 45 per cent higher than the U.K. prices in some cases?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will continue to work with the J.C.R.A. and also the Consumer Council to try to understand why those price differences are there. That is the most important thing. First of all, understand why the difference is there and then you can seek to act.

3.14.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister mentioned a flat-rate card and a price cap for freight for DFDS. What evidence does the Minister have to suggest that a flat-rate card would necessarily bring prices down and indeed not allow economies of scale for those bigger companies who want to bulk purchase and therefore keep prices down?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

A J.C.R.A. report into the freight industry said that greater transparency of freight prices would likely have an impact ... will allow us at the very least to understand what proportion of the price on the shelf is created by freight. We now have freight prices capped for the next 20 years. That is going to have an impact on the pricing of freight in the Island and that should feed into ultimately a lower freight proportion of the cost of the goods on the shelves.

3.14.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

I would suggest that does not answer the question. The greater transparency does not necessarily mean the introduction of a flat-rate card; it could just mean that discounts are published. Does the Minister accept that while he might have control in terms of a cap on price increases, he does not have any control over the initial pricing that the company can charge and therefore it is completely at their liberty to increase prices now so that they ... because they can only limit their increases accordingly? Is that not potentially an unintended consequence?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely not.

3.14.6 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister mentioned before trying to attract a European supermarket, but specifically what engagement has he had with French supermarkets? I know that this has been something that the Minister has tried to promote previously, to try to get a French supermarket into Jersey to reduce grocery prices.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have had plenty of interaction with French supermarkets; one in particular.

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

Again, it is something that has been brought to me by constituents; the cost of food is just going up by the week. Does the Minister not believe that we should have a negotiated agreement with some of the major supermarkets? A major supermarket in, say, Huddersfield would charge a different rate than, say, West End of London. I know rents and freight are something to be considered, but does the Minister think this is something that should be looked at? I feel very disturbed by the fact that some of our major supermarkets in Jersey are now employing security guards on a weekend. Does that worry the Minister?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not understand what security guards have to do with the original question, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Well, if I were inferring it, then I would say people are inclined to thief - so the suggestion appears to be - because of the cost of food. But the real question was to do with the ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If the Connétable was concerned about shoplifting, I just wish he had said that more clearly in the question; I would have better understood. I do not know anything about the Huddersfield situation that he is talking about, so I cannot respond.

The Bailiff:

Do you want to add a supplemental question, Connétable?

3.14.8 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

May I clarify, Sir? It was just the fact that major supermarkets price to the area, so that ... not necessarily Huddersfield, but prices vary to the area. If they perceive to have a wealthier area, they will increase the prices.

The Bailiff:

What was the question?

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Will the Minister agree to look into this problem?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have no doubt that all shops in Jersey, supermarkets or otherwise, price to Jersey.

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

I follow up a bit on the question from the Connétable of St. Saviour. Would the Minister support implementing regulations that would require supermarkets to apply standardised pricing for similar products or brands across different stores? Or would he consider setting a cap or maximum price for essential items to help control rising grocery costs?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

In short, I think I could say that such market intervention is a long way from my thinking.

3.14.10 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

What role, if any, do local producers and suppliers play in reducing grocery prices, and are there any incentives being offered to support them in doing so?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Better Business Productivity Support Scheme is entirely intended to enable businesses to cut their overheads and reduce the cost of sales. That in itself will help supermarkets or grocery producers or farmers to reduce their overheads and therefore in theory reduce their prices.

3.14.11 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful for the Deputy to acknowledge that the issue of grocery prices is indeed one of the issues that the public want us to talk about because they are concerned about it. I only heard in his answers questions relating to what the J.C.R.A. is doing and what he is getting advice. Is he getting advice from anybody else than apart from the J.C.R.A. and the Consumer Council, who are telling him there is a problem? Specifically, is he doing anything to bring in a low-cost supermarket such as Aldi or Lidl, whether they be from France or Germany or the United Kingdom?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am pleased to say that we recently saw Alliance take over the Iceland franchise as well, which is a low-cost retailer; it is important to maintain that choice in the Island. I also take advice from lots of people all the time. Genuinely, when I am walking down the street, people are often offering me advice. I speak to organisations and institutions offering me advice. I am always listening and always heeding advice.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think I meant professional civil service advice.

The Bailiff:

Well, there we are.

3.15 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding the High Value Residency scheme (OQ.85/2025):

Sir, I believe the Assistant Chief Minister will be answering. In relation to the High Value Residency Scheme, will the Minister advise whether there is a cap, either formal or informal, on the annual number of approvals under the scheme, and if not, why not?

Deputy I.J. Gorst (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur):

There is not a formal cap on the number of 2(1)(e) applications approved per year. When the housing regulations were introduced in 1974, an aspiration to secure 15 approvals per year was established; this remains the case today. Imposing a cap would be artificial and potentially mean that good quality applicants could be rejected. Instead, the parameters of the scheme are set to achieve the most benefits for Jersey while securing a reasonable number of applicants. This means that every application can be assessed on its own merits.

3.15.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

This question arose out of the Minister for the Environment's decision to change Supplementary Planning Guidance at the request of 3 high-net-worth individuals; the issue this raises is one of social cohesion. In the absence of a cap, how will the Minister prove that the Government is achieving the right balance between the benefits of high-value residency and ensuring they do not come to dominate areas of political decision-making in which they have a stake?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Just to correct the Deputy, the Minister under questioning at the last States sitting disagreed with the analysis, that the Minister has just articulated again today, so that is as it may be. I will leave it to him to answer that part of the question. It can only be done, of course, by looking at the past data and approvals and actual movers are different. In 2024, we had 23 approvals with 11 arrivals. I think this is an important scheme. It is a scheme which is mirrored elsewhere across the globe. In fact, more countries are producing such schemes to attract talent and entrepreneurial spirit, as well as wealth, because they recognise the contribution to the community that these individuals can bring.

3.15.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Assistant Chief Minister advised he knew the past approvals for 2024, I believe. Does he know the numbers going further back for the total amount of those who have moved or been approved to the Island? If so, could he share them with the Assembly?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Yes, I do have them and I am quite happy to read a list of numbers if the Assembly thinks it is a good use of their time, or I can email them to Members after. You would like me to read them out? Could you stop me when I have got to the sufficient time to answer this question, Sir?

The Bailiff:

This is the moment where I really should have put the timer on. Right. Yes, of course. But are you able to do a summary of it?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I will do a stab back to 2020. In 2023, we had 31 approvals, 15 arrivals. In 2022, we had 17 approvals, 9 arrivals. In 2021, we had 20 approvals, 25 arrivals. In 2020, we had 22 approvals and 14 arrivals.

3.15.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It is important the Assembly hears this because it means the public can hear those numbers and not just Members. Given those numbers, the Minister said that each application should be considered on a case-by-case basis. But does he see any risk at all that there is a cumulative impact if applications are not considered in the round to a policy, not just on a case-by-case basis?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I do not have the figures with me for leavers, but the Deputy will be aware that individuals are leavers as well. The challenge for Jersey is to ensure that we consider the applications to ensure that individuals that are coming actually want to set up and create a new life here in Jersey and bring

value not only to the economy but to the community. I know that my colleagues opposite would be able to share stories of where some such individuals have joined the Honorary Police Force, for example. We want to see more and more of that: individuals that move to Jersey, that build their life in Jersey, that create value here and create jobs and develop entrepreneurship; I think that is really important. Of course, we have to be mindful of the cumulative impact, but that cumulative impact - although the intimation of the question was that it would be negative - it can actually be positive.

3.15.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Does the Assistant Chief Minister believe that we should be lowering the requirements for entry to 2(1)(e)s to encourage more wealth-creators to our Island, especially in light of the exodus of millionaires from the U.K. escaping from that high tax jurisdiction.

[11:45]

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

It is about balance and it is about value. I know some of my colleagues that sit on the H.A.W.A.G. (Housing and Work Advisory Group) on principle disagrees with this policy and on all such policies. I think that the balance that we have is appropriate. But let us be clear, it is less competitive than it used to be. European states are creating schemes and attracting more individuals because the barriers to entry are lower; the tax take required is lower. Even if we just look across the water not a very great distance, it is much cheaper for someone to move to that place. I think this scheme works incredibly well. I think we can be confident and Islanders can be confident that they are paying a substantial tax contribution and that they are creating value here in Jersey. We have got that balance right, but if we do become uncompetitive - and I see no signs of that with the current scheme - then of course it would be right for us to consider it.

3.15.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Assistant Chief Minister speaks about the policy and balance. Does the Assistant Chief Minister - mindful of the fact that it was under his Chief Ministership that his then-Minister for Treasury and Resources brought these proposals, but individual decisions are made by him and his colleagues and in the recent past - does he not understand, and do Ministers not understand, that there is on the one side the issue, such as my Constable was saying, of people stealing in grocery stores? Maybe because they have not got enough money, the issues of food banks. On the other side, the issue of the opulent displays of wealth by very welcome individuals in Jersey who also, by the way, are concerned about the cost of living with the lower prices issues? Does he not agree that he needs to do more and the Government needs to do more to address the issues of ordinary working people and retired people, as well as, and get some of these 1(1)(k)s to do something to reduce prices if they possibly can? One or 2 have done, of course. He is going to be having problems all the time with this.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, this is perilously getting close to being outside the ambit of the question which was whether there was an informal or formal cap on the number of approvals. I am sorry, I do not think I can rule that as being in order on any reasonable interpretation of the question.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Okay, Sir. The question is about the informal nature of the cap. There is an informal cap; is he mindful of the fact that he needs to be informed about the informal cap that he has?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Sir, I do think, while it is perilously close and I would not presume to suggest anything other than your ruling, I do think it is an important question because there are 2(1)(e)s in the past who have sought to reduce prices in particular markets, and I support their work. It is important and it is

something that those of us who are making decisions are very mindful of. We do not use the skills and talents today of some of these individuals who could help us with the strategic problems that we as an Island face. Asking them to call on their contacts, particularly with things like low-cost supermarkets and sites that they could help to invest in, is a fundamental area where we currently are not benefiting from this policy in the way that we could. If the Deputy is suggesting he has got ideas and he knows individuals that can help us with this, then we are absolutely all ears, because I believe it benefits Islanders. But we have to work harder and harder to prove to Islanders the benefit that has been delivered, but future benefit that can be delivered in the areas that he suggested in his question.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

No, Sir. He has done very well, actually.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

There is a first time for everything.

The Bailiff:

I have Deputy Kovacs, then final supplementary.

3.15.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Has the Government conducted any reviews or studies on the long-term effects of the High Value Residency Scheme? If yes, when and what was the outcome? If no, why not?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I am not sure that we have done a recent review. There have been reviews undertaken in the past when I have been sitting in different governmental chairs, but I cannot recall off the top of my head exactly when they were.

3.15.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

How does the Minister ensure that the scheme aligns with Jersey's economic goals, avoids increasing inequality or housing unaffordability, and ensures contributions are made to the areas of the economy where Jersey needs it the most?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy will know that in the previous Government, led by Deputy Moore, the parameters of the scheme were changed and the contributions required were substantially increased and the thresholds of minimum assets and house value purchases were substantially increased at that time.

3.15.8 Deputy J. Renouf:

Just to be clear, this question is not arguing against high-net-worth immigration on principle; it is about the cap. Does the Minister accept that there is a point at which there would be too many high net-worth people in Jersey, given that it is a cumulative process? If he does, does he not also think it would be good for the Government to spell out what this level might be, especially as a cap would require explanation and a spelling out of the relative benefits and costs?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I think the difficulty with the approach that the Deputy is outlining is for all of the reasons that Members have just asked me to be mindful of in making the decisions. If we had a formal cap and an applicant from, let us say, a French family supermarket brand whose name we can think of, applied to come here, would we say "No" to them because we have reached the cap? Or: "Wait for another 12 months so that we can deal with your application?" No. They want to know that we can deal with their application professionally and in a timely manner. Having said that, we still have the aspiration to secure 15 and the average, if one looks at those numbers, has been around the 15. We have not

changed our parameters in light of the non-dom changes in the United Kingdom and all of the exodus from wealth creators spread around Europe and the Middle East. We have not changed our parameters. We have sought to stick to our admitting because it serves Jersey well and we have focused very much on individuals that can bring their business, that can create jobs, that want to be philanthropic and want to take part in the Jersey community.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Minister. That brings Questions with notice to an end. We now move on to Questions without notice.

4. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Health and Social Services

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

Could the Minister, having been in office for just over a year, inform the Assembly of the issues he considers to be of greatest importance to improve the quality of the health service for the future?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I thank the Deputy for her question. I think the 2 areas of principal focus going forward, if we really want to improve the health service, are going to be, on the one hand, digital, and on the other, preventative healthcare. I think we are facing what is effectively a tsunami of new treatments that are keeping people alive for much longer. I looked on the internet the other day; the year of my birth I think average life expectancy was 72. I think our average life expectancy is approaching 84; so we are all living 12 years longer. That is 12 years of intensive treatment, and science is producing a lot more ways of keeping us alive. I think we have to have a real focus on keeping people well for longer and investing in screening and better vaccinations and so on. In terms of digital connectivity, we are appallingly badly connected. There are 7 industry standards and I think we do not leave the starting blocks; we are not even at stage one, so there is a long way to go. Both of those areas are going to require an awful lot more money and it is probably a good opportunity for me to say now that in the not-too-distant future I will be making that apparent and coming to the Assembly with a fairly sizeable request. I hope that answers that question suitably.

4.1.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

Following on from that, what does the Minister consider to be his greatest achievement?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I would not claim to have any great achievements at this point in time. What I have done over the course of 14 months, hopefully, is made a reasonable assessment of where we are and what needs doing. I think some of our proposals are going to deliver some benefit, particularly the formation and implementation of a partnership board which will bring together all of the component parts of the health service, not just the H.C.S. (Health and Community Services) or the H.C.J. (Health and Care Jersey) as it now is ... division, and get people making decisions collectively from a much more even basis in terms of the fact that each person will have a place on that board and an equal voting right. I think those are the sort of things that are going to make a difference. It has taken a while to get here. I am sorry if people feel progress is slow, but I think we start from quite a long way back and there is a lot of work to be done.

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

Could the Minister provide a definitive timeline for when the new statutory duty requiring provision of palliative and end-of-life care will be brought before the Assembly? Could the Minister outline the key provision of this duty and explain how it will enhance the quality and accessibility of care for those in need?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Sorry, could I ask for that question again? It is quite an intense question. Just want to make sure I have got it all together.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course. This related to the assisted dying law. As part of that, the Minister had agreed that there would be a new statutory duty requiring the provision of palliative and end-of-life care to be brought before the Assembly before we would discuss or debate again on the assisted dying law provision. So, could the Minister give a timeline of when this would come to the Assembly and outline the key provisions that would be in this duty?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

My understanding is that the law itself will be back before the Assembly towards the end of the year. That particular provision, though, I cannot off the balls of my feet give an exact timeline or a full detail of what that will contain, but I am very happy to get that information and forward it to the Deputy later today.

4.2.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for giving that information because I believe that many in the Assembly were asking for that before the assisted dying legislation would be discussed again. The Minister reminds the Assembly and Island regularly that there is limited money for health ...

The Bailiff:

Could you ask a question please, Deputy?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

How does the Minister plan to ensure that sufficient funding and resources are allocated to effectively implement this statutory duty, especially given that it is specifically linked to the delivery of the assisted dying law?

Deputy T. Binet:

Having visited Hospice fairly recently and had a meeting with the team there and gone through the numbers, I am aware that they have had a fairly significant uplift in their funding in recent times, in any event. As regards to any commitment we have made to bringing things to the Assembly before the law comes forward, if that is what we have committed to do, then I can confirm that we will certainly stick to those commitments.

4.3 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

Could the Minister advise what work is going on in his department to address the rising cost of nursing and residential care home fees?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

That is a very difficult one to answer. That area of care is looking for more funding and I have to say I do not think there is a single area of care within the whole system that is not looking for more funding. We see the same in dementia care; we see the same in the treatment of diabetes; we are simply short of money on every front. Which brings me to another piece of work that we are doing at the moment, and this will not go down well with anybody. I have tried to make the point that we need more money for health because health provision is getting more and more complicated. We are starting to look at where we may have to introduce certain charges in certain areas of health to increase the total fund of money coming in. We also have to have a discussion with members of the public about what sort of service they are going to want in the future and how much they are going to be prepared to pay for it. It is a very difficult one. I think everybody in the Assembly knows full

well that this is a problem that is confronting everybody all over the world. It is a difficult one and I want to hope that we can be at the front end of things tackling that head-on.

4.3.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I thank the Minister for his response on that. In some instances, there have been increases of up to 13.9 per cent increase in fee charges. Would the Minister please explain, given that situation, how he will ensure high quality care remains accessible and affordable to Jersey residents, particularly those on fixed incomes and pensions?

[12:00]

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

That figure comes as something of a surprise to me; I was not aware of anything that extraordinarily high. I will be very happy to speak to the Deputy later to find out what that situation is. It just strikes me if anybody in the care home business is raising their rates by nearly 40 per cent, they are going to struggle to get the right amount of people using their services. But I am very happy to look at that. In terms of what we will do going forward, I can only commit in this area to do what I am going to try and do in every area and apportion the resources that we have got as fairly as we possibly can. I do not think I can commit to doing anything much more than that.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Can I just clarify: it was not 40 per cent, it was 13.9 per cent. The Minister may just like to be aware of that figure.

The Bailiff:

I think that is a point of clarification and that is perfectly all right.

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I thought it was 39 per cent, sorry. Apologies.

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

The Minister has inherited a Health Advisory Board and I think the Assembly made a decision at the time to have an 18-month longevity of it. Would the Minister advise the Assembly kindly what he is going to do with the advisory board. He has spoken of it. When are Members going to be able to discuss the long-term putting in place of the advisory board? Because I think he has found it quite useful, has he not?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Yes, we have reached the point of review which is currently being undertaken. On a personal level, I would thank them publicly. I think we are very lucky [**Approbation**] to have some extremely experienced, good people to work with; they have been very helpful to me and to the team. I would be very happy to recommend they continue; I certainly hope that they wish to. I think they found Jersey a particularly intriguing place to work, very different to anything else. I am certainly hopeful that we can retain their services going forward.

4.4.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am genuinely pleased to hear the Minister thanking the board, because of course it was very controversial, as the Minister will remember. The States Assembly resolution is that he needs to come back to the States Assembly in continuing the board, because they have only got 18 months' life. Is he aware of that? Can we look forward to receiving his long-term plan for a board in the very short term? Because it is obviously part of his rebuilding of the health service.

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I am acutely aware of the fact that it is an 18-month timeline. I rather suspect we might be trespassing beyond that and I apologise to the Assembly; it is not for lack of wanting to have dealt with it. We certainly will be coming back to the Assembly to discuss that and with - certainly on a personal level and from the team - a recommendation to maintain their very professional services.

4.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

At the end of last year, the Minister gave an answer identifying 3 areas of treatment that had waiting times of more than 6 months. They were bariatric medicine, gastroenterology and clinical genetics. He also said that after 52 weeks where patients have been waiting, they are given a family questionnaire to complete and return. Can he advise whether or not those forms have now been processed and what the results are in terms of bringing down waiting times?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

No, I am not able to confirm whether that has happened or not. Once again, I am very happy to make that inquiry and let the Deputy know as soon as I can.

4.5.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Specifically, when it comes to clinical genetics, which I understand is relating to those being screened for potential breast cancer, he did say that he hoped that by quarter 2 of 2025 that there will be no patients waiting longer than 6 months for this screening service. Can he confirm whether he is still on target to meet that aspiration?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

No. I am unable to confirm that, just standing here at this point in time. Unfortunately, it is quite easy to get caught off-balance not knowing these things. Quarter 2 does not finish until the end of June. Very happy to review that and give the results of that when we get to the end of quarter 2, and I am happy to give the Deputy an update as soon as I have got the time to do that.

4.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

In the Budget of 2025, the Financial Recovery Plan savings had been reprofiled to a less aggressive timeline. Is the Minister on target to meet the reprofiled Financial Recovery Plan savings of £8 million this year and £9 million next year?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Well, we are only 12 weeks into the year, but I have to say, unfortunately the budget is already slightly overstretched. In terms of the actual financial recovery plan, I have a meeting at the end of next week to get an update on that. Once again, that is information that I am very happy to pass on to the Deputy once I have had that update. It is not something I have looked at for a number of weeks.

4.7 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Does the Minister still expect a planning determination to be made for the St. Saviour's Health Village by the end of this year?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

As the Deputy knows, we are working on both of the secondary sites, Kensington Place and the Health Village. The plan is to have something fairly substantial by the end of this year. Whether it will be a month or 2, either way everybody will know that there has been a big focus on trying to get the planning permission and to engage a main contractor for the construction of the acute service at Overdale. I think everybody appreciates that that has to be our primary concern at the moment. The target is for then and, hopefully, will be within a month or 2 of that.

4.7.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Does this mean that the Minister has been able to purchase the fields that are surrounding the property or is the Minister considering a compulsory purchase of those fields?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I think some preliminary discussions have taken place. I do not think we are looking at compulsory purchase at this point in time. As I say, planning permission and engaging a principal contractor have been the main points of focus up until now. We are making good progress on the appointment of a contractor and we will be revisiting these things in the coming months.

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

What sectors of our health service does the Minister have under consideration for the introduction of charges?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Until we have done some more work I do not think it would be wise at this stage to start speculating. There is a whole range of things that we are looking at. If the Deputy does not mind, I will refrain from making any comments at this stage because this is going to be a very sensitive situation to deal with. I think we need to be sure of our ground before we make any public statements.

4.8.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

When does the Minister think he may be able to inform us what charges are likely where?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I think our course of action will not involve me coming to tell people what the charges are. I think what we are going to do is develop a whole range of options, and this is one I know I have been criticised by not liaising with the public on some matters and I continue to defend that position. But I think on this one we really will have to have a proper consultation process. I want to handle this professionally and properly. I want people to know what we are proposing and I want them to know why we are proposing it. I would like to have feedback from people as to what health service they want as a core service and how they feel they can ...

The Bailiff:

That brings the period of questions to an end, Minister.

5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for International Development

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

Would the Minister be able to explain how often she would have used the criteria and measures the J.O.A. (Jersey Overseas Aid) has for selecting partner countries?

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for International Development):

We review our strategic plan on an annual basis to refresh it. Indeed we had such a meeting on 10th March this year and we have considered all the countries that we support for our sustainable development grants.

5.1.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Focusing on the Corruption Perceptions Index calculation, a number of Jersey's partner countries are high in the index; for example, Sierra Leone has become worse since 2023. What would the Minister do if these scores keep dropping for any of Jersey's partner countries and have they changed since that meeting on 10th March?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I am not entirely sure if they have changed since 10th March; that I would have to check. But, as I say, we have a formula which works incredibly well. In fact I think we are one of the only jurisdictions that uses the Corruption Perceptions Index when considering which countries to support, as well as the Human Development Index. The countries are also chosen if they lend themselves to our 3 themes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sorry, I do not think my question was answered. I asked, what would the Minister do if the scores keep dropping for any of Jersey's partner countries?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

As I have said, we review our countries annually and we have just done that. We are considering bringing some more countries on board. Sierra Leone, the one she cited, we found meets our criteria. But we keep them under constant review and if we were concerned with any one country we would review it. We do not have to stick annually, so we can review it if we are particularly concerned about any of the countries we are supporting.

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

The Minister knows my views, and I think a lot of Assembly Members, but we absolutely hold in awe the work that the International Development office does and the commissioners, together with the late chief executive. I would be mindful of the excellent reputation that she has, given the United States is pulling back on U.S.A.I.D. (United States Agency for International Development), the United Kingdom has made the very difficult decision to reprioritise their own budgets for defence, and I offer no criticism to the United Kingdom for doing that. Could the Minister advise the Assembly, is she and her officials seeing a marked increase in terms of demand for what is now a much poorer world in the world of available resources from big countries like the United States and is that going to have an impact on her work?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Thank you for that question. Yes, indeed the decision by the United States does carry with it significant implications. We have not partnered with U.S.A.I.D. directly, apart from one particular N.G.O. (non-governmental organisation), Mercy Corps, and we are working with them to assess the Corps expenses. But at this point we are not overly concerned. However, having said that, we have been contacted by many N.G.O.s who are concerned that they cannot finish, they cannot complete their projects, they are in search of bridging loans or support, both of that nature. It is extremely concerning. The U.S. contribution was 71 billion last year, of which U.S.A.I.D. got 40 per cent of that. It is having a significant impact.

5.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful for the Minister because I think this is the big issue and the Minister would agree this is the big issue that her officials will be having. The follow-up question I have is mindful of the earlier comments that the Assistant Chief Minister was making about the high-net-worth individuals in Jersey and the huge amount of work that she has managed to do, not only to get benefit from the leverage of our States grant but also the private sector engagement that she is doing. Does she see an opportunity for Jersey to be really making a difference in a world where there is huge scarce resources for aid but Jersey can do it differently and do it well in a targeted way? Would she have Ministerial support of her colleagues to try and do a Jersey not as in grant, world class, all the rest of it but a Jersey-sized solution of an otherwise really problematic world where Jersey could make a difference? Has she thought of that? I am sure she has.

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Yes, indeed we have thought about that because obviously we have the 2(1)(e)s who I have to say I have got one such person on the Commission who contributes hugely and is of great value to the board. But, yes, there is - I do not know about untapped - certainly leverage there, although I would have to say that any contribution made, other than taxpayers' money, other than tax money, would not be considered as overseas development assistance.

[12:15]

It would not make our contributions look any higher, although obviously it would have huge amounts of benefit to beneficiaries but we are exploring various vehicles like impact investment bonds and things like that.

The Bailiff:

Any other questions for this Minister? There are no other questions for this Minister. The remainder of this period and the following 15 minutes of questions for the Chief Minister.

6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

6.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Chief Minister will be aware that the ferries that take freight or passengers in the Island are of critical importance to us. Would the Minister give us an assurance that the cancellation that we saw on the very first day that should have been the first day of operation of DFDS is not something that is likely to be repeated and that he has confidence in the service and the contingencies in case of failure for this critical infrastructure?

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

Yes, I am pleased to confirm with Members that I have full confidence with DFDS. But I would also remind Members that I also have long and bitter experience and plenty of scars from people with ferries over many years. I think we are going to have a long and productive relationship with DFDS. It is most unfortunate that they had this problem. I have been briefed, along with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, on the details of what has happened and DFDS and the authorities remain confident that this will be sorted in due course. It relates to a new ramp that was put on the boat to handle further freight deliveries to and from France. An upgrade of that was required, that needs to be signed off and some conditions from the M.C.A. (Maritime and Coastguard Agency) in relation to the change of flag status, which I am told are all achievable. I cannot say exactly when the fast ferry operating to Saint-Malo will be in service, I hope within the next week or 2 at the very most. But in the meantime I understand DFDS are placing contingencies in place and would be informing their passengers accordingly.

6.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

It could be argued that Jersey passengers are a lot more patient than potential customers elsewhere in the world but it has to be pointed out that the ferries operator missed their first day of work, so to speak, because the boat simply was not ready. Could the Minister perhaps clarify, because the announcement was made on Thursday afternoon of the cancellation, when he was first informed and when the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development was first informed of that cancellation?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development was informed on the Wednesday evening. I was informed very early on the Thursday morning. The reason for being informed at the last minute was I understand that DFDS were inspected on the Tuesday or the Wednesday, so it was a last minute change of plan for them as well.

6.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Minister will recall being the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture and maybe recall an email that I sent him in 2020 when I was not in this Assembly about cost of living J.C.R.A. competition issues. Is he also of the view, like his Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, that the cost-of-living issues are the number one issue across all sectors of society? Is he satisfied that his Council of Ministers, based on his experience of competition regulation, the importance of keeping cost of living, that his Government is doing enough by not just talking but doing things to control the cost of living in Jersey which is hurting so many people?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe that affordable housing and the cost of living rank equally as the top issues. Perhaps affordable housing, especially for young people, might rank slightly ahead of that. But we are most mindful of the cost-of-living challenges. I am not sure I can teach the Deputy anything on that. He has been a supporter and a promoter in increasing competition in Island because we have had cost-of-living inflationary price differential problems for many, many decades, for some of the reasons that the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development explained earlier. This Government has taken action to reduce where it can and use some of the levers to help with the cost of living, for example, the freezing of duties on alcohol, so the reduction in G.P. fees and other solutions, as well as outlined in the Common Strategic Policy. Of course we are also promoting competition wherever we can and the good work done by the Consumer Council, the grocery-shopping comparisons in our local stores that are shared, and the encouragement for people to shop around. This does remain disappointing that there is such a disparity between Jersey supermarkets and certain U.K. supermarkets in different parts of the country. We can always do more. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development is chairing the Anti-Inflation Strategy Group and some careful consideration is being given to what we can do. But the Deputy and Members will know that the levers we have to make a difference are limited. I reiterate we will do everything we can to alleviate the problem.

6.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I apologise to you, Sir, and this Assembly if I sound like a broken record. But the Chief Minister says that he agrees that the cost-of-living issues, grocery prices - we will come back to housing later I think - but focusing on groceries and cost of living, my campaign election to get back into this place was action, not words. We are having words from the Chief Minister. Would he be satisfied at the end of his term of current office that Jersey's inflation rate will be higher than comparable periods when there was an interest in political action and not just words? Does he not think that his Council of Ministers and him needs to do something for people's real life experience that they cannot afford the cost of living in Jersey on a week-to-week basis, ending up with people stealing food, food banks and the rest of it? Does he not understand that?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I disagree with just about everything the Deputy alluded to in his previous statement, which I think ended in a question eventually. What I can say is this Government is doing more to address the cost of living than the previous Government. As I outlined in my previous answer, there is always more we can do. It is enormously challenging to effect prices in grocery stores without introducing forms of price control, which I am and I think the Government would be against in principle. We have inherited, we are working in extreme geopolitical tough economic times. Inflation is stickier than our economists had forecast. Interest rates are staying higher than were originally forecast. All this has an impact, not just on grocery prices but the cost of living right across the board in our small Island. I reiterate we will continue to take action. This is not words, this is taking action. The Deputy can ignore the action, conveniently ignore the action that has been taken if he wants. But we will continue to work towards bearing down on the cost of living wherever we can.

6.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

The Minister for Housing has proposed a new Residential Tenancy Law, can the Chief Minister confirm whether he supports it and whether it is a Government proposition?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I do support the Residential Tenancy Law, which was lodged by the Council of Ministers or was it the Minister for Housing? The Minister for Housing I think. That has been discussed at a Council of Ministers' meeting thoroughly on a number of occasions. The majority of Ministers are in support. There are Ministers that have expressed a reservation on certain aspects of it.

6.3.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I confirm, therefore, whether the Council of Ministers will be voting for it?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I suspect the majority of Ministers will be supporting it. I understand that some Ministers will be unable to support certain aspects of it and it is up for debate how we are going to take the proposition and legislation when it is presented to the Assembly, whether it is possible to take certain aspects in part of it. But I expect the majority of Ministers will support it with one or 2 exceptions.

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

The Minister for Infrastructure just mentioned his plan for the regeneration of Fort Regent. How does the Chief Minister intend to fund the regeneration or will this be funded by private investment?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Aspects of the regeneration of the Fort redevelopment will be funded privately; for example, the proposal for a hotel up there. That is something that would be left in the hands of the private sector. They would fund, for example, the build in return for a long ground lease for which we would receive the rent and perhaps some commercial arrangement with the hotel revenue. The rest will be funded by the Government, as outlined in the presentations to States Members made yesterday. Just briefly, that will take the form of revenues created by commercial activity from the Fort, some borrowings to avoid further delay, so we can get on with it. Where the Government makes efficiency savings or create government surpluses, some of that can be directed towards the project where available. Those are just some of the examples of how we are going to pay for it. The estimated cost is £110 million and those proposals continue to be under development and will be brought to the States Assembly for approval.

6.4.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

That is quite a serious investment. Will that borrowing be incorporated in the Government Plan later on in this year?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I believe it would have to be and it is likely to come back. The funding for this and other regeneration projects are likely to come back when we discuss and debate the Budget at the end of the year.

6.5 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:

A very simple question: is there still a housing crisis, Minister?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I believe there is.

6.5.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

How will the introduction of the Draft Residential Tenancy Amendment Law, as promoted by his Minister for Housing, help alleviate this crisis?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe it will provide security and confidence for tenants; that is hopefully alleviating stress for some aspects of people in tenancies. I agree with the Minister for Housing, I think the vast majority of people are happy in their tenancies and the vast majority of landlords are responsible in their duties as landlords. The biggest challenge we face is the provision of affordable housing and how we help people get into affordable housing; that is the top priority for Government.

6.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

The latest gender pay gap review said there is a gap of 65 per cent in the financial legal sector between men and women aged 55 to 59, is part of a larger trend of increasing gap when women hit 40, which all have long-term impacts on women's retirement and pension security. What steps is the Chief Minister's Government taking to encourage businesses to provide adequate workplace pension schemes and address this inequality?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am pleased to see some progress is being made in the gender pay gap in the private sector but we still have a way to go. I think if you examine the statistics in the financial services sector, there is some welcome news. If you look at the age demographics, the pay gap is unwelcomingly higher in the older gender bracket indicating that there is some legacy there. But we are seeing progress in the younger age demographics where the pay is much more equal. While the Government does not agree at this stage with introducing legislation to force private businesses to publish the data, we will continue to work with them to encourage them to do that and also to lead by example, where possible, with our employees in the public sector.

6.6.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I think my question was related to pensions and the fact that there will be pension inequality because of these gaps. I would ask the Chief Minister again: is the Government encouraging any businesses to provide adequate workplace pension schemes and address inequality and maybe also taking his response about the fact that this is legacy? It is not legacy, there is inequality ...

The Bailiff:

There really does have to be a question and not a speech.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

He did not answer my question, Sir, at the beginning about pension.

The Bailiff:

The pension certainly featured as part of the question but I think the Chief Minister addressed a significant part. If you wish to say a supplementary to specify pension answers then I am content with that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes, Sir. Could the Chief Minister say what the Government is doing to encourage businesses to provide adequate workplace pension schemes to address this inequality?

[12:30]

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That is a policy under development. I believe it is on the agenda of the Minister for Social Security. Although given the current economic climate and the introduction of a living wage over the next 2

years, it was agreed sensible to defer the introduction or further introduction of the workplace pension programme until we have got through the current challenges, but that is on the agenda. I am supported in principle of that. I am not sure there is much we can do about the gender pay gap that we have inherited; that is legacy. Of course private workplace pensions in the financial services sector based on salaries will, unfortunately, carry that deficiency through with them into the future. I just want to reassure Members that is something that the Government, possibly the next Government in this Assembly, will have to agree with in due course.

6.7 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Further to the adoption of amendment 3 for the Common Strategic Policy in which it was stated that: “We will enable design of homes for our ageing population to allow them to remain living independently”, would the Chief Minister advise which Minister at the Council of Ministers is responsible to develop policies in this area and to progress, achieve the objectives of the Common Strategic Policy?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Sir, can I just clarify the question? Was it in relation to sheltered accommodation for the elderly, did I hear correctly?

The Bailiff:

I am afraid I did not hear that. Was it in relation to sheltered accommodation for the elderly?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It can be various. The amendment asked and it was adopted that: “We will enable design of homes for our ageing population to allow them to remain living independently.”

The Bailiff:

Right, design homes for ageing populations or enable them to live independently.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Ultimately, that would probably cut across a number of Ministries, predominantly Housing, Health, possibly Social Security. What I can say is work is work being done - now policy work being done - in relation to the provision of affordable housing also cuts across the better provision of sheltered housing for the elderly. It is to enable simply just that, to enable more elderly citizens to live comfortably and independently long into the future, given the statistics we are seeing now in relation to longevity.

6.7.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you, Chief Minister, for the clarification. I assume this will be under the Chief Minister’s leadership and in this way I would ask if the Chief Minister can specify which projects, specific projects in 2024, were initiated to meet this commitment or what planned specific projects for 2025?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am afraid I cannot do that off the top of my head. I would have to look at that. I am not immediately aware of any projects but, like I say, I would have to check.

6.8 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Will the Chief Minister advise if plans to distribute £5.3 million through the Better Business Grant, without the publication of recipients, aligns with his expectations of transparent and good governance by his Government?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I align my comments with those made earlier by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. While I firmly believe in transparency - and it might be that we decide to publish the list of the recipients - I think in relation to commercial sensitivity, competitive pressures, there are other ways of being transparent with the money spent, for example, perhaps by economic sector or business sector, so you are not identifying individual businesses. I do, however, believe it is important that when grants are given, the accompanying agreement, the accompanying business plan, is closely monitored by officials during the period for which we expect to see an economic benefit from those grants.

6.8.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

In 2021, as Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, the Chief Minister was happy to publish the list of every recipient of the Rural Support Scheme and the amount they received, some as low as £1,500. Would he advise why his stance on transparency for public money has changed?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe, if I remember rightly at the start of the pandemic, I cannot be sure, but it was a Government decision or a States decision that all business recipients of all grants and COVID grants were published. I cannot specifically remember. Can the Deputy just remind me of which grants he was talking about.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I do not want to take up time but this is the Rural Support Scheme, nothing related to COVID, and the Minister was happy to answer it in a written question to Deputy Higgins.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I cannot recall that. But what I will say is that I am happy to change my mind when presented with new evidence and new reasons to do so.

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

Following the recent ITV report which highlighted poor standards of workers' accommodation, does the Chief Minister feel confident that the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) Law 2018 is being administered appropriately to protect workers against substandard staff accommodation?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not aware that it is not being administered appropriately and I have every reason to believe it is. However, I would say while many businesses have worked hard, and we have seen significant improvements to worker accommodation, in my opinion there are still some areas that fall behind that and we need to bare down on those so they catch up as soon as possible.

6.9.1 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

What conversations, if any, has the Chief Minister had with the Minister for the Environment to ensure that lessons must be learned and that our current health and safety rented dwelling policy is properly applied and enforced to protect workers and to ensure that tragic accidents, such as the one reported by the media, will not happen again?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Sorry, Sir, could I just ask what the actual question was?

The Bailiff:

Could you ensure that the thing that happened and reported by the media does not happen again? That was the question but if you would like to just ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I can answer that, Sir. Of course we want to do everything we all can to avoid any sort of a similar tragedy. Ministers and this Government will be engaged with all the appropriate stakeholders to ensure we can avoid such a tragedy in the future.

6.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

Does the Chief Minister see evidence of widening inequality as a result of his Government's approach to the cost-of-living situation? If so, what particular inequalities are proving hard to resolve?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

In these challenging times, I see the actions taken by this Government's office have gone some way to slowing the gap in inequality. The second part of the question, could the Deputy remind me?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Does the Chief Minister see evidence of widening inequality and, if so, what particular inequalities are proving hard to resolve?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure really in the context of inequality. Could you be a little bit more specific, please?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Certainly. For example, poverty, also inequality in access to services ...

The Bailiff:

We are absolutely running against time, so we are out ... obviously there is just 5 seconds left and the Chief Minister is not going to be in a position to answer any ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Without listing any specific examples, we are ...

The Bailiff:

Your time is up, Chief Minister. **[Laughter]** Very well, that concludes the period of questions for the Chief Minister. Given the time we have reached, is the adjournment proposed?

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

Very well, the adjournment is proposed. The Assembly stands adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:39]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:16]

The Bailiff:

At the beginning of Written Questions this morning Deputy Renouf raised with me the form of the answer to Written Question 139 asked of the Minister for the Environment. The question, insofar as it is relevant to my deliberation, asks further to his answer to Oral Question 64/2025 in relation to the Residential Space Standards S.P.G. (Supplementary Planning Guidance): "Will the Minister (a) state what views, if any, were expressed by other Ministers in relation to his review of the S.P.G. in relation to very large homes?" The answer to that part is as follows: "As set out in Ministerial Decision MD-ENV-2025-94, it is evident that the Minister for Housing provided comment in relation to the review of the 300 square foot parameter set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance. This is set out in an

appendix.” I have considered the appendix and it certainly makes reference to the fact that the Minister for Housing expressed a view. It does not say what those views were, nor does it say whether any other Minister had any comment to make. It seems to me to the extent it does not address that question head on, then it is not an adequate answer to the question and, accordingly, I direct that there is an improved answer lodged by 9 o’clock tomorrow morning.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

7. Draft Westaway Trust (Transfer of Assets) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.10/2025)

The Bailiff:

We come now to Public Business. The first item of Public Business is the Draft Westaway Trust (Transfer of Assets) (Jersey) Law P.10 lodged by the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the main responder is the chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and I ask the Greffier to read the citation.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Westaway Trust (Transfer of Assets) (Jersey) Law 202-. A law to provide for the transfer of the assets currently administered in accordance with the Westaway Trust (Jersey) Law 1930 to Le Don De Faye Fund and for connected purposes. The States, subject to the sanction of His Most Excellent Majesty in Council, have adopted the following law.

7.1 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

Today I bring forward these changes to transfer the assets of the 2 Westaway Funds, namely the Westaway Pauvres Honteux Fund and the Westaway Ecoles Elémentaires Fund into Le Don De Faye Trust. This is a practical step which will ensure these funds continue to be utilised, respecting the wishes of the original settler, Ms. Julia Westaway. The Westaway Funds were established in 1930 as a result of the will of Ms. Westaway, with the States agreeing to accept the assets and administer them for benevolent purposes. The funds created under the trust were designed to provide special relief for parishioners who met certain criteria through the Pauvres Honteux Fund and supply clothing and shoes to children of families who met certain criteria through the Ecoles Elémentaires Fund. These funds were created with strict conditions; their distributions are limited solely to income and with assets of just £24,000 and £31,000 respectively. At the end of 2024 the distributable return has become negligible at less than £1,000 per year per fund, which is split across the 12 Parishes. Restrictive terms of the fund, having included limitations on the scope of the awards, that distribution is not to diminish capital and that the awards should be distributed to Parishes in proportion to their population. Unless we take action these funds will remain largely dormant and unable to fulfil the fund’s original purpose. The proposal here is relatively straightforward in that we transfer the full value of these funds into Le Don De Faye Trust. This trust already operates under similar principles with a link to the churches and distribution on a population-weighted basis to directors and churchwardens of the 12 Parishes to support parishioners who are in need. This trust, Le Don De Faye Trust, has a significantly larger asset base of some £1.8 million, enabling it to generate meaningful income for distribution which will allow us to maintain the spirit of Ms. Westaway’s bequest. The immediate effect of this transfer will be a small but meaningful increase in each Parish’s distribution by approximately £200 per Parish. By merging these funds we achieve 3 key benefits. Firstly, we ensure the funds remain active, instead of allowing them to stagnate due to insufficient income. This will integrate them into a larger fund that can make meaningful distributions. Secondly, it will maintain the spirit of the original bequest. The funds will still support those across our Island’s Parishes, as Ms. Westaway intended. Thirdly, it will improve financial efficiency. The assets will be invested in the States of Jersey Common Investment Fund improving the potential returns. This proposal has the full support of the Westaway Donations Council, which currently oversees the

Westaway Funds, the Treasurer of the States, who is responsible for overseeing all 3 funds and directors and churchwardens were consulted and raised no objections and also the wider public through an advertised consultation in the *Jersey Evening Post* in January 2024. The direct control of these funds will remain at arm's length from Ministers and officials, transferring from the Westaway Donations Council to directors and churchwardens. This proposal is not just a technical financial adjustment, it is about preserving the spirit of benevolent giving and ensuring that funds do not go to waste. The world has changed significantly since 1930 and it is our responsibility to ensure that benevolent trusts adapt to remain effective. By consolidating these funds into Le Don De Faye Trust we are safeguarding their purpose for future generations, while respecting the legacy of Ms. Westaway. I commend this proposition to the Assembly.

The Bailiff:

You move the principles, are the principles seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the principles?

7.1.1 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

I thought it would be appropriate for me to say a few words about Ms. Westaway and to ask the States Assembly to recognise not only her generosity but also her bravery. Indeed, that was recognised at a recent event where we were focusing on women in Jersey who have made a great contribution to Island life. As Members will know or may know, Ms. Westaway managed to withstand the bullying of her brother in regard to how the assets of the family which she inherited were to be spent. There was a contested will involved, which is of course always difficult and stressful. But she was determined that her family's money should go to charity, charitable purposes. Some of the criteria that were established in the early years were a little strange. They involved shoes and they involved restricting it either to Catholic or Protestant children; I cannot remember which it was. But notwithstanding that she was a charitable lady and I noticed also that she purchased the 1893 painting of the Assize d'Heritage by John St. Helier Lander, a copy of which is still in the Royal Court. She was a generous patron of the Island and anyone who does not know what she looks like only has to go to the St. Helier Town Hall Assembly Room where there is a splendid painting of her, set in pride of place above the grand piano. In 2006 we recognised the centenary of the establishment of the Westaway Trust and a plaque was laid in Don Street, Westaway Chambers, which was the home and birthplace of Julia Westaway. At the same time we did a book launch for local writer Daff Noel's biography of Julia Westaway entitled *The Poor Shall Inherit*, which is a good read. I would recommend that to Members who would like to know more about Julia Westaway. I hope that her legacy and her reputation will be upheld, even as the assets to the trust are transferred elsewhere. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Connétable. Does any other Member wish to speak on the principles? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I call upon the Minister to respond.

7.1.2 Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am grateful to the Constable of St. Helier for telling us that information and background about Ms. Westaway, which I have to confess I was not aware. It is good to know that if we adopt this proposition we can continue her work. Yes, the original bequest was to benefit children of Evangelical Protestant families, which is something that increasingly with time everyone involved has found it difficult to do. I would like to maintain the principles, please.

The Bailiff:

Do you call for the appel?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I call for the appel, yes, please.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the principles and I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The principles have been adopted.

| Pour: 43 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 0 |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------------|
| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | |
| Connétable of Trinity | | | | |
| 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 M. Tadier | | | | |
| Deputy S.G. Luce | | | | |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | | | |
| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | | | |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | | | |
| Deputy R.J. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy I.J. Gorst | | | | |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham | | | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy T.A. Coles | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Scott | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

Does the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel, Deputy Miles, wish to call this in?

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade (Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel):

No, thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff:

How do you wish to deal with the matter in Second Reading?

7.2 Deputy M.E. Millar:

En bloc, Sir, please.

The Bailiff:

Yes. Do you propose in Second Reading?

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Are the Articles seconded in Second Reading? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak in Second Reading? Those in favour of adopting in Second Reading kindly show? The appel is called for. I do not need to invite Members to return to their seats because they would already be here by now. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is in Second Reading and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. Again, the Articles are adopted in Second Reading.

| Pour: 43 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 0 |
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| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | |
| Connétable of Trinity | | | | |
| 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 M. Tadier | | | | |
| Deputy S.G. Luce | | | | |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | | | |
| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | | | |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | | | |
| Deputy R.J. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy I.J. Gorst | | | | |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham | | | | |

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| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy T.A. Coles | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Scott | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

Do you move in Third Reading, Minister?

7.3 Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Is it seconded for Third Reading? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak in Third Reading? Those in favour of adopting in Third Reading kindly show? Those against. It is adopted in Third Reading.

8. Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202- (P.15/2025)

The Bailiff:

The next item is the Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations lodged by the Chief Minister. The main responder is the chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and I ask the Greffier to read the citation.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202-. The States make these Regulations under Articles 2(6), 5(1), 17(1)(a), 19(3), 24(6), 27(6) and 44 of the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law 2012.

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

Deputy Alves is acting as rapporteur for this item.

8.1 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur):

As Assistant Chief Minister, I have the honour to hold responsibility for the control of housing and work legislation. Today I hope that Members will support my proposals for these Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations. The draft regulations do not aim to break new ground, they aim to reinstate everything that we have already within the

current Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 2013. Overall the existing statuses are maintained, as is the current policy intent. The opportunity has been taken to update some areas and the main aim within the changes has been to simplify the structure and language. The draft regulations also take the opportunity to be more generous in a small number of areas around relationships and family units. I have supplied Members with a document that sets out the current control of housing and work statuses of entitled, licensed, registered, entitled for work and registered and how they are currently achieved.

[14:30]

I hope this will be helpful as we go through the debate and highlights that the majority of the draft regulations maintain the position of the current regulations. You may ask, if nothing is changing why am I bringing these regulations forward today? These draft regulations support the States Assembly's previous approval of P.13/2022, the Draft Control of Housing and Work (Amendment) (Jersey) Law 202- in March 2022 and are part of a broad project to provide more responsive migration controls as a key control mechanism within the Common Population Policy. The current Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 2013 will fall away with the introduction of the Amendment Law and these draft regulations are required to allow the changes that the Amendment Law made to the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law 2012 to come into force. The draft regulations are designed to provide a clear framework of how a person achieves his status under the Amendment Law, how a status can be lost or revoked and the access each status gives to occupy accommodation, enter into property transactions and to access work in Jersey. If adopted, these draft regulations would replace the current Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 2013 - sorry, that is a mouthful - and will be followed by orders to replace the current Control of Housing and Work (Exemptions) (Jersey) Order 2013 and the Control of Housing and Work (Fees) (Jersey) Order 2013. These will be completed and an Appointed Day Act will be brought back to the Assembly before the end of this year. It is intended that the Appointed Day Act, with the approval of Members, will set a future date for control of housing and work legislation to come into force. This will allow time to set up operational systems and to communicate changes appropriately. As vice-chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee, I take my obligations to the Assembly extremely seriously, as I am sure we all do, and I wish to highlight the previous approval of a related proposition. In March 2021, the Assembly debated P.137/2020; that was the Migration Control Policy and approved some areas of the proposition that are not being progressed within these regulations. While recognising the Assembly's authority at the time, I wish to outline why I do not cover all of the areas approved within P.137/2020 here. Since March 2021 there have been significant external factors that I do not believe that the policy's decisions taken by the Assembly in 2021 will still meet the needs of the local population. That decision was made ahead of the publication of the March 2021 census figures and against the backdrop of a much higher predicted population. The population estimates at the time suggested that a total population of 107,800 in 2019, while the actual 2021 census showed a total population of 103,267. The P.137/2020 debate was also held ahead of a full understanding of the impacts of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. We are now able to access much richer and more timely data from Statistics Jersey and this shows us that at the end of 2023 Jersey's overall population has remained relatively stable in the last 5 years since 2018. This is a marked difference from the high levels of population growth that we have seen in the 5 years prior to 2018. These statistics also show that Jersey has required inward migration to maintain its working-age population, which has also remained stable over the last 5 years. In taking these impacts into account, these draft regulations maintain the same structure as the existing control of housing and work statuses. They do not remove automatic graduation or provide time-limited statuses. Nor do the draft regulations take forward any requirement for an individual to make a declaration of any unspent criminal convictions when applying for Control of Housing and Work Law status. It is considered that Jersey's position within the Common Travel Area would make any such requirement futile for British citizens. I have

considered a vote to rescind the P.137/2020 approval but feel that by bringing these new regulations to the Assembly we have a mechanism to democratically make any change to that previous decision appropriately. I would also set upfront my intention to debate Regulation 5 separately from the other regulations. Regulation 5 relates to a provision for entitled status for high-net-worth individuals. I have taken this decision as a result of conversations had with Members from across the Chamber. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Scrutiny Panel for the time they have given to review the draft regulations and the support that they have communicated. I also recognise that the workstream on these regulations has spanned 2 Council of Ministers, and would also like to thank the work carried out on these draft regulations by previous Ministers, who I hope will see much of their work and direction taken forward in this proposition. In summary, these draft regulations aim to maintain the existing migration controls within the control of housing and work legislation and are drafted so that they are easy to understand by using simpler language and structure, that they modernise considerations of relationships and family units, that they provide for increased transparency in making future changes and they allow for digital solutions in supplying and demonstrating a status under the Amendment Law. They are required in order to bring the agreed Amendment Law into force and I encourage Members so support these regulations. I propose the regulations in the First Reading.

The Bailiff:

Are the principles seconded? **[Seconded]**

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Sir, before the debate I would like to raise that I am likely to have benefited from the amendment and I need your ruling.

The Bailiff:

Very well. Thank you very much.

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

Sir, I think I would also benefit by a year.

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

Sir, I think I might as well. **[Laughter]**

The Bailiff:

Anyone else ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have to calculate it first.

The Bailiff:

Is anyone else going to benefit? Deputy Moore has indicated similarly. Very well. I think that is shared by a significant number of people.

8.1.1 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade (Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel):

I rise to speak as chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel. Just for the benefit of the Assembly, the panel has undertaken a review of the draft regulations. We have presented comprehensive comments and we have concluded our support for the draft regulations. As the Minister has said, we are content that these draft regulations reflect the changes introduced by the Amendment Law, approved in principle by the States Assembly in March 2022. We have further detailed the relationship between the Amendment Law and these draft regulations in our comprehensive comments. We are satisfied that these regulations will not bring forward any policy changes in

practice to the housing and work rules and statuses. They only increase the flexibility for making future changes, simplify the terminology used, modernise considerations of relationships and family units and enable the use of digital solutions, all of which we welcome. Importantly, they maintain the structure of the primary law, yet provide flexibility for future modifications through regulations and orders without having to alter the primary law itself. In terms of some more observations, to inform its review the panel met privately with government officers and questioned the Chief Minister on the proposals during a quarterly hearing. The key observations from the panel are that there needs to be very clear public communication about the effect of the draft regulations to avoid confusion about the changes that would be brought into practice. Indeed the panel raised this during the briefing prior to lodging the proposition and to the Chief Minister during the hearing and there still seems to have been some confusion. The panel is pleased to note that future policy shifts will stem from improved data, rather than prior assumptions; this is really important because the 2009 migration projections where data did not account for impacts from Brexit or the COVID-19 pandemic. An important area of focus for the panel was that of the appeal procedure. The Amendment Law introduces a new Housing and Work Control Panel to handle appeals before referral to the Royal Court. This is a political panel to replace the current H.A.W.A.G. (Housing and Work Advisory Group). The panel raised concerns about the Chief Minister appointing Members to this political panel. He would review appeals related to their own decisions. One Member aptly described this as marking one's own homework. The panel had also taken the opportunity to highlight the recommendation of the Jersey Law Commission to establish a single Jersey administrative appeals tribunal for a unified appeals process and the benefits thereof and would recommend that if that body is taken forward that this appeal panel should be moved to this tribunal. The Government has not provided clear proposals beyond the current proposed amendment. The Chief Minister acknowledges to the panel that future changes may be needed within 5 to 10 years. Nevertheless, the panel has emphasised its intention to scrutinise any forthcoming regulations that propose policy changes during this Government term. The panel also noted that approval of the draft regulations today will not bring into immediate effect the Amendment Law and regulations. Should the draft regulations be adopted, new orders for fees and exemptions, updated public guidance and an Appointed Day Act will be required and need to be brought to the States Assembly for approval to enforce the amended primary law and new regulations. We are told this is expected by the end of 2025. The panel has emphasised its intention to review the orders and guidance ahead of them being brought forward for approval by the States Assembly. To close, the panel supports the draft regulations in establishing a flexible legislative framework that better manages migration policy without the need to alter the primary law. However, the panel emphasises the need for careful scrutiny of any subsequent policy changes brought by way of regulations during this term of Government and future Governments and their potential impact on Jersey's population. The panel will continue to monitor and review this workstream to ensure that any proposals align with Jersey's evolving needs. As changes will also likely be proposed by future Governments moving forward, the panel urges continued scrutiny of any changes affecting the work stream.

8.1.2 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

Can I thank the Assistant Minister for bringing this? Thank you very much for setting that out, it has been very helpful ...

The Bailiff:

Through the Chair, please.

Deputy B. Ward:

Through the Chair, sorry, Sir ... for bringing this because it has stimulated a question. Could the Minister explain under the "Licensed" section and look to your right-hand side of that where it says: "Licensed for Lease Only now shown." Does that contradict what it says in the left-hand side? In

the left-hand side it talks about your essential employee; that is your teachers, nurses, doctors, professionals allied to health, who can lease, buy and sell. But on this right-hand side it says “Lease only”. May I ask the Minister just for some explanation as to why there is a difference because I am a little bit confused?

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Does any other Member wish to speak on the principles? If no other Members wish to speak, then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Alves to respond.

8.1.3 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I would like to start by thanking the chair of the Corporate Services for her comments. Just to pick up on the comments around the appeal process, the draft regulations, the chair was correct, they do not cover an appeal process. These have formed part of a previous debate and approval of the Control of Housing and Work (Amendment) Law. Within that primary legislation there is an appeal route to the Royal Court in the same way as previously. The formation of the new panel is the internal review mechanism which allows a person to request a review of a decision without going to a full appeal if they desire to use that route. This does not negate the ability of a person to use the appeal route at any time. The decisions which can be taken to appeal are outlined in Article 41 of the previously agreed Amendment Law. The chair was correct, we do not currently have an external tribunal set up; we use the Royal Court at the moment. But if a broad tribunal service is established in the future I would be happy to revisit the appeals route within the Control of Housing and Work Law. To address the comments raised by Deputy Barbara Ward, thank you for that and I am glad that this has helped simplify things for Members. Currently it is not a contradiction as such because we do already have “Licensed for Lease only” currently in the policy. It is a policy, part of the main policy. Generally speaking, this is normally awarded to people who may be on a temporary type work contract.

[14:45]

It may not be that they necessarily have a permanent one, but while they are here they obviously need to access housing. “Licensed for Lease only” is already used as a condition when we give licences, it just was not down as a separate regulation within the current setup. I hope that has clarified that. I maintain the principles.

The Bailiff:

Those in favour of adopting of the principles, kindly show. The appel is called for. I invite any Members not in the Chamber to return. The vote is on the principles. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The principles have been adopted.

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| Pour: 42 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 1 |
| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | Deputy I.J. Gorst |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | |
| Connétable of Trinity | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |

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| Deputy M. Tadier | | | | |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | | | |
| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | | | |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | | | |
| Deputy R.J. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | | | |
| Deputy T.A. Coles | | | | |
| Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Scott | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

The Bailiff:

Does the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel wish to call the matter in? I assume not, in the light of your comments, Deputy.

Deputy H.M. Miles (Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel):

No, thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much indeed. We come to Second Reading. How do you wish to propose the regulations, Deputy Alves, in Second Reading?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

There is an amendment to Regulation 2, so I would like to take that as amended. Then I would like to, as I stated earlier, take a separate vote on Regulation 5. I would like to propose Regulations 1 to 4 to start with and then 5 and then 6 to 27.

The Bailiff:

Yes. Do Members agree that we can take the matter as amended?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Excuse me, Sir. I am not sure whether I have got confused. Are we talking about the amendment to the draft regulations at this point?

The Bailiff:

Yes. What Deputy Alves has said is that given it is an amendment of the Chief Minister, she has agreed to take the entire regulations as amended by that amendment. There is only one amendment to it, which is a short amendment to Regulation 2(d), which changes the period of years from one thing to another. There will also be a separate vote on Regulation 5.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

The Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel were not able to scrutinise the amendment that the Chief Minister has brought. I therefore would like that to be debated separately.

8.2 Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202- (P.15/2025): amendment (P.15/2025 Amd.)

The Bailiff:

Very well. That is perfectly acceptable. You are entitled to have it debated quite distinctly. It is an amendment to section 2. You will probably simply wish to propose amendment 1 separately now, Deputy, and we can deal with that. Then we will come on to amendment 2. One moment. I have been slightly corrected and the Deputy Greffier is right, you propose all of the amendments. Then we take a separate whether or not we amend Regulation 2. Then there will be a separate vote when we come to vote on Regulation 5. If you would like to propose the amendments.

8.2.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, thank you. An amendment has been put forward to Regulation 2(1)(d), which intends to reduce the period of continuous ordinary residence required to achieve permanent entitled status. In the current regulations, this stands at 30 years and I propose within this amendment and the draft regulations that this period is amended to a period of 25 continuous and ordinary residence. The amendment comes following discussions with Deputy Alex Curtis and as a reduction had already been discussed at the H.A.W.A.G. Plus Ministerial Group, and the Chief Minister and I were willing to bring forward this amendment. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Deputy Alex Curtis for these discussions. Permanent entitled status cannot be lost, whereas currently a person who has achieved entitled status after 10 years and been continuously resident in Jersey for 25 years would lose their entitled status should they be absent from Jersey for a period of 5 years and would therefore revert to registered or standard status. The aim is to recognise the significant period of time spent contributing to Jersey the Jersey community by a person not born in Jersey, but who has been continuously and ordinarily resident in Jersey for a period of 25 years. Following Brexit and COVID, it is important to ensure that Jersey can continue to attract the skills and labour for our economy and society and that workers and their families are treated and rewarded fairly. I believe this strikes the right balance of maintaining sufficient migration controls while rewarding individuals that have contributed substantial periods of their life to our community and economy with the freedom to return to Jersey as they wish to do so. It is important to note, however, that this is only applied to those who hold a British passport or those who have relevant migration permissions to live in Jersey. The reduction from 30 to 25 years of continuous and ordinary residence will have little impact upon the housing demand as entitled status can be achieved after a period of 10 years continuous residency. Members of the community who have been continuously present in Jersey for a period of 25 years will have held entitled status for a period of 15 years. Entitled status allows a person to live and purchase qualified property. Permanent entitled status gives no further access to housing or work. It simply ensures that entitled status is not lost.

The Bailiff:

You are proposing the amendment now? You have just proposed amendment 2, yes?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes.

The Bailiff:

All right. We will take it that way then. Is the amendment to Regulation 2 seconded? **[Seconded]**
Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

8.2.2 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I am going to speak briefly on the amendment, because following the briefing for Members the other day, I wanted to make it clear that this amendment has not been reviewed by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and the panel has not formally been briefed or conducted any scrutiny on the amendment, due to the short timescale. We are aware that the proposed amendment was as a result of discussions between Deputy Alex Curtis in his personal capacity and Deputy Carina Alves, Assistant Chief Minister, who has designated responsibility for this workstream. While the panel did discuss the amendment at our last meeting, panel members will be drawing their own conclusions and will vote accordingly.

8.2.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I would like to thank likewise both the Chief Minister and the Assistant Chief Minister for engaging on this. It is fair to say, Islanders who have served pretty much normally for their entire working life, 30 years, and now hopefully 25 years, deserve to know that Jersey is a home for them and a place that they can be able to be and take time away. To put that into context, it will be no surprise right now an Islander who moves here and starts work at the age of 20 will have to be continuously resident until they are 50 before they know that they can take extended leave away from the Island. That is an incredibly long period of time and the world is a big place. Those who have committed such time may have family who are reaching older age or they may have aspirations to travel while they still can. Knowing that after 25 years this is a position they can be in, where Islanders can achieve permanent entitled status is the correct balance. It is right to move it here at this speed. I thank the Assistant Chief Minister for highlighting it was a conversation. There is no point, in my view, here individual Members lobbing amendments over the fence and on such a matter like this I felt it better to speak with the Ministers involved and see if they would like to lodge it, knowing there may well have been conversations. Lastly, what I would say is, under existing regulations and under the new regulations, there are still abilities for those who are yet to be permanently entitled to take leave from the Island. Those include reasons for secondment for work or for a period of travel. That guidance is quite hard for many Islanders to digest, so while we are in a position where hopefully this will entice those who served a great deal of time in this Island to know this can be their home for life, that the Assistant Chief Minister and Chief Minister do not stop in their work in making our policies understandable, especially with regard to those who, say, apply to the department to take a year sabbatical or year's travel that they are confident in the knowledge that when they return and resume work here that their period of continuous residence for permanent entitlement status is not broken. I support this and I hope other Members do.

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

Sir, point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Yes. Do you give way for a point of clarification?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Yes, Sir.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

This point of clarification started in Deputy Miles's speech, but is a point of clarification in Deputy Alex Curtis's speech. Deputy Miles referred to Deputy Alex Curtis requesting this amendment in his personal capacity. It sadly put doubt in my mind and made me think: would the Deputy please clarify whether he is bringing this because he knows of particular people or there are particular circumstances or is he bringing this as a general good for the Island? I was concerned by that, that there were particular people that the Deputy has in mind who may benefit.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Morel, Deputy Alex Curtis is not bringing this amendment. This is an amendment brought by the Chief Minister.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Did he request this amendment with individuals in mind or was it general good for the Island?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I can clarify that if it helps, Sir, without making a second speech.

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I know individuals, those who did not approach me and those who did approach me. I think we all do, given the number of people here who have declared an interest, there are many States Members in this room who will benefit from this. It is something that will benefit the wider Island. It was raised to me by multiple people, but nobody has directly asked me to lodge this. It is from my experience in talking to Islanders, both those who I am friendly with and those who I hold as broad acquaintances and those who you see once every 5 years, but enough people that I realised it is an important thing. I hope that clarifies matters.

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

I was grateful for the Assistant Chief Minister in recognising those of us in this Assembly that have got some history of the Work and Housing Law. In this particular amendment, having been responsible for the law drafting but not the actual law, there is clearly a ... I cannot remember why this was put in with such a long period. The whole purpose of work and housing was to have a non-discriminatory approach. If you are good enough to live in Jersey, you are good enough to work and you are good enough to buy. Way back, there were some Members of this Assembly, like me, who could never get housing qualifications no matter how long we ever stayed here. That was the situation in 1998. I almost regret that it is 25 years, but if you are good enough to be in Jersey for that amount of time, in a world that is so short-term in its situation, where people have lots of opportunities, where we want to encourage people to be global citizens and get experience outside, this has to be absolutely the right thing to do. I would have encouraged Deputy Alex Curtis and the Assistant Chief Minister to be even bolder, because it is the right thing to do. I congratulate Deputy Alex Curtis and the Assistant Chief Minister for doing this.

Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

I may have had a momentary lapse in concentration, but I am not sure that we moved the regulations. We proposed the regulations and went simply to the amendment.

The Bailiff:

We have gone simply to the amendment. I have, I am afraid, bitten the bullet when we were well into dealing with the amendment to realise that was the position. I propose, therefore, to take the vote on the amendment and then on the assumption it is passed or not propose the regulations as amended or otherwise in Second Reading. Yes, you are quite right, Deputy, we have not yet dealt with the regulations at all. We are just working out whether we are going to deal with them as amended or not. Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Alves to respond.

8.2.5 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I would like to thank Members for speaking on that and raising some of the issues and some of their thoughts. To answer Deputy Alex Curtis, guidance is currently being worked on to make it easier to understand. That is why it is important to have the time to do that guidance ahead of the appointed date. I will also say, to build on the point that Deputy Morel brought up, I deal with a number of appeals on a weekly basis and I have had appeals as well for people who have appealed to have permanent entitled status, which cannot be granted in the current way that the law and the regulations are structured.

[15:00]

This has sometimes been because, for example, they have elderly parents who live in the U.K. and they want to go back and care for them. They have property here and they have children here and grandchildren here and are worried that their grandparents in the U.K. may live longer than the 5 years that they are allowed to be out of the Island. Currently there is not a mechanism to enable me, even with a Ministerial Decision, to grant that permanent entitled status. I would like to thank Deputy Ozouf as well. On his point, I believe the original consultation that was done on this a number of years ago did consult on 25 years originally and the Members at the time decided to put 30 years instead. I hope that Members will be supportive of this amendment.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. Those in favour of adopting the amendment, kindly show. The appel is called for. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is on whether or not Regulation 2 can be amended in the terms of the amendment and then it will form part of the regulations when they are put to the vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been adopted

| Pour: 41 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 3 |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------------|
| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | Deputy I.J. Gorst |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | Deputy K.L. Moore |
| Connétable of Trinity | | | | Deputy M.R. Scott |
| Connétable of St. Martin | | | | |
| Connétable of St. John | | | | |
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| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
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| Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

8.3 Draft Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 202- (P.15/2025) - as amended (P.15/2025 Amd.)

The Bailiff:

We move now formally to Second Reading with the regulations as amended. How do you propose the matter in Second Reading?

8.3.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I would like to start by proposing Regulations 1 to 4, please.

The Bailiff:

Are Regulations 1 to 4 seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on Regulations 1 to 4 inclusive? If no Member wishes to speak then I close the debate. Those in favour of adopting Regulations 1 to 4 inclusive, kindly show. The appel is called for. I invite any Members to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is on Regulations 1 to 4. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting.

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| Pour: 42 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 2 |
| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | Deputy I.J. Gorst |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | Deputy M.R. Scott |
| Connétable of Trinity | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Martin | | | | |

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| Deputy R.J. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
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| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | | | |
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| Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
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| Deputy A.F. Curtis | | | | |
| Deputy B. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson | | | | |
| Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

Very well. You wish to deal with Regulation 5 separately?

8.4 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, please, Sir. I would like to briefly speak on it as well. Regulation 5 provides a route to entitled status for high-net-worth individuals. It is also sometimes referred to as 2(1)(e)s or 1(1)(k)s. As the routes to each status are more clearly defined in a draft regulation, this provides a structure that allows me to be able to take this regulation as a separate vote. Should the Assembly vote contre on Regulation 5, all persons currently using the high-value resident route to entitled status would continue to be able to do so, honouring existing statuses. It would, however, close the route to future

applications once the draft regulations came into force. There is no further impact upon the remaining draft regulations should Regulation 5 be removed. I maintain the regulation.

The Bailiff:

You propose Regulation 5. Is Regulation 5 seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on Regulation 5?

8.4.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I will say 2 things on Regulation 5, which in essence is, as the Assistant Chief Minister says correctly, are a replacement for the 2(1)(e) provision within the former law and the 1(1)(k) in the law before that. The first comment I would make is while the 2022 changes to the primary legislation introduced what is now defined as the Housing and Work Control Panel, which the chair of the C.S.S.P. (Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel) mentioned, this obviously has not been formed yet, because the law is not active and live. I have a question and hope that the Chief Minister could respond to this which is: how does the Chief Minister intend to start or fill the posts within such a panel? The Housing and Work Advisory Group is currently made up of *ex-officio* Members, including the Minister for Housing and, I believe, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, although I would have to double-check my mind on that one. In essence, the new Housing and Work Control Panel would have no *ex-officio* Members. The Chief Minister would be able to staff this however he so chooses. As such, it is a concern, I am sure, to some Members that the decision-making on our very important matters is taken from roles that ultimately had an Assembly vote. Right now, we voted for our Minister for Housing and he sits on said panel and is accountable for that as a role within his function. I would be interested to hear how the Chief Minister sees the value in using certain roles in a similar fashion or is he looking to staff it with those who will agree with the policy position he likes? I say that as it is a choice that the law now provides. He could fill the roles to meet a certain objection. Does he believe that this is fit for purpose and allows the panel to be held suitably accountable under its membership? That is the first part. Secondly, Members have a choice on whether they want this scheme to exist. I am reassured that the mover has said that ultimately this would not affect those here and cause legal challenges. I will leave it there, but I would like clarification on the panel if it is to form under this regulation.

8.4.2 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

To answer the question, from my perspective as current Chief Minister I plan to make no changes to the current makeup of the panel for the rest of this term, but this is forward looking in the spirit of the rest of the changes to provide more flexibility around future challenges that face us. No change from me during this Government.

8.4.3 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Because this touches on the question of 2(1)(e) status, I thought it might be helpful for us to consider how we might vote on this by way of a small illustration. At the end of last week we had what was a private briefing with the chief economist. I will not disclose anything that he said to us, but the briefing was partly to do with the living wage and the fact that a great deal of work is being done on looking at the potential economic consequences of moving to a living wage, including what you might traditionally call a cost-benefit analysis. That work does need to be done. It means that Government is going into a new area of work with its eyes wide open, something they support on principle, which has been pushed for for quite a while, for which they want to make sure they know all the consequences for both intended and unintended. When it came to Jersey's policy on high-net-worth individuals, as some would call them, I do not think there is any ideal phrasing that we might use that implies ... about worth, and we have covered that in the past, no cost-benefit analysis has ever been done of the current scheme or indeed of the scheme in its inception. If that is not the case, I am happy to be corrected, but I have never seen any cost-benefit analysis. On the one hand it seems

that you could have criticism for promoting things ideologically, so those who say they favour the living wage. It is absolutely right that Government is doing the detailed work, but it is okay to be ideological in certain other areas and just apply certain traditional economics as an act of faith, saying that this is necessarily good for the community. The truth is, we do not know about the impacts that the 2(1)(e) scheme and therefore voting for or against Regulation 5 might have. I would simply put it to the Government that if they are so sure, or any future Government, that the scheme is of value and that it does not have unintended consequences for the community that we live in. That it is a net benefit that they should be willing to show the workings and not simply apply that as an act of faith or an act of conventional or ideological economics.

8.4.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am sorry but I am not understanding what it is, the consequences of ... you were going to wrap up the debate and I assume there is nobody going to be speaking against. I am not sure, if I am honest, and I do not know whether I am the only one, what the consequences of a vote against this is. There is something that has not been said and we are a Parliament and we should be discussing things openly. May I seek clarification? The Assistant Chief Minister cannot speak, because he has not spoken, but maybe he can reply, but the Attorney General could also ... could I just put, for the avoidance of doubt, my understanding is that all 2(1)(e)s that have been given permission would continue to be able to live in Jersey, but if this vote is rejected then it is goodbye to any policy, no more high-value-net worth individuals? Have I understood that right? I hope you do not mind me asking, because it was not clear.

The Bailiff:

It is a question that can either be addressed by Deputy Alves in response. The Chief Minister cannot speak. He has already spoken. You could also address it as a question, I suppose, as a matter of law, to the law officers. How do you wish to deal with it?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I wonder if the Solicitor General would be kind enough just to clarify the fact, and if I have misunderstood then I apologise, that if the vote is against this Article then we do not have a legal mechanism to undertake 2(1)(e)s in the future, notwithstanding the fact that there is an Income Tax Law which bridges it, because as an Assembly we should understand what we are doing, sorry.

Mr. M. Jowitt., H.M. Solicitor General:

On the face of it, it would mean that there would not be an equivalence of the 2(1)(e) status. To give a definitive answer I might need to spend some careful time looking back through the amendment law that was passed in 2021, to see whether notwithstanding the loss of Regulation 5, somehow the original 2(1)(e) status would survive. There may be others, not least the Minister, will have been far better briefed than I to respond to the Deputy's question.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

On the basis that this is a vote to, as I best understand it - I am grateful to the Solicitor General - if my understanding is ... but it is complicated because there are a number of different inter-related laws and an underlying law, which is very controversial. For the avoidance of doubt, if this is a vote in favour of scrapping versus keeping 2(1)(e)s then I would urge Members kindly to vote in favour of the amendment, because to do so would disrupt Jersey's future economic growth and all the benefit, albeit it that the Assistant Chief Minister this morning has explained that there is more to do and more can be done to benefit Jersey, because we do not want a 2-tiered society, because that is the issue that is underlying this, I think. Is that effectively we have a growing number of 2(1)(e)s or previously 1(1)(k)s and their demonstrative wealth and things is in stark contrast to many Islanders who are facing cost-of-living pressures everywhere, and so there is this uncomfortable tension. But it is important that we debate things so that we know what we are doing. I will be supporting the

Assistant Chief Minister's amendment because done properly with the right balance and with the right decision-making, 2(1)(e)s can be very valuable to our economy. They can bring the jobs and the growth of the future. They can be very important to support all sorts of future economic activities, not-for-profit organisations and all the rest of it. I do not want to do anything by accident, but effectively this is a debate on 2(1)(e)s or not then it is, yes, 2(1)(e)s, but please, Council of Minister and Assistant Chief Minister, if I may ask through the Chair, Sir, for them to be very mindful of what the original intention of the 2(1)(e) status was and that people should be contributing and there should be real value for Jersey's economy. Ministers are shaking their head, but they need to do more to explain the benefits and not just the disbenefits, which are bandied around, people changing planning laws, et cetera, like that.

[15:15]

There is real benefit to Jersey having 2(1)(e)s and we should welcome them and we should be a very welcoming Island. This is an opportunity for this Assembly to show its support.

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

I wanted to add my request for a bit of clarity, perhaps when Deputy Alves does her summing up, in terms of quite where this has come from. Having originally been presented with a law that was simplifying things, that this particular regulation has been presented separately so that we are making a decision right now, a policy decision, which again has not been reviewed by the Corporate Scrutiny Panel as a policy move, as such. I am aware the Deputy Alves is acting as the Chief Minister's rapporteur, but I would like it to be clear if he has requested this move or has supported this move to have this separately debated. For me, I am afraid I was not aware that this was going to be a policy matter that was separately debated.

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

I had intended to keep my head down in this debate, but some comments were made by the Minister for External Relations in question time earlier today and I felt that it was probably right for me to clarify my position on this. Briefly, before getting into that, the comments just made by Deputy Scott, it is worth saying that the intention of these regulations as a whole was not to provoke a big policy debate on this. The purpose of it was to clean up the law, change the terminology and make it more modern and fit for purpose. It just so happens that if you are doing that and addressing lots of Articles in a law, if the Assembly did, as it is entitled to do, voted against one of those Articles that would have the effect of doing a policy change. We could, for example, choose not to vote for Article 6 of this, in which case there would not be a route any more for people getting entitled status on the grounds of hardship. That is not why the debate was done, it is a consequence of that because of how the law is written. Earlier today in question time, the Minister for External Relations referred to a member of the Housing and Work Advisory Group having an issue with the 2(1)(e) regime on principle. That is true, but it is not the full picture. As well as having an issue with it on principle, I have an issue with it on practical grounds as well. My issue on principle with it stems from what Deputy Ozouf said before, which I thought was the opposite of the reality. He talked about not creating a 2-tier society, when in fact the 2(1)(e) regime creates a 2-tier society by offering people a route for, essentially, buying privileges that other people have to work for. That goes against what I believe in. I do not believe we should be a society that provides for that, because I believe in equality and I believe everybody ought to be treated under the same principles. However, I could probably find grounds to overlook that if I thought that there was a good body of evidence that said exceptions to that could produce benefits from which we could all enjoy. Which is why in my career in Government, in which I have had 2 stints as a member of the Housing and Work Advisory Group, I have repeatedly asked for those who present me with 2(1)(e) applications, of which I have read through more than I could possibly count, to demonstrate to me what is the economic benefit, is there a cost-benefit analysis, do the pros outweigh the cons? Despite being in a position of decision-making

on it, whenever I have asked for that I have never been given it. It is on practical grounds as well that I do not feel that I can support applications when I am not given the level of evidence that I would require in order to put aside what might be a naïve point of principle in order to support something that practically I felt would benefit Islanders. I have never been given that evidence and therefore I think it is wrong on behalf of the people who voted me into this Assembly to make decision on their behalf to make decisions without access to that, when I, on the face of it, do not believe that it produces the kinds of benefits that people say without referring to the evidence. In the time that we have had this regime, our Island has become a more unequal place with poverty rates going up and I simply do not see a connection. The idea that if we bring in more people maybe that will fix it; I believe Albert Einstein had something to say about that kind of tactic and I do not think it is right. That is why I would not be prepared to vote for amendment 5 in these regulations. It is something that if we want to have as a feature, an offer, that we provide, we do a proper job and do a proper economic-benefit analysis of it before coming back to it. I, in good conscience, simply cannot continue to support it on behalf of my constituents.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sir, may I ask for a point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Do you give way?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful to the Minister for Housing. Could he please clarify that he has no statement of the benefit to the Island ... I do not know what he means, please could he confirm what he means by cost-benefit analysis? Is he saying that he has no evidence that 2(1)(e)s benefit Jersey overall? Is that what he is saying, so I understand?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The key word there is “overall”. I have wanted to see greater evidence and some kind of proper study, but all I get is a sentence in response saying: “Yes, of course it benefits us.” I have no doubt that there are some people who probably on an individual basis contribute way more than any negative that might theoretically arise. However, as a programme, I have not seen a collective body of evidence that has been reviewed in any kind of analytical manner that can provide me with a definitive conclusion. It seems to me that people believe in a received wisdom of this policy that they take for granted. I do not think that that is an appropriate standard to apply to that kind of thing.

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

I am slightly loath to enter the fray, because, like other Members, I was slightly surprised that we are taking this particular part separately, but we are. Any mover of any proposition and any Member has the right to call for a particular part of legislation to be debated and voted on separately, but here we are. I would like to refer us back to the careful wording of my colleague, the Assistant Chief Minister. She was very careful in the way she worded her moving of this particular Article to say that one piece of legislation is repealed and replaced by this piece of legislation. Therefore, in repealing the other piece of legislation, if we wish to, in all of this tidying up work, maintain what we think of as either a 1(1)(k) or a 2(1)(e) regime, we must support this Article 5. If we vote against Article 5, as we have heard some will be doing, we will no longer have a high-net-worth regime. It is okay for some Members to say: “Those people who were already here under this regime will remain.” They will, some of them, remain, but others will believe that today was the day when Jersey became insular, it became unwelcoming to innovation, to investment, to business growth and to being a warm,

welcoming community. I, for one, will be supporting my colleague Assistant Chief Minister in voting for Article 5 of this piece of legislation. Reports have been done. Sometimes when reports are undertaken, if we do not like the results of the report, we sometimes forget that the report was undertaken in the first place. I am not sure how many years ago it was, but it was done. There was a lot of consultation also done in bringing forward the new regime where high-net-worths pay more in tax than they have ever paid before. The other thing I would say is that we can, and I enjoy disagreeing politically with my Ministerial colleagues, because it should be about policy that we are disagreeing. That is, we do know that from Income Distribution Surveys, income inequality has grown, but when we look at why it has grown, it has grown because of the cost of housing. It has been the case for the last decade, if not longer. This Government is committed ... which is why it is disappointing for me to hear what the Minister for Housing says about 2(1)(e)s, because he is committed to ensuring that we deal with that high cost of housing. Government has brought forward, carrying on the work of the previous Government, proposals to deal with the high cost of housing. It is the high cost of housing that is the driver of income inequality in Jersey. That is all really technical, when we start talking about income and equality, but what it means is that how affordability and cost of living is exasperated because of the cost of housing. I cannot say to Members more strongly than I am saying now: please support the Assistant Chief Minister in voting for Article 4 and send that strong message to those who are currently here, part of our community, and those who are considering becoming part of our community, that we welcome you, we recognise the value that you can bring to our community, and we want to work in partnership to deliver businesses, jobs, innovation and all of those important things that mean that Jersey's got a positive and bright future.

8.4.8 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am pleased to follow the Minister for External Relations. When he says we want to be a welcoming Island, I absolutely agree with him. I look forward to his support to P.20, the extension of eligibility criteria to election candidates because that is a very welcoming proposition that welcomes people who have been on this Island for such a long time to be part of this Assembly. How much more welcoming can we be? I am also pleased to hear that he understands that high rents are such a problem on the Island and, therefore, he will support the draft regulations of housing that will be coming, which looks at rent stabilisation. That is a reassuring thing there. However, I cannot agree with him on the other parts. It is part of my manifesto.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on Regulation 5? If not other Member wishes to speak I close the debate and call upon Deputy Alves to respond.

8.4.9 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I would like to start off by thanking Deputy Gorst, who has highlighted that my reason for taking this separately was because any Member can request for this, so I decided to pre-empt that and have this discussion. My personal view is obviously not, as you have heard from my party members, the same as my colleague, Deputy Gorst. However, given that I am probably feeling a bit conflicted in this position I will probably abstain on this occasion. I wanted to clarify something, a correction regarding the panel that Deputy Alex Curtis brought up. The panel was agreed in the amendment law, not in these regulations. I propose Regulation 5.

The Bailiff:

Very well. Is the appel called for?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on Regulation 5 in Second Reading. I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. Regulation 5 has been adopted.

| Pour: 31 | | Contre: 10 | | Abstained: 4 |
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| Connétable of St. Helier | | Deputy G.P. Southern | | Deputy L.M.C. Doublet |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | Deputy M. Tadier | | Deputy C.S. Alves |
| Connétable of Trinity | | Deputy R.J. Ward | | Deputy H.L. Jeune |
| Connétable of St. Martin | | Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | Deputy R.S. Kovacs |
| Connétable of St. John | | Deputy T.A. Coles | | |
| Connétable of St. Clement | | Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | |
| Connétable of Grouville | | Deputy C.D. Curtis | | |
| Connétable of St. Ouen | | Deputy L.V. Feltham | | |
| Connétable of St. Mary | | Deputy A.F. Curtis | | |
| Connétable of St. Saviour | | Deputy M.B. Andrews | | |
| Deputy C.F. Labey | | | | |
| Deputy S.G. Luce | | | | |
| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | | | |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy I.J. Gorst | | | | |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham | | | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Scott | | | | |
| Deputy R.E. Binet | | | | |
| Deputy M.E. Millar | | | | |
| Deputy A. Howell | | | | |
| Deputy T.J.A. Binet | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Ferey | | | | |
| Deputy B. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson | | | | |
| Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson | | | | |

[15:30]

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Can I raise a point of order, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I previously asked you, Sir, about ... I know this is not a point of order that will have an immediate answer, but I previously asked you about the issues that Members such as myself do not understand about the Troy Rule and how this ... we have just had a situation which, in my view, seems rather

unparliamentary that a mover of a proposition then basically abstains because of some counter-weighting force. I ask whether or not that is something you believe, as Presiding Officer, is normal or acceptable in the context of a party being part of Government?

The Bailiff:

The norm is obviously that whoever proposes is likely to wish to support and vote for a particular thing. However, I do not think there is anything wrong, as a matter of principle, with someone moving a proposition because they believe it their duty to do so, but nonetheless seeking to abstain, but I think they have to make their position clear to the Assembly.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If it is a point of order, Sir, could you also rule that it is not the first time a mover of a proposition has abstained ...

The Bailiff:

That is a point of opinion, not a point of order.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is not an opinion, Sir, it happened last session.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Alves, do you move Regulations 6 to the end plus the schedules?

8.4.10 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Are those regulations seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on those regulations in Second Reading? If no Member wishes to speak then those in favour of adopting Regulations 6 ... the appel is called for. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is on Regulations 6 to the end plus the schedules. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. Regulations 6 to 27 plus schedules have been adopted in Second Reading.

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| Pour: 41 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 1 |
| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | Deputy A. Howell |
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| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
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| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy I.J. Gorst | | | | |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham | | | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | | | |
| Deputy T.A. Coles | | | | |
| Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |
| Deputy C.D. Curtis | | | | |
| Deputy L.V. Feltham | | | | |
| Deputy R.E. Binet | | | | |
| Deputy H.L. Jeune | | | | |
| Deputy M.E. Millar | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Ferey | | | | |
| Deputy R.S. Kovacs | | | | |
| Deputy A.F. Curtis | | | | |
| Deputy B. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson | | | | |
| Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

Do you propose in Third Reading?

8.4.11 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Is it seconded for Third Reading? **[Seconded]** .

8.4.12 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am going to try and not be like a Jack-in-the-Box, but these are issues of parliamentary importance and we are dealing with a law that is probably one of the most significant laws that has been of interest to the voting public when this law was originally brought into force, amalgamated the 1949 Housing Law and the Regulations of Undertakings. In the Third Reading, a matter that I brought to the Assistant Chief Minister and to the Government as a whole is that the whole purpose of the Work and Housing Law was to make it appropriate with less red tape and less bureaucratic to be able to employ people in Jersey. The Assistant Chief Minister earlier said, quite rightly, that the world has changed since the States Assembly in 2020 or 2022 passed quite an extraordinary proposition, which the Assistant Chief Minister has referred to. Now having adopted, in the Third Reading, these matters, will the Assistant Chief Minister or the Government kindly consider Members such as myself who have a very strong view that in the world in which we are facing recruitment crises, we are effectively now having, dare I say it, a disposable system of immigration where we have people in and out on a short-term basis. We had a debate earlier about whether or not we had a right to live here after 25 years. We now have a workforce that is never going to get any rights, because they want work permits, et cetera. I am not going to stray into the work permit debate, because I should not.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, may I just interrupt you and say that any speech on Third Reading should be limited to whether the Assembly adopts the law or not in Third Reading.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Yes and it should adopt it, but with the caveat now with the powers that this law has and the abilities by regulations to amend things that the Government is needing to take account of the concerns of business who are saying that they are mired in red tape. The Government is right to do productivity improvements and to do red tape reviews; the Minister of Sustainable Economic Development is doing so.. Would the Assistant Chief Minister kindly please concern herself with these issues, because the original intention was to streamline. She has done a good job in relation to these amendments, which make it less pejorative. Improvements are there, but there is a whole realm of things that needs to be done, because the world is so different from when we brought the simple one-stop-shop for working controls. I take this opportunity of congratulating the Work and Housing Office, who do a fantastic job unseen for basically dealing with people's licences and registry applications, but unfortunately we now have a completely separate system, which does not seem to be talking to one another. We are a Sovereign Island, we can make decisions. The Assistant Chief Minister knows what I am talking about.

8.4.13 Deputy M. Tadier:

In deciding whether or not the Assembly votes for this in the Third Reading, there are some considerations that I would like to make, partly with my Scrutiny chair hat on; the Scrutiny Panel, of course, being the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel. While this is being moved as a proposition under the Chief Minister's Department, and very ably, may I say, by his Assistant Chief Minister, Deputy Alves, we may also wish to consider one of the criticisms partly continuing from Deputy Ozouf. It is not a criticism of what is being moved, but maybe of what might otherwise have been in the amendments. These amendments, it has to be said, are very tame. Essentially, they are moving in the right direction. The reduction from 30 years to 25 years is the right direction of travel. However, when we listen to the ethos of some of the comments that were made earlier in the debate about Jersey wanting to be welcoming, not being an insular Island, it is difficult not to be insular when you are an island, by definition. However, we can decide what kind of ethos we want to put out there in terms of the message we are putting out there. The message is very much: we are open for business when it comes to super-wealthy moving to the Island. That is fine, we can all slightly disagree about that and we can hopefully aim to find some facts about that too. I am reminded that this law, at its very essence, is about the economy. I was also reminded last week, speaking with the chief economist in our panel, of the fact that the economy is not just about money. In fact, it is not really about money. The economy is about people. It is about people's lives and how we interact with each other. It is partly about wealth, of course, but it is about surviving, it is about making a home for ourselves here, and it is about how we do that. I am also mindful of the fact that we do not have a 2-tier society, but there is a strong risk that we are moving towards a 3-tier society where we have the super-rich, who are in some ways the only ones who can afford any meaningful standard of living in Jersey. Increasingly, you can argue you have the working population or the retired population. Then we have cheap labour, which is imported, which Deputy Ozouf alluded to, which is those who have very few rights, because we do not allow them to accumulate their rights. There is that disparity between the way we treat those at the top and are welcoming people from the top who never lose their status once they have it. They do not have to worry about whether it is 25 or 30 years. They have it from day one and they can jump the queue. Whereas there are many people who work very hard in this Island and many of us happen to be the descendants' great-grandchildren of economic migrants who came to the Island perhaps in the 1890s or in the 1910s, but who were able to settle here and make it their Island, something which we are depriving our future generations. What I would like the Assistant Chief Minister to consider in summing up, or indeed for the Assembly

to consider going forward, is that this law was very much put in at a time when we were trying to keep people out of the Island. We wanted to restrict housing because there was maybe a shortage of housing. There was also economic growth and population growth seen in a very different way. We need to have that honest conversation, especially with the public, because it is not going to be a populous thing to do. Any politician or group of politicians that proposes liberalising who might be able to live and stay in Jersey, even though it is the right thing to do, might not be fully understood by the population. For my part, I would like to understand whether or not these amendments that we made today could have gone further. What are the wider economic implications that exist from the current Housing and Work Laws? For example, what are the implications of not allowing people to buy property in Jersey, even though they are living here and working here for 10 years, when they could be investing in the Island? Finally, there is this presumption, because I have heard it said, that under some economic models Jersey needs to have 150,000 people living on the Island to sustain it economically. There is this idea that you are only economically of value if you are still working. That presumes that if you are a pensioner that you are not really of value to the economy, which I would like to say is not the case because pensioners have paid in over the years. It is their money that they put into the pot and it is their money that they are getting back and they are spending that in the economy. We do need to have a wider discussion about what the longer aim is for the Housing and Work rules. Are they going to be moving down to a sensible regime where we are allowing people who are already living in the Island, who already work in the Island, who already want to make it their home, to have a stake in the Island? If we do not give them a stake in the Island, we cannot complain about civic engagement levels, because they do not feel that Jersey is for them.

The Bailiff:

Does any Member wish to speak in Third Reading? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Alves to respond.

8.4.14 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I would like to start by thanking Deputy Tadier for his contributions. This format that we now have in the regulations does give us more flexibility. I will take on board his contributions. The other point I wanted to make was with regards to Deputy Ozouf's contribution, which was around the current policy controls. This also comes back to the "Licensed for Lease only" point that Deputy Barbara Ward raised earlier on. At the moment we do have people who are here on visa and permit work who are given "Licensed for Lease only". It is precisely because of the temporary element of their immigration status, for example, that we can give them a licence to enable them to rent, but not knowing whether they will be able to stay past the 3-year mark, for example, if they have a 3-year work permit. However, the current regulations make things a lot clearer. It also means that we are able to tweak the policy on licences. I recently made a decision to include veterinary nurses, for example, in the licensing scheme, which they were not included before because they did not hit certain criteria, but because we have a shortage of them on the Island, and even with local veterinary practices training up local people, we still needed some more. There is a lot more flexibility in these regulations. Hopefully, in the future, we will be able to propose some new ones as and when needed, with more flexibility. I would like to close by thanking fellow Ministers and Scrutiny colleagues for their support in bringing forward these regulations. Just to say that I note Scrutiny's request to be updated with regards to the orders and the guidance ahead of an Appointed Day Act and I will ensure that we keep that dialogue open. I would like to recommend the regulations in Third Reading to the Assembly.

The Bailiff:

Call for the appel?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Very well. I invite Members to return to the Chamber. The appel is called for. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is the regulations in Third Reading. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The regulations have been adopted in Third Reading.

| Pour: 42 | | Contre: 0 | | Abstained: 0 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------------|
| Connétable of St. Helier | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | |
| 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 M. Tadier | | | | |
| Deputy S.G. Luce | | | | |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | | | |
| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | | | |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | | | |
| Deputy R.J. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy I.J. Gorst | | | | |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham | | | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy T.A. Coles | | | | |
| Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |

9. Increase Stamp Duty for properties that are not principal residences to 5% (P.16/2025)

The next item is increase Stamp Duty for properties that are not principal residences to 5 per cent, P.16, lodged by Deputy Andrews. The main responder is the Minister for Treasury and Resources and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

[15:45]

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion - that Stamp Duty, Land Transaction Tax and Enveloped Property Transaction Tax for a property that is not the purchasers' principal residence should be increased to 5 per cent and to request that the Minister for Treasury and Resources bring forward for approval the necessary legislation to give effect to this decision no later than 1st January 2026.

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

As many Members in this States Assembly are fundamentally aware, Jersey has a housing crisis. Deputy Mézec, in fact, has been leading on this issue, and he has been for some time since he was elected in 2014, but despite the fact that we had the 2008 recession and we saw house prices increase exponentially, States Assemblies did not provide any intervention for Islanders. There was no demand or constraint in the implementation of the policy and of course what this has led to is spiralling house prices across the last couple of decades. It has meant affordability for the middle class is no longer a reality to own a home in Jersey, and that is regrettable because we have already seen many people leaving Jersey because they aspire to be a homeowner, and they need to go elsewhere to achieve this dream. I just want to touch on the contents of my report because it is a bit wordy and, for some Members, there might be a bit of difficulty in understanding some of the things that I explained in the report. First things first, when I mention about marginal efficiency of capital, that is the rate of return that an investor would gain from any investment over the rate that one borrows at. When we turn to the financial crash in 2008, we saw the base rate be lowered, we saw the commercial rates also lower and so that meant that credit became cheaper and so people were able to invest, and they were able to then generate a good return on their investment. Now, because we experienced demand for inflation in Jersey's housing market, that meant there was upward pressure in Jersey's housing market both in purchasing and rental terms. Now, for many people who are living in the private sector in particular, there was an explicit rent. What that basically means is the landlord took out a mortgage, buy-to-let mortgage. Most banks, what they do is they set out conditions. Usually, it would be a 25 per cent downward payment. Some, however, have lowered that to about 20 per cent, so what this really shows is that despite the fact that the housing market was distorted and there was upward pressure in house prices, many people were still able to afford that 20 per cent downward payment, or that 25 per cent downward payment. As we see in the 2021 census, when we look at owner-occupied units, social housing rent units and qualified private rent units, the biggest increase was in qualified private rent that saw an additional 2,933 additional units. That was double the increase of owner-occupied units across the period of 2011 to 2021 and what this really shows is due to credit being very cheap, many people were seeking to generate an economic rent - unearned income for themselves - because they could afford to do it. It was a very attractive investment, investing in housing. However, when we do go through the business cycle, and in some cases as we have seen previously as well, when credit becomes more expensive, it is more difficult to achieve that marginal efficiency of capital and therefore housing transactions tend to reduce, especially with those who are investing in second or additional units. I also just want to touch on the relationship of personal income tax and wealth because for some people who have already paid for their home outright, they no longer have an explicit rent. They no longer have a debt

obligation. Their income savings therefore increase and so their ability to invest is obviously increased because they can invest more readily compared to, say, somebody who is paying a rent and they have also got to try and increase their income saving to get on to the property ladder and there is also difficulty in affording that downward payment. In most cases, it is 10 per cent but there have, however, been instances where with some first-time buyers they have had a 5 per cent downward payment that is required. That obviously helps them, but it means there is a greater mortgage repayment for them at 95 per cent of the market price that they need to then pay off the remainder of the mortgage life compared to, say, 90 per cent. With the Fiscal Policy Panel, they touched on those who are the higher income earner, and it was also alluded to that it tends to be the higher income earners who tend to invest in property. Because Jersey levies lower personal income tax rates, it means a person's net income is therefore going to be increased compared to an income equivalent who might be in the U.K., Scotland or Wales. When we look at, for instance, Scotland, they have got a stamp duty surcharge of 8 per cent. In the U.K., it is a 5 per cent stamp duty surcharge. Jersey's housing market is far worse than both Scotland and the U.K. In terms of housing affordability for middle Jersey, let us face it, it is not really affordable, is it, unless we provide a provision such as maybe with the First Step scheme to provide a larger downward payment so then the mortgage repayments tend to be cheaper? The banks tend to have quite stringent criteria. It tends to be if you want to borrow then it is probably about 5 times your income - your household income - and in some cases with some of the credit lenders it might be the case that you can lend up to 6 times your income. Even then, many people are struggling and so many individuals end up being in a situation where they are perpetual renters. The reality of entering home ownership has really diminished for many of those individuals and I think that is a very unfortunate situation that we find ourselves in. Also, you need to look at the lifetime of that household. If you, for instance, enter home ownership then at least you can say: "The State does not need to cover private rent for the individual", compared to those who end up as perpetual renters who then are pensioners, for instance, and the Government still got to expend money on that household plus you have also got to incur the transfer payments. In the long run it is more expensive for the Government. Many people who enter home ownership enter in negative net wealth position, and what this basically means is their debt liabilities exceed that of the assets that they own outright. Many individuals who are first-time buyers, for instance, find themselves in this position. When compared to, for instance, individuals who have a number of different properties - and for some they are able to buy a property outright as a cash buyer - their debt liabilities tend to be minimal compared to those who are competing in the markets to enter home ownership. That is what many people are having to contend with unfortunately. I also just want to touch on the base rate and commercial lending rates. It has been quite conspicuous ever since we came into office. We constituted the Assembly on 27th June 2022. The base rate at that time was 1 per cent. It then went up to 1.25 per cent and then again up to 1.75 per cent but there were these continued hikes in the base rate all the way up to 5.25 per cent. During the first year that we served in office, commercial lending rates were obviously cheaper because the base rate was so low. The reason why the Bank of England - or shall we say the Monetary Policy Committee - set the base rates at the rates they do is to ensure that if any commercial bank is wanting to lend then there is a rate that is set, and they know how much that rate will be if they are to then borrow. Then there are obviously repayments that the commercial banks have to then incur as well. When we are looking at a higher base rate, it is to take out demand in the economy but, as we have seen empirically when credit has become cheaper, that tends to lead to demand for inflation in the housing market. We have seen in the last 38 years - since 1986 when housing data was provided for - in 1989, 1998, 2008 and 2021, the House Price Index showed that there was an increase in prices that exceeded 16 per cent but then afterwards there was a massive drop for each year. Hence this has been reflected with house prices seeing the biggest drop since records began, but that has happened on 3 occasions previously so it comes as no surprise. I know there has often been this rhetoric that has been seen in the media; however, I do believe it to be misleading to some extent. I do have quite a few graphs in front of me. I think it is important that I turn to these graphs because in 2023, 49 per cent of flats that were sold

were sold to persons who were acquiring property as a second or additional unit. In quarter 2, it was 41 per cent. In quarter 3, down a bit to 14 per cent and in quarter 4, it was 37 per cent. The first, second and fourth quarter saw more units acquired as second or additional units compared to those first-time buyers entering home ownership. That is the precise problem that we have. Because house prices tend to obviously be cheaper when we are looking at one or 2-bedroom units, it is easier for people to put up that 25 per cent downward payment ...

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

I wonder if the Deputy could just give way and remind us which year he is talking about?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

2023. Sorry.

The Bailiff:

Yes, it is all right. Please carry on.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

That is fine. Sorry about that, through the Chair, Sir. This is showing that during a period when commercial rates were lower compared to the rates that have been set now, there was obviously incessant demand and people were still investing in second homes. That, though, has petered off gradually, as we can see with commercial rates having increased across a period of 2024 in particular, but now we have seen the Monetary Policy Committee take the decision to gradually reduce the base rate. It was at 5.25 per cent. Now it is about 4.5 and at the moment, as I saw with the recent minutes that were published, the Monetary Policy Committee are obviously very cognisant about the inflationary pressures within the U.K. economy and also the international pressures as well. As we see, we see Donald Trump with the news that he is implementing a 25 per cent tariff, et cetera. Of course, there are many things that we need to consider. However, we are on this path where there is an expectation that the base rate is forecast to drop to about 3.5 per cent by early 2026, probably in about the first, potentially the second, quarter of 2026. I just want to touch on the number of transactions that have gone through the Royal Court because I think this is very good information that Statistics Jersey publish. The information that I have in front of me shows the proportion of sales that go through the Royal Court with a loan. For instance, in 2014, 68 per cent of transactions had a loan; 2015, 61 per cent; 2016, 60 per cent; 2017, 61 per cent and, again, it tends to hover around that figure of between 60 to 70 per cent. What this basically means is all the other transactions have gone through the Royal Court, and it has been cash buyers who have been acquiring property without any loan. What this really shows is that there is a degree of wealth in Jersey - wealth investment - and so there is no need for certain individuals, for instance, to go up to a credit lender to acquire a buy-to-let mortgage because they can buy a property outright. This, in some respects, may be beneficial because at least it is probably more negotiable because there is no explicit rent made payable between the tenant and the person who owns the property that potentially you might be able to agree a reduced rent. Whereas when we are looking at, for instance, some of the buy-to-let mortgages, that has to be serviced and unfortunately it is the tenant who is going to have to pay that and, of course, as we see with some of the rates at the moment, they are very expensive. There tends to be an introduction of, say, a fixed term of maybe 2, maybe 3 years, and thereafter it goes up to a variable rate in some cases but of course each credit lender will provide different services. What I can see is for somebody who is looking to enter home ownership as a first-time buyer, usually the rates tend to be lower compared to that or, say, a buy-to-let mortgage where the rates tend to be more expensive.

[16:00]

What that means is some individuals are paying those rents and their ability to save is also impacted as well, and so for them to enter home ownership, due to there being that incessant demand for

inflation that we have seen in Jersey's housing market in recent times, makes it very difficult for them to then afford a downward payment. It is important for me to also just remind Members that when we are looking at one and 2-bedroom units, in the recent report that was published by Statistics Jersey, we have seen the mean price for a one and 2-bedroom increase over that compared to the third quarter of 2024. Because we are on that path now where we are looking at the base rate being in a position where it is inclined to reduce, that will see changes with the commercial rates as well. In fact, a couple of the credit lenders have already made announcements to that effect in the U.K., but I just want to also touch on the fact that there has been this unfortunate trend, especially when we are looking at the private rental sector, with some of the statistics that have been published due to the fact that we have seen 2,933 additional units come on to the private rental market. When we look at lower income households living in rental stress in 2009 and 2010, about 43 per cent of those households were living in rental stress. In 2014, it increased up to 82 per cent and in 2021, it remained at 82 per cent. What this really shows is that there are many people who are struggling in Jersey and in some cases those individuals, they do not really have any choice but to pay the rent because, again, you have got an individual or individuals who own the property, they have got a buy-to-let mortgage and that debt needs to be serviced and so it makes it even more difficult for those individuals. I know Deputy Mézec has highlighted this about the 5 per cent rental cap but a few of the rates that are currently being used exceed that across the mortgage life and so there potentially could be some amendments to the law or potentially there might be some discussion I would imagine about credit lender regulation in regard to the rates that are set. For me, it is very much a concern because even before I decided to come into politics, I was very much adamant at one point in time that I had no choice but to leave the Island because it was so expensive. Unfortunately, I have seen a few of my friends leave Jersey already and a couple of them intend to do so in the near future. For me, I was in a position where I had my own business. I was working as a personal trainer, working very hard. I also had a full-time job, and I was then just seeing house prices at the time spiral out of control and I knew I was not earning enough to even meet the criteria that was set by major banks in the Island. I was not in a position to then obtain any borrowing and so I found myself in a very difficult situation, as many young people have done as well and they still do, where I had to contemplate: "What do I want to do with my future?" In the end I said: "I will stand. Hopefully I am elected. Hopefully I can try and enact change to try and represent the voices of the young people in this Island." I have tried to do that as best as I can. Sometimes I have been successful, sometimes I have had my failures as well but for me I am very worried about the housing crisis that exists. Unfortunately, it is going to be many people who are part of my generation who are going to end up being perpetual renters, and when we become older what is going to happen? Many of us are going to need care. There are not going to be any assets, for instance, that you can dispose to then pay off debt obligations. The Government are going to be incurring huge levels of social expenditure in the future, and I think this is frightening and I am very scared, I must say, about our young children today. What is their future going to be like? Also, the yet to be born. We have to think ahead of time; we do. Obviously, I know we have only got a 4-year political cycle, but the States Assembly must plan ahead because there are many, many issues and if they are not addressed now then of course those issues will become exacerbated in the future, and it will be too late to do anything. I think I have made the points that I intended to make, and I would like to open the debate.

The Bailiff:

Is the proposition seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the proposition?

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

The stated goal of this proposition is to further dampen demand in this part of the housing market, i.e. the buy-to-let section, but this move would be not only unnecessary but counterproductive. It risks weakening market and economic confidence at a time when market correction is underway and there are signs of stabilisation in house prices and private rents. We can all acknowledge that the

housing market has already been through a significant shift. When the current 3 per cent higher rate of stamp duty was introduced in 2023, it was intended to reduce the demand for second homes, buy-to-let properties and holiday homes, and to rebalance the market towards owner-occupiers and first-time buyer households. Since the peak in 2022, property prices have fallen by 10 per cent. The number of transactions are down by 16 per cent. Interest rates have risen significantly and, while they have come down and may come down further, they are unlikely to return to the historic lows of the 2010s. This means that the intervention we put in place 2 years ago is working. The housing market is cooling. First-time buyers have better opportunities to take their first step on to the property ladder and private rents are beginning to stabilise. The proposition before us, however, seeks to go further at a time when the market is already in a correction phase. This is an unnecessary intervention that risks damaging confidence, discouraging investment and even reducing the supply of private rental properties at a time when many Islanders rely on them. We all want to support home ownership, but we must also recognise the importance of a strong and stable private rental sector. Many Islanders are not yet in a position to buy, and they depend on a well-functioning rental market. As we have just seen in our debate earlier this afternoon, there are also, of course, people who live here in Jersey who cannot buy because of their housing and work status. They also need rental properties, and we have to also reflect that there are many people who come to Jersey on a short-term basis - like I did in 1996 for a year - who want rental property and not to buy straightaway. Some people need to find their feet in Jersey before they start to buy, and we have to have a good supply of rental properties. The current 3 per cent rate already strikes a fair balance. It discourages excessive speculation but still allows for investment in the rental market. If we push this rate to 5 per cent, we risk discouraging landlords from maintaining or expanding their rental properties, potentially reducing supply and driving rents higher, hurting the very people this measure claims to help. Proponents of this measure suggest it could generate an additional £1.2 million in revenue. It is important, however, to emphasise that this amount may not be realised due to uncertainty about the behavioural response and effect on people's willingness to purchase buy-to-let properties, second homes and holiday homes. If the effect of the proposition is to deter people buying such properties, we will not see any additional revenue, nor will we see buy-to-let properties coming on to the rental market. Furthermore, there is a real risk of market distortion if buyers rush to complete purchases before the new rate takes effect. We could see an artificial spike in transactions this year followed by a further slump in 2026. That kind of market instability is not what responsible policymaking should encourage. Instead of further tinkering with stamp duty, we should focus on practical solutions to improve housing affordability. That is why this Government is supporting initiatives such as the Minister for Housing's First Step scheme and Andium Homes development of new affordable housing. These policies address the root causes of the housing challenge, boosting supply, improving affordability, and helping first-time buyers without unnecessarily penalising investment. It is also worth noticing that States of Jersey Development Company are also developing schemes to help first-time buyers and to help people move up on the housing ladder, as are, indeed, some private sector developers. We must govern with prudence and common sense. The current 3 per cent higher rate of stamp duty is, I suggest to Members, doing its job. Prices are stabilising, first-time buyers are seeing better opportunities, and the rental market remains intact. Increasing the surcharge to 5 per cent is a step too far and I urge Members to reject this proposition.

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I was hoping you could give a ruling on how to interpret the proposition, if I may ask of you?

The Bailiff:

If I can. What is the question?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The question is the proposition as worded does not mention surcharge, nor does it suggest a rise in stamp duty. It says, for example to take one of the 3 taxes, that stamp duty: "... for a property that is not a purchasers' principal residence should be increased to 5 per cent." It does not suggest increasing the surcharge rate to 5 per cent. I understand, Sir, we have to take propositions as they are worded, not infer what is being proposed here. I just wondered if you could rule what the intended outcome would be ... stamp duty on those purchasing a property that was not their principal residence would be 5 per cent and there is no reference in this to a surcharge or to the fact that this is about the surcharge within the wording of the proposition at all.

The Bailiff:

That is true. If you look at the first line of the report, the 3 per cent stamp duty surcharge was introduced. It is quite clear, it seems to me, that what is being proposed is an increase to 5 per cent. You are right; it does not say the surcharge within the proposition itself, and I am not in a position to say what significance there is in the difference, but my interpretation would be that what is intended is to increase from 3 per cent to 5 per cent on the first figure mentioned in the report, which is the surcharge.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Just for our clarity, we are assuming that what is in the report is what is intended, notwithstanding the proposition does not use the same wording. That is your ruling. It is clear enough but ultimately it is not in the proposition.

The Bailiff:

I am assuming, Deputy Andrews, that what you intended was the surcharge was to go up to a 5 per cent surcharge. It seems to me that if I read the proposition by itself, as if there were nothing, there is no mention of the surcharge but if I read it in the context of the proposition as a whole, it is an increase from 3 per cent to 5 per cent of the surcharge. If you intend something different, Deputy Andrews, then you probably need to go away and come back again but that is my ruling for the purposes of this debate.

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

I want to express some concerns regarding the current proposal to increase the stamp duty, land transaction tax and enveloped property transaction tax to 5 per cent for properties that are not the purchasers' principal residence. I want to acknowledge that in the past I brought forward an amendment to increase this figure to 10 per cent as stamp duty. At that time, I was not sure of where the housing market and interest rates were heading. I believed it might be a necessary measure but looking back I can admit that the timing was not right for my proposal. I was, after all, responding to a market that was shifting and evolving, and I believe it is good, the approved percentage of 3 per cent, as it stands today. Additionally, having the stamp duty tax for second residential property provides useful data to the Treasury allowing us to know the level of such ownership. That 3 per cent has, in my opinion, done its job. It had a significant impact without overwhelming the market. Now we find ourselves at the point where this proposal suggests raising the rate to 5 per cent. While I understand the reasoning behind this, I believe the timing is not right again. The 3 per cent has worked. It has already provided a measure of pacing the second property market and I believe now is not the time to increase that pressure and create unintended consequences. We also need to consider that if we were to raise this tax now, we would be removing a crucial tool for future use. If down the line we see the need to slow down the second residential property market again, we would no longer have the ability to use this mechanism effectively. That is a point we also need to think about. Therefore, I believe this proposal is not the right step at this moment. I fully appreciate the intentions behind it, but we must recognise that 3 per cent is already achieving the intended results. Increasing it to 5 per cent now could put unnecessary strain on the market and it would take away a

tool we might need to use in the future when circumstances change. I therefore ask you all to consider the long-term effects of this decision and to think carefully about whether now is the right time to take this step. Thank you. [

[16:15]

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

I am not going to speak for long, but Members will recall that in the Budget debate I sought to reduce the surcharge, not increase it, and I also had - quite understandably - an amendment to this proposal rejected by the Greffe out of ... I wrote it out of frustration but understanding why the Deputy is bringing this proposition. I want to say firstly that I do not think that we should criticise the Deputy for a lot of the remarks that he is saying because he is speaking on behalf of so many Islanders and we had a debate that was very different earlier on the Work and Housing Law. The Island has been for as long as I have been a Member and as long as ... there are photographs in the coffee room, Members are photographed there, of a problem of immigration in Jersey. We are seeing emigration, and we are seeing people like Deputy Andrews's friends leaving the Island because they have no hope, no prospect of getting on the housing ladder. As a Jersey person, and everybody is a Jersey person irrespective of whether they have been here or just arrived and they work and they contribute to the Island and they are going to get their qualifications after 10 years, they are a Jersey person, and we need to build communities, and this Island has always built communities. We are a patchwork of different people and the frustration that I have is that the Deputy has to resort to this kind of proposition which, as well intentioned as it ultimately is intended, I am afraid to say to the Deputy that it does not work but there is a solution. I know that many of the Deputy's friends and people that he knows and many young families in St. Saviour are ... the amount of properties that have got mum and dad having elder children living at home, sometimes with families themselves because they cannot get on to the property ladder. They cannot even afford to rent, or they are trying to save for a deposit. That is normally the reason why they are ... I think we call them concealed households in the statistics but those are families with people trying to save up for a deposit, trying to meet the lending criteria the Deputy speaks about. There are countless examples over the decades in this place and in other Parliaments around the world that have tried to deal with the issue of rising house prices, and I understand it, I think. I have lived with this debate for years and in past times we have done something about it that works. The only way ... and the Deputy spoke of a demand problem. I think what he meant to say with that is that there were too many people chasing properties because there was not a sufficient amount of supply. I have not been able to get the copyright permission because it is behind a paywall but there was an article in last week's *Economist* magazine which explained exactly why this sort of policy just does not work, and we have not even started with the Minister for Housing's proposals on rental markets but that will be an issue for another day. There is clearly a friction in the Council of Ministers, eruption in the Council of Ministers. We have seen that this afternoon. We have seen the early movements of it where there is a real split within this Council, and I urge the Chief Minister to try and unify his Council because he has directly opposing rules, and deals are done for political expedience. I do not mean that in any disproportionate way, but deals are politically to get things through this Council of Ministers, and it is rather uncomfortable for me to see that and to hear it as a Back-Bencher. The real issue I say to the Deputy ... and I will be rejecting it and I will be bringing back my proposition to do what the Council of Ministers wanted to do, which was to reduce the surcharge because they knew it was not working. We had the extraordinary position - the absolutely extraordinary position - that a Government brought forward an amendment to mine which I wanted to scrap it and they wanted to bring it down to 2 per cent, and it did not get through because of some voting thing that I do not quite understand. Do we have a Government? Do we have collective responsibility? I am not sure what we have got. All I know is it is failing the public of the Island, and what I say very kindly to Deputy Andrews is: does he have any idea of the unintended consequence he has had through the market which is already absolutely stagnant? Any idea that the Minister of Treasury and Resources is going to get a penny or a pound, a decimal place,

10 per cent of her so-called surcharge revenue that was put in the Budget last year is for the birds. It is an April Fool. It is not coming in because they have basically killed the property market for buy-to-lets. They have killed it; stone dead. Nobody in their right mind is going to be wanting to borrow money, if they have got it. There is nothing wrong with mums and dads or people with a pension pot investing in Jersey in property which is going to provide private rental accommodation, which the Government does not have to provide with their social renting properties. There is nothing wrong with it. There is nothing wrong with having a strong, well-functioning private sector rental market of supply. The tragedy is that we have got for the first time ... and I have been in discussions on Friday with the Constable of St. Helier speaking about the very significant amount of one and 2-bedroom properties being built in St. Helier. They are going unsold. There is a huge amount of properties unsold, and that is a real shame. It is a real shame because it is not giving the opportunity of people to get on to the ladder of what Deputy Andrews wants to do and therefore it is gumming up the whole system. I sometimes wonder whether I live in 2 universes, whether I live in the States Assembly where we talk about ourselves and we talk about lovely things and I get up and talk too often and people get cross, but whether or not I am talking about the real things or trying to in my inevitable way speaking about the real issues of Islanders that are out there. The housing market is completely stuck. We have got people wanting to sell their home, needing to sell their homes and they cannot sell it. We have got people that want to downsize into apartments that cannot sell their family home. The market is completely stagnant, and Deputy Andrews does not mean it, but I have had people ringing up who know I am interested in this sort of thing say: "What is going to happen? Are the States going to do ...". A lot of the general public do not know who are Ministers and who are not Ministers. They think there is just the States Assembly. Sorry, if that is going to hurt at the egos of some Ministers but they do not know. They do not. They are going on with their lives and being normal.

The Bailiff:

Why do they know who the Bailiff is? [Laughter]

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Well, I do not think they know who you are, Sir, sometimes because you are supposed to be non-political. You are a judge as well. Anyway, they read about you in the paper and other things, Sir, but that is another subject. The fact is that there is no way of tinkering at the issue apart from dealing with supply of homes. No amount of tinkering with new taxes, keeping existing taxes is going to solve the problem that the Deputy is trying to do. We do not have enough of the right type of homes. We do not have enough family homes for people to buy or rent. Supply is key and we are falling short. The Bridging Island Plan was the glaring, horrendous example of what the last Assembly did so very wrong and before members of Reform pop up, they voted against every single one of the rezoning propositions. Every single one of them. The lack of foresight in making the Minister for Planning have a sufficient amount of land, and that includes brownfield land owned by the States of Jersey. I know the Minister for Infrastructure; I know the previous one and the current one. I hope he is looking at all his lovely brownfield sites to try and get that on-thought of housing development. I know he is going to be doing that, and I know his predecessor did. I congratulate them for that but, of course, we have got a glue of a planning system that is incredibly difficult for the Minister - even though he is making valiant attempts - to make it work. We have got a bat survey that is needed and a this, that and the other and it is very difficult. We are seeing construction firms going completely out of business and we are not seeing anything being built. I was delighted; I told the Constable of St. Saviour, I said: "Delighted that we had got some homes done next to Cinq Chenes", and then I started looking at the Andium website and I looked at confidential.je and I saw just how many family homes Andium have sold off in the Parish of St. Saviour. Cinq Chenes sold off. Grasset Park, there is one on the market at the moment for £695,000. I say that it is not good enough for this Government to say that their First Step scheme is working. It is not working. It is not working, and we are letting

families down. We are letting renters down. We are letting Islanders down by not doing the right things with basically the decisions that this Assembly can make, and I am very well aware that I am going to irritate Members by saying some of the home truths that maybe they need to hear. We have got plenty of flats. There is lots of them. We want them rented but nobody is going to buy them, not with a 3 per cent surcharge on the whole amount, let alone a 5 per cent. It is not a stamp duty that is escalated on a ladder system. Like a previous Minister for Treasury and Resources did not do the cliff edge so that you did not have 3 per cent on the first bit, then if you go over another £100,000 you go up to 5 per cent. No, it is a very gradual increase. Stamp duty holidays, what I wanted to do in my amendment to this, I was going to put (a), (b) and (c) saying estate agents cut their rates to 0.5 per cent, get the market moving, banks to qualify you get no stamp duty on a first-time buyer home providing that the estate agent only charged 0.5 per cent and a mortgage at only one per cent above that of the U.K. Because the Minister for Financial Services has not brought in the banks and said: "Why are you not putting the rates ...?" Notwithstanding the fact that we are a credit Island, and we have got all this thing, why is the Minister for External Relations and Financial Services not bringing the bank in to say: "Why are our mortgage rates so high?" Because they are and everything is mitigating against it and the Government are coming with their half-hearted approach, one minute bringing a half-baked proposal to cut my surcharge down to 2 per cent in the Budget, then the States throwing that out. Next minute we have mixed messages in the last debate about whether or not we want 2(1)(e)s, people investing in Jersey, and the whole thing is completely, absolutely bonkers. We are going to be arriving at the next election and we are all tarred with the same brush because Members really, we have to basically say: "Well, what have you done?" and what have we done to improve the lot of housing in Jersey? We have not done anything really. Nothing. We are seeing construction companies going bust. We have got the illusion Andium is the only thing that is building anything. Great; I am a huge supporter of Andium. I think I was responsible for setting it up and getting £200 million for borrowing and doing up their refurbishments but what are we doing? What are we doing? What are we doing in terms of really dealing with the underlying concerns that Deputy Andrews has? Raising the surcharge, I am afraid, will not fix it. It will make matters worse. It is going to push more rental properties off the market in precisely the area where you want the market to work where there is a surplus. Markets adjust. If King Canute tried to do something and it did not work, if you try and following the Minister for Housing's proposals, because he said it in this Assembly, of crowding out all the private rental market - he does not want a private rental market - this is the right way to do it. We have got stagnation in our market. We have got people losing confidence. We have got people wanting to sell their properties that cannot. We need to reject this proposition and instead this Government needs to come forward with a realistic, developable, buildable project to put policies that get shovels in the ground, get building the type of family homes that we need. If that needs a reconsideration of some of the mis-voting that happened in the Island Plan where sites were thrown out with imperfect information, and we are not giving any of our young people the hope that they are going to get on the housing ladder. How we help, this is a matter that all Members need to be concerned about. They will not hear me going on about it if they get on and start voicing and understanding the concerns, the lived experience of people like Deputy Andrews who do not believe they are ever going to get into home ownership. I am afraid he is right, but he is wrong in the way that he is doing it. This Assembly needs a Minister for Sustainable Economic Development that worries about the construction industry, a Minister for Treasury and Resources that worries about taxation that does not work - like this surcharge, she is not getting money for it at all - and a Minister for Housing that understands that you do not crowd-out the private sector rental market and you need wealth creators to grow the Island and to grow prosperity and we are not doing a very good job. I am sorry, Deputy Andrews, there are solutions, but this is not it.

[16:30]

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

This is a really nice debate for me because we hear on the one hand Deputy Ozouf wanting the surcharge to be reduced and Deputy Andrews wanting the surcharge to be increased so it gives me an opportunity to boast my moderate centrist credentials in this debate because I think it ought to stay exactly where it is. It is a shame that he is not in the room, but I had come close to using the entire time I have to speak in this if I dedicated it all to correcting everything that Deputy Ozouf said in his speech. Of course, he lamented the sale of homes at Les Cinq Chenes and Grasset Park and then boasted of his role in establishing Andium Homes, which he did so on a business plan that required the sale of Les Cinq Chenes homes and Grasset Park in order to meet its financial obligations to pay back to the Treasury, something which I opposed at the time. He also pointed out that Reform Jersey had consistently voted against the rezoning of fields in the Bridging Island Plan debate but did not mention that when those amendments were dealt with one way or the other, we voted for the plan because, at the end of it, we knew that it was in the Island's interest to do so when it came to that final vote. He talks about the lack of building. I live on the border of 3 massive construction sites where I walk past hundreds of homes being built every day when I leave my home and come to work. Those are homes ... I can say that the Maisons Les Arches development just by my home has been snapped up really quickly by those who have applied to buy homes there because it is a fantastic product, really high quality homes there at a more affordable price, exactly the kind of thing we ought to have been doing years ago and that I am glad that we have our foot on the pedal now and are doing. I know that the stamp duty surcharge for investment purchases has been contentious and we have seen it in this debate, people who hold opposite views on it so I defend it as a sensible intervention at its time where we were experiencing massive inflation in house prices and all of that contributing to what Deputy Andrews, I thought, spoke very well about, which is the fear that young people are feeling from this. Last week a very good friend of mine moved from the Island having been planning to do it for a while and it was the cost of housing, the number one thing. I have had that experience myself of losing friends because of it, exacerbated by years of a bubble, but we are seeing the green shoots and seeing things beginning to be corrected. Again, Deputy Ozouf talked about how important the role of supply was and then lamented that we have too much supply and stuff is not being bought now. One of the consequences of that is last year we saw the biggest fall in house prices since records began. That poses challenges in some senses but opportunities in others. It shows, in my view, that there is a correction taking place after years of a bubble of unsustainable price increases. Things are falling back to a more natural equilibrium which hopefully will allow more Islanders to thrive. The 3 per cent surcharge introduced when it did and seeing what happened afterwards, it is difficult to disentangle that from the rise in interest rates. We will never know for definite which was the more powerful factor in that, but what it has done is it has reduced buy-to-let purchases, which was a stated intention of that policy. It is not an unintended consequence. It is an intended consequence, and we are seeing the proportion of homes being bought by first-time buyers is increasing and I think that it will likely increase even further over the coming years. Deputy Kovacs reminded us of the debate that had previously taken place about establishing the surcharge at 10 per cent, which I voted for at the time and did so in good faith because the surcharge at that point had not yet been introduced. We did not know for definite what would happen at whatever rate it ended up being introduced at but what we can tell now, with 2 years of its existence, is that 3 per cent has done the job and, since it has done the job, we do not need to tinker with it. The reason why I will vote against the proposition that Deputy Andrews has brought forward, not because I have any kind of ideological opposition to setting the surcharge rate at a higher percentage; I do not. He referred to the U.K. They have a higher surcharge rate there and perhaps, in a different economic circumstance, maybe 5 per cent would be more appropriate. But we can see with our own eyes now the impact that the 3 per cent is having and I just cannot imagine what value would be added to that by increasing it. The investors side of the market has been dampened by 3 per cent. How is it going to be dampened anymore by 5 per cent, and is that what we want at this moment in time? I do not think that it is and if for whatever reason there was a deterioration in the economic situation in the coming years and there was another spike in investment purchases, if we wanted to have at our disposal the option of increasing from 3 per cent

to 5 per cent, we would not be able to do so because we would have already done it at a time that it would have been least effective. I think it is better to stick with where we are right now. Keep an open mind for the future by all means. Keep an eye on economic conditions and whether a higher or lower rate would be sensible but, right at this moment in time, it does not seem to me that there is strong evidence that an increase from 3 to 5 per cent would achieve what we would ideally want it to and make anything better for Islanders. But what Deputy Andrews and Deputy Ozouf said about how Islanders feel about the housing crisis is absolutely right and our housing crisis is multifaceted and there are lots of things that need to be done to help address it. That does mean providing more social housing. It does mean providing more first-time buyer housing and it means using the stock that we already have in all sectors more effectively and providing a better framework for people to have secure and affordable homes from which they and their families can flourish. But I do not see how that situation is made easier or better by increasing the stamp duty surcharge from 3 per cent to 5 per cent and that is why I will be opposing it.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Andrews to respond.

9.1.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I must thank all Members who have contributed to this debate. The expense of credit has obviously been a major deterrent for investors investing in the housing market ever since we reconstituted the States Assembly. In 2021 when credit was very, very cheap, we saw demand obviously pick up and thereafter we saw a big drop in house prices according to the House Price Index, and that was the fourth time that we have experienced that in the last 40 years. However, with commercial rates coming down, they are gradually coming down and of course we know what the policy intent is of the Chancellor Rachel Reeves and the Monetary Policy Committee. They do have an obligation to follow through the Government of the day's ambition to deliver increased economic growth and that is why they are on that path towards lowering the base rate. Obviously, that will make it a bit easier for the commercial banks to also then lower their rates that they charge boroughs as well but I just want to touch on a couple of things. I know it has been mentioned about the need for housing stock to accommodate households, but I just want to mention about Jersey's tight labour market. It is not just a tight labour market; it is a very tight labour market and the reason being is because of the cost of housing. Many people are not attracted to Jersey because they know they are going to be paying higher rents compared to other jurisdictions where they could possibly go and work. Also, they are going to be deprived of the ability to save to a good level because we have got such a distortion in Jersey's housing market in terms of housing allocations but also with prices as well, and that has obviously made the situation worse. The way how I frame it is this: Jersey's housing market is currently in a position of partial market failure. Basically, what that means is there are units available, but the units are insufficient to meet the needs of the working population. Also, when we are looking at prices, there will be more upward pressure in prices, believe it or not, going into 2026 when commercial rates become cheap and we will see more people investing in second homes. That is going to happen and that is not going to be very good news, is it, for the first-time buyers, the very people that we need to try and assist into home ownership? For me, is a stamp duty surcharge warranted? Absolutely. Why would you be investing in a market to deprive somebody else of owning their own home. That is a question that all of us should be asking, especially when house prices are so high in Jersey compared to, for instance, the U.K. Obviously, London, there are similar prices to Jersey, but this is the reason why there is not really much hope, is there, for our young people? You just need to read that Channel 103 article - I think it was published 2 or 3 days ago - and look at the statistics. Look how many people - young people as well - who do not see Jersey as their long-term home. They want to go. They want to explore life. I understand that. I think all young people should try and do that, but they are not going to be coming back here most of them.

Why? Because it is too expensive to live, and they will be better off going elsewhere. They can enjoy their life. They will not have to be paying excessive rents or excessive mortgage repayments because there has been so much demand in the market previously and I just do not think that is really fair, but we are where we are. I think there are going to be some long-term implications for the Island economy, and it will be for future States Assemblies to deal with and, unfortunately, I do not know how we are going to get to grips with it. I really do not, and I do fear some of the problems that are only going to get worse. I know there has been mention about the First Step scheme as well but the First Step scheme, the reason why it was created was because there was a market problem. Affordability was an issue and therefore the Government had to step up. They had to intervene, and they had to help households who, again, were not able to match the credit lenders mortgage criteria. So it is going to be costing us more in the long run because previous States Assemblies have not been doing their job. The stamp duty surcharge should have been implemented a long time ago and you have got to ask questions: what were they doing? What were previous Ministers for Treasury and Resources doing? It is only in 2023 that it came into force, the stamp duty surcharge, and even then, when commercial rates were cheaper, and I have just read out the number of transactions that were from non-main residency purchasers compared to first-time buyers and most of whom were individuals acquiring a second or additional home. We are going to see this happen once again, once we go into 2026, and once we go into next term as well. The housing market, it will pick up. It is a cyclical relationship that we see. We have seen it in the past where we have seen a massive spike in house prices but then it soon goes down the year after and then it stabilises, and then it goes back up again. I do not think we are going to be seeing a repeat of low interest rates like we have seen, for instance, after the financial crisis and COVID-19 because, again, we saw the base rate go down to about 0.25 per cent. That was very, very low but what we will be seeing is definitely more demand because people do want to be generating a good return on their investment. As soon as they know they can do that, they are going to be looking at all the different commercial lenders and, if there is one that they feel provides a good rate, they are going to go with them. Once again we are going to see demand pick up and it is going to be the first-time buyers who are going to be priced out of the market to individuals who have potentially got a monopoly of homes that they own, and I do not think that is fair. I know Deputy Ozouf also mentioned about the building trade and I know that is obviously an area of real importance, but there is one policy that I do want to touch upon and that is about where a developer is bringing forward 50 or more units on a development, and they need to provide affordable housing. The conversation I have had on about 3 or 4 occasions is very much this: people are going to be planning a development with less than 50 units and the reason being is because they do not want to impact their economic profit. They do not want to see any losses, so they come in at 42 or 43 units to avoid that policy, and that has also been an issue. I do not know if the Council of Ministers are aware of it, but it is certainly going to be a problem because, again, we are not really seeing those scaled developments coming forward. You have got to be really careful about the way how you try and intervene in the market because sometimes you might be well-purposed but, again, there might be unintended consequences. I think I have made all the points that I need to. I feel that the young people in Jersey need a voice, and I hope to be that voice. I think it is a good cause, and I think it is very much warranted that a 5 per cent stamp duty surcharge is introduced. We have got to be a bit more aggressive in addressing Jersey's housing crisis. It is much worse in Scotland. It is much worse in the U.K. However, we have got a 3 per cent stamp duty surcharge and it has not really been put to the test because it is the expense of credit that has been the deterrent, not the stamp duty surcharge as such. I think I will leave it there and I will call for the appel.

[16:45]

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on increase stamp duty for properties that are not principal residences to 5 per cent and I ask the

Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, then I asked the Greffier to close the voting. The proposition has been defeated.

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|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Pour: 3 | | Contre: 40 | | Abstained: 1 |
| Connétable of St. Martin | | Connétable of St. Helier | | Connétable of St. Clement |
| Deputy C.F. Labey | | Connétable of St. Brelade | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | Connétable of Trinity | | |
| | | Connétable of St. John | | |
| | | Connétable of Grouville | | |
| | | Connétable of St. Ouen | | |
| | | Connétable of St. Mary | | |
| | | Connétable of St. Saviour | | |
| | | Deputy G.P. Southern | | |
| | | Deputy M. Tadier | | |
| | | Deputy S.G. Luce | | |
| | | Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | |
| | | Deputy K.F. Morel | | |
| | | Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | |
| | | Deputy S.M. Ahier | | |
| | | Deputy R.J. Ward | | |
| | | Deputy C.S. Alves | | |
| | | Deputy I. Gardiner | | |
| | | Deputy I.J. Gorst | | |
| | | Deputy L.J. Farnham | | |
| | | Deputy K.L. Moore | | |
| | | Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | |
| | | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | |
| | | Deputy T.A. Coles | | |
| | | Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | |
| | | Deputy D.J. Warr | | |
| | | Deputy H.M. Miles | | |
| | | Deputy M.R. Scott | | |
| | | 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 | | |

10. Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- (P.17/2025)

The Bailiff:

The next item is Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act P.17, lodged by the chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee). The main responder is the chair of Corporate Services

Scrutiny Panel. There is an amendment lodged by Deputy Moore. Connétable, do you accept the amendment or not?

Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:

No, sir.

The Bailiff:

Very well, then we will deal with the amendment separately. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202-. The States make this Act under Article 6(3) of the States of Jersey Law 2005 and Article 2(3) of the Connétables (Jersey) Law 2008.

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

In making the decision to change election day from Wednesday to Sunday, the committee noted that, despite best efforts of the States Greffe, vote.je, and the Jersey Electoral Authority, voter turnout remained low at the last election. The committee has looked at other jurisdictions where the voter engagement is higher and recognised that in many other places, especially in France and Portugal, elections take place on a weekend. Although the electorate currently can vote early via pre-poll or apply for postal votes, both of which offer flexibility for those who may not be available to vote on election day itself, the take up of both these options is relatively low, and in recent times elections have been held midweek on a Wednesday. A study by post-doctoral research fellows at Griffiths University, Australia, in February 2024, posed the question which day of the week gets the most people to vote? Thousands of international elections were analysed. In general, voting takes place on weekends, more than 60 per cent of elections, with Sunday being the preferred date. The date on which the fewest elections are held is a Friday. When agreeing that we would propose a Sunday as a polling day, P.P.C. looked carefully at which date would be the most suitable and after much deliberation 7th June was agreed as the most practical date. An April election would not, as suggested, allow Members and, I quote: “To fully focus on the Liberation Day and not be distracted by the last few weeks of election campaigning”. Especially where they have responsibility for organising Liberation events or unexpectedly lose their seat. Easter Sunday next year is on 5th April, so the Easter weekend is 3rd to 6th April and the school holidays only finish on 20th April. I feel that addressing the amendment that the school holidays are not the best time to be campaigning house to house as this will disenfranchise a lot of parents, fathers and mothers and carers, who may want to stand for election, as taking a school-age child around with you from door to door is probably not what the child would want and not the best use of time and they would find the added stress of finding childcare during holiday time would not be beneficial to their polling. 9th May is a month before 7th June, so there is a large gap and a clear month for canvassing and electioneering. I really do not think the public pay much notice as to who is attending Liberation. This year is the 80th anniversary in May 2025. In May 2026, it is the 81st anniversary, so next year will be a scaled down event. I do maintain that 7th June is a far better time to hold elections, and I would also like to add that, just as I thought this would be helpful, the history of polling dates is as follows from 2018. Elections were first held in the spring in 2018. The polling day was Wednesday, 16th May 2018. The nomination meetings were held on 10th and 11th April, so candidates, including sitting States Members, were campaigning in early May, including over Liberation Day. Easter Sunday was 1st April in 2018. In 2022, following comments about the 2018 date, the polling day was moved to 22nd June in 2022 to avoid Liberation Day. The nomination period under the J.E.A. (Jersey Electoral Authority) for the first time opened on Wednesday, 11th May, and closed on Friday, 13th May, with candidates announced on Wednesday, 18th May 2022. In the proposition to the States at that time, P.17/2021, Draft Constitution of the States and Public Elections Law, the P.P.C. report of that time said: “The

other change we feel it is necessary is to move the date of the next election back by a month into June 2022". The elections in 2018 were the first to be held in the spring. The committee has listened to feedback from the public and Parishes regarding the suitability of mid-May as our general election day. The impact of Easter, the May bank holiday, and of course Liberation Day, made the election period particularly difficult in 2018 on a practical level, and the committee suggested a shift to June will not only provide for an uninterrupted 5-week run between nomination night and election day, but will allow there to be a discrete proroguing period, as agreed by this Assembly. In 2026, Sunday, 7th June 2026 is proposed for the next election and this was done in consultation. As I have said, in 2018 it was held in May, 2022 the P.P.C. listened to the people and decided that June was the date that we should hold the election. I will speak more on the main debate, but I would just like to say that P.P.C. has researched this. Sunday, 7th June we think - there is no such thing as a perfect day - but this is the best day to hold this election.

The Bailiff:

So you move the proposition, is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Very well.

10.1 Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- (P.17/2025): amendment (P.17/2025 Amd.)

The Bailiff:

We have an amendment to the proposition lodged by Deputy Moore. I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Page 6, Article 1, for "7th June 2026" substitute "26th April 2026".

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

While I welcome the proposed change to a weekend election, I ask the Assembly to consider the overall work of Government and perhaps the slightly hurried impact of our election date following the last elections and the formation of the Government back in 2022. It is absolutely imperative that we do as much as we can to turn around the desperately low levels of civic engagement in our community. But I would like to propose this alternative approach to the election date as a positive impact on that level of civic engagement. I will set out later to Members how I think the April date would achieve that. First, let us look at the practicalities of the work of Government and the work of Scrutiny, particularly after an election. There is, of course, as Members are aware, so much to do to set a Common Strategic Policy and a Government Plan. Time is of the essence, and to enable a new Government to bring forward a new programme and to allow time for the scrutiny of it, an earlier election will make a great deal of difference. It will allow for greater team building and I believe better decision-making also. Another benefit of bringing forward this election date is to encourage young people and their families to get involved with the election process throughout the school holidays. It enables people to have more time and, not just those who are campaigning, and I have to say to the Constable that I have campaigned with young children, they have, on many occasions canvassed with me on their scooters and they have very much enjoyed the process. One of them is currently doing a politics A-level, and I believe that his experience growing up in a political household has of course sparked that interest within him. But there are people in our wider communities, our supporters, who canvass on our behalf and with us, and they are absolutely critical parts of an election process and they are to be encouraged. Particularly the younger members of our community who also can take an interest in the political process at that canvassing time and that campaigning time, and that also helps to drive a greater sense of engagement and involvement in our political process. So, I believe that setting out an election date that is shortly after the close of the school holidays is in fact a benefit to our democratic process and will encourage younger people to take more interest in the process and to get involved. It must also be said that, as the Constable has

mentioned, the rationale behind this proposal - part of it - in holding the elections ahead of Liberation Day does avoid any discomfort that some might feel by those who are about to begin their election campaigns while they are taking part in our national day of celebration and do have a greater prominence within our community at that particularly special time. This is a minor change, but I do hope that Members will agree that there are a number of positive benefits in order to further encourage public engagement in our democratic process and also to expedite the important work of a new Government. I move the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

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

If nobody else wants to speak, I think the Deputy has taken the trouble to bring this proposition and it deserves at least the consideration. I can see that there are benefits to having an earlier election. As the former Chief Minister rightly points out, there is a huge amount of work that a new Government needs to do. I am noticing that Easter is very early next year. I always think of Easter in terms of the link to my twin sister's birthday and I can see that Easter next year, Good Friday is on 3rd April, and then there is the Easter holidays, and the former Chief Minister makes a very good point about the Liberation Day timing. I think the Deputy has made a thoughtful case about why the elections would be better held earlier because it certainly will help the Government deal with its obligations to serve people and deliver a corporate strategic plan and all the rest of it, unlike the hurried situations that we found ourselves in. I can see incredible merit and would like to know why Members might not agree to it because we are dealing with democracy, and this is a debate about democracy and it seems to matter and this seems like a good idea.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I thought I saw a light on the back row, but I am not sure if that was to speak.

The Bailiff:

I did not see it.

10.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

No, it is fine. It was an accident I think. That is maybe why I was a bit slow to get up and put my light on. There are a couple of things to say. It was said that members of the public would not notice who was there on Liberation Day, but I think it would be noticed if any Member who is standing for election was not there on Liberation Day. I think we would be very quick to have people asking: "Why were you not at Liberation Day?" Clearly, if a Member decided, or a potential candidate who is maybe not yet a Member, decided that they did not want to participate in Liberation Day but wanted to go out canvassing, that might cause some issue. So I will get around to the way I think that I will be voting on this, but it has to be said that there could be seen to be a disparity in terms of the ability for non-Member candidates who are actively canvassing might have a lot more freedom to go canvassing on Liberation Day and thereabouts, whereas Members seeking re-election would probably almost certainly have to give up their day, I am sure willingly, to attend Liberation festivities even though they may well be scaled down, which is what the chair of P.P.C. said.

[17:00]

So I think the issue that Deputy Moore identifies is valid, whether it is sufficiently valid for us to consider changing the election day and therefore shortening the election period is perhaps another question. I personally think that there should be an election in April, whether it is on 26th April or not, I am not sure, but it should be the election for Senators. I think that if maybe P.P.C. had been able to give consideration or Members to amend this, and I would encourage Deputy Moore that if this does not go through today that she speak to P.P.C. and decide whether or not the election for

Senators can take place so that it has finished and the results are declared before the nomination period for Deputies and Constables is open. That would give something of a halfway house to what the Deputy is seeking because, first of all, it means that those 9 Senators will have been returned. It means that they can be free not to attend Liberation Day as they wish to, they could even get pride of place because they will of course have been recently elected and they will be people with a strong Island-wide mandate, so therefore probably better than other mere mortals who may not get elected at all, or only have a partial mandate from the Island in Liberation 81. It would also give an opportunity, of course, for those Senators to start potentially deciding whether they want to run for Chief Minister or other lofty Ministerial offices while the other candidates are preparing for their elections. On balance, I do not see the merit of moving all Members to the same Election Day earlier on. But I do think that the Deputy should persist in considering one of the elections to be held in April. I would simply say that I do not know if indeed, if there were 2 elections ... I know that is not quite what we are debating, but I am proposing perhaps a counterfactual about why Members might wish to vote against this but keep that option in the future. I have a slight concern and I have discussed it with the Greffe. I understand that there are 2 sides to this argument, that the election period is a bit too long. I think it is up to 6 weeks, maybe even going on slightly longer. From the Greffier's point of view, it is probably necessary to have quite a long lead-in period because there is a lot of material to present and to prepare. But I think from the public's point of view and from candidates' point of view, you can start getting very quickly into election fatigue, especially indeed of course if there is going to be more than one election, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it. It would be much more preferable if a shorter election period might be considered. 4 weeks minimum, but certainly 4½ to 5 weeks should be the real maximum, as I said, because I think fatigue can set in for all those who are involved.

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

The date that the Deputy proposes is just causing me a little bit of concern in regards to the period after an election by which we then select our Chief Minister and take nominations. Within P.P.C., we have been discussing elements around when the return of the vote might take place after a Sunday election due to staff within the Judicial Greffe working into the long hours to make sure the vote is all correct and tabulated, and whether or not that would be released either on the Sunday night or on the following Monday morning. When we look at Standing Order 115 about the nomination period, it is 3 clear working days before the meeting for which the selection is made, which is 5 working days before. Sorry, there are a lot of days in there. But 4th May would also be a bank holiday, so this is where I am getting confused on what day would we be returning a Chief Minister. Would that be on Friday, the 8th, which is the day before Liberation Day, and does that sit comfortably with everybody, or whether or not we would be voting to have a new bank holiday on either the 8th or the 11th to replace the missed bank holiday, which we usually have for Liberation Day on the 9th. So it is with this uncertainty that I am not quite sure how all that works in with the timetable of things and so why I would be rejecting this amendment.

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

I am unfortunately unable to support the amendment and one of the reasons is very much family. Effectively 26th April would mean that 3 weeks of that election period are school holidays and for any Members with children at school, this is their likely only opportunity, especially if they are elected and particularly if they end up in the Council of Ministers, there is every chance they will not get another opportunity for a break until December. So I do think very strongly that Members with children should have the opportunity to spend some time with their children, possibly on holiday abroad or just in Jersey, enjoying it before they enter that election period. I feel quite strongly about that, that 26th April would effectively be very poor for families where one in the family is standing for election.

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

Just to add to that, I understand that is often a holiday where often children are studying for exams as well. So I have that additional concern to raise.

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

I have been both in and out of Government during Liberation because obviously the first year that we stood for election in 2018, Liberation Day was before the election, in 2022 it was after the election. I do not necessarily think that Liberation Day should be a factor of when we have the election from the point of view that some of us will or will not be known. Some new candidates will or will not be known. I do not think that necessarily is a factor. My biggest concern is that, as in 2021, funding was secured for the project and the review by the Constable of St. Martin in relation to the violence against women and girls. That project was started by the Government under John Le Fondré. It was continued under Deputy Moore's Government with Deputy Miles as the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. Now, as the new Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, it is 6 weeks cut-off the opportunity to ensure that legislation gets through this States Assembly, and that is all I will say.

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

Maybe the Minister before me has alluded to this, but I am just concerned about bringing the election date forward. I am not really focusing on Liberation as such, but more about between now and purdah we have a lot to do as a States Assembly and the Council of Ministers has a lot to do. The people of Jersey are expecting something to come out of this term and we have had a lot of turmoil at different points in the term, and I think that there are some things that are still there to be brought forward. The Chief Minister alluded to that earlier in the legislative programme that the Council still has to do before purdah, so for me, I am asking Members to reject this as just a citizen of Jersey so that we can get some things done before the end of the term.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak on the amendment, then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Moore to respond.

10.1.9 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I am grateful to those who have expressed their views in this short debate. I always think it is healthy to consider alternative options, and I have found this short debate healthy and interesting in itself. If we look a little further back, I have to say that personally I preferred campaigning for autumn elections. I found the longer evenings running into September were an excellent time for knocking on doors, and people tended to be at home. But it was the decision to move to the spring elections was something that I somewhat regretted. However, it did very much meet the expectations of this amendment, which was to expedite the work of Government and to assist the delivery of a government programme. That is the main rationale for this point. I absolutely hear the points that people make with regards to meeting the school holidays, but as I explained in my opening statement, this is also an opportunity for us to engage with young people and encourage young people to get involved in different election campaigns if there are candidates that they believe in it can be a very inspiring thing for them to do. It also offers us or any candidate an opportunity to listen to the young and to ensure that they inspire their work if they are so elected into the future Assembly. Of course, as Deputy Jeune was just stating, this would make a slightly shorter term for this particular Assembly, but I would say to Deputies Le Hegarat and Jeune that the 6 weeks that we would lose in this government programme is a much lesser time period than the many months that have been delayed by the change of Government that has taken place during this term of office. Months and months and months have been wasted in delay and going backwards, changing policy points and changing work that was well in progress. Just this morning, we heard from our Minister for Health and Social Services who, having campaigned against a health board, is now acknowledging that it is a really

positive thing. He also admitted that our financial recovery programme for the health service has also been delayed and put back by this change in Government. So, this Assembly has to go to the next elections, taking full responsibility for what it has done to itself, and not for the benefit of the public who were strongly behind the former Government, and it held a strong mandate to deliver on its government programme. I do not mean that to be something of a party-political broadcast, but I do feel that it is important to acknowledge that delay and that backward movement that has been caused by this Assembly. I think that we will probably see the effects of that when we move to the next election campaigns. This amendment is brought simply with the hope and aspiration that a new Government will be able to have the maximum amount of time to hit the road and deliver a successful new government programme because it is much, much needed, and I am sure the public will be looking forward to it just as much as I am. I hear, even though I am sorry that I am not in the Assembly today, hear the tone of the Assembly and therefore I would ask Members to please consider this amendment, and I ask for the appel.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the amendment and I asked the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I asked the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been defeated.

| Pour: 6 | | Contre: 39 | | Abstained: 0 |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | Connétable of St. Helier | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | Connétable of St. Brelade | | |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | Connétable of Trinity | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | Connétable of St. Martin | | |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson | | Connétable of St. John | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | 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 M. Tadier | | |
| | | Deputy S.G. Luce | | |
| | | Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | |
| | | Deputy K.F. Morel | | |
| | | Deputy M.R. Le Hégarat | | |
| | | Deputy R.J. Ward | | |
| | | Deputy C.S. Alves | | |
| | | Deputy I. Gardiner | | |
| | | 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 H.M. Miles | | |
| | | Deputy M.R. Scott | | |
| | | Deputy C.D. Curtis | | |
| | | Deputy L.V. Feltham | | |

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| | | 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 L.K.F. Stephenson | | |

10.2 Draft Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- (P.17/2025) - resumption

The Bailiff:

We now return to the main proposition in its unamended form. Does any Member wish to speak on the proposition?

[17:15]

10.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

If nobody else is going to talk about our election day, we have one of the worst voter turnouts in the world. We are really needing this Assembly and all those exciting people that want to stand for the Assembly, whether that is for the position now accepted - it will not get any delay from me - of Senators. Electors are going to have to have a lot to get through with the electoral information that we are going to have, they are going to have lists of candidates. I do not know. I think my guess is about 20 Senatorial candidates, but we have got a lot of them sitting here, and they are going to have Deputorial seats and a comfortable selection, so I know that the P.P.C. and the Greffe are going to do great job in all of the work that is necessary to inform the public and, if I may say, irrespective of whether or not people vote for one or not, we need to do so much more to make sure that we engage. The Chief Minister is not listening, unfortunately, but that is often the case. **[Laughter]** But what we need to do, if I may say, is be able to captivate the interest by outcomes and talking about relevant things that are affecting people's lives. Because the lives of people that I speak to are very different from the matters that we attend to in this Assembly often, housing crisis, cost of living, et cetera, harm against schools, and we have got to be relevant in this next election. If it is on a Sunday, then people are going to have time to review their documentation and which Deputies or Senators they are going to do, because they are going to have a lot to read and we need to make it inclusive. If there is one objective, if we could have one objective that is something that all Members would agree to, is if we can try and get our voter turnout maybe 10 per cent higher than the last election, we would be even not average in terms of the credibility of the elections. Because you may not like me speaking on every matter, but credibility and democracy and the amount of people that vote each one of us into this Assembly by percentage of, not just the turnout, but the people who are entitled to vote is about the foundation of a credible democracy and we do not have a credible democracy in the sense that we fail to capture the imagination, capture the interest as to why people should vote for us. That is a problem and it is something that should not be allowed to continue. It should be something that all Members, irrespective of whether they do not want their competitors to vote for Reform or candidate X or Y, we need to go out and really work hard to try to make ourselves relevant so that people think that a cross on a box can change something for the benefit. Because clearly, as people do not do that, they do not think we are relevant. I think we are relevant and we need to be.

10.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am glad Deputy Ozouf talked about coming out on a Sunday and voting for Reform Jersey because that is exactly what we want them to do. I think the advantage of having it on a Sunday, therefore, is that more people are off on a Sunday. Of course, people do work on Sundays. People have to work all days of the year, potentially. But we know that even those who work in retail, certainly in the bigger shops, will be limited between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m., and I am presuming that the polling stations will be open as normal from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. I think that needs to continue so that they have time. It would be important that the workers get some time off on a Sunday and therefore they will come and vote for the workers party, who are going to provide clearly a comprehensive manifesto that they can get behind. It is also worth noting that Sundays historically were election days in Jersey anyway. I am not sure if that was always across the board. Elections used to take place, I understand, whenever there were vacancies, not necessarily in a general election like we do today. I am reminded from looking at an extract from Philip Falle's book in 1734 where he talks about the jurat elections taking place after the church service, at which point the results would be announced. So doing things on a Sunday, elections on a Sunday, is not just what the rest of the world does today, but it is what Jersey has done in the past. Seeing as we are going backwards in many ways in our electoral system, we might as well go back to having elections on a Sunday.

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

I am just provoked to speak. Deputy Tadier made a comment about polling station times, and there were comments produced by the comité that raised the prospect by reducing polling station opening hours because of the fact it is on a Sunday. I just want to state my absolute objection to that. Polling stations should be open for as long as possible. We already have them open for fewer hours than we see in other jurisdictions. Sunday will be more convenient for many people because they will not be working, but some still will, and we need to be making voting more accessible, not less accessible. I hope that idea gets a short shrift from those in charge.

10.2.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Sorry, just to say that I am not convinced completely that this is more convenient for people. A lot of people do vote on the way to work and back. So I will just put it there. I am not convinced.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon the Chair of P.P.C. to respond.

10.2.5 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I thank everybody who has contributed to this debate. Historically, countries that go to the polls on Saturday or Sunday see the highest turnout. To the extent that some 6 per cent of countries that go to the polls on weekdays, a 2004 study by Mark and Franklin Trinity College, Connecticut, entitled *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945*, considered 29 countries and found that, when the election was held on a Sunday, participation was higher. In the absence of firm evidence to the contrary, and given voter apathy to date, P.P.C. considers that a move to a Sunday election should be trialled to see if it brings more people to the polls. Our democracy is not going to function well when merely a third of eligible voters are participating, and even a modest increase in voting will be worthwhile. Real democracy is when all adults have an equal opportunity to vote. The current weekday poll disadvantages those in full-time employment and young voters who are students. This is reflected in the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2022 conducted after the last elections, which revealed that 53 per cent of over-65s voted compared to just 17 per cent of those aged 16 to 34. Fewer people work on a Sunday than any other day, and the committee believes that weekend voting will be easier for working people, students and people with families. Early morning voting does not suit many people, often in a rush to get to work, and after a day's work people are not inclined to venture out again to vote. Weekends are normally

more leisurely, time management more flexible, and more electors might be near their designated polling places at the weekend. Children will be off school and so able to accompany parents to see democracy in action, while those empty schools could be used as polling stations without impacting on the school week. I would just like to turn to Deputy Tadier's point re a shorter election period. It would make it hard to accommodate things like postal voting and the circulation of the manifesto documents and the ability to hold hustings for all the positions of Deputies, Constables and Senators. There needs to be sufficient time to allow all this to happen. Postal voting, especially, we cannot get the ballot papers printed until we know exactly who is standing and also for there to be time for people to apply for postal votes and have them sent to them and posted back. I would like to reassure Deputy Mézec that P.P.C. is not considering shortening the polling day. To conclude, I would just like to say that making access to the polling stations throughout the whole day on a Sunday will benefit those who currently vote the least, and those are the people of working age and students. Finally, to make society more equal and democratic, we need to level the playing field to ensure all ages have equal access to vote. Holding the elections on a Sunday will give all ages greater access to the polls. I make the proposition and call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats and I ask Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The proposition is adopted.

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|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|--|---------------------|
| Pour: 42 | | Contre: 1 | | Abstained: 2 |
| Connétable of St. Helier | | Deputy I.J. Gorst | | Deputy S.G. Luce |
| Connétable of St. Brelade | | | | Deputy M.R. Scott |
| Connétable of Trinity | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Martin | | | | |
| Connétable of St. John | | | | |
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| Connétable of St. Ouen | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Mary | | | | |
| Connétable of St. Saviour | | | | |
| Deputy G.P. Southern | | | | |
| Deputy C.F. Labey | | | | |
| Deputy M. Tadier | | | | |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet | | | | |
| Deputy K.F. Morel | | | | |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat | | | | |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier | | | | |
| Deputy R.J. Ward | | | | |
| Deputy C.S. Alves | | | | |
| Deputy I. Gardiner | | | | |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham | | | | |
| Deputy K.L. Moore | | | | |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec | | | | |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf | | | | |
| Deputy T.A. Coles | | | | |
| Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée | | | | |
| Deputy D.J. Warr | | | | |
| Deputy H.M. Miles | | | | |

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| Deputy C.D. Curtis | | | | |
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| 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 | | | | |
| Deputy M.B. Andrews | | | | |

The Bailiff:

There is a 6 minutes to go. Is the adjournment proposed? The adjournment is proposed. The Assembly stands adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:25]