

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 4th FEBRUARY 2025

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[9:30]

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

The Bailiff:

Is someone going to raise the défaut on Deputy Tadier?

Male Speaker:

Yes, Sir.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

I would, on behalf of Members, like to welcome His Excellency to the Chamber this morning.
[Approbation]

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

2. Appointment of one Member of the Jersey Police Authority

The Bailiff:

We move now to Appointments and the first or the only matter under that heading is the appointment of a member of the Jersey Police Authority. In a moment, I will ask the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs for her nomination before then asking for any other nominations from the floor. If there is more than one nomination, we will proceed to a secret ballot. A Connétable cannot serve as members of the Authority, neither can the Minister nor her Assistant Ministers, nor can anyone who has been a police officer or a member of the Honorary Police in the last 5 years. It has been recognised that serving on the Authority and the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel represents a conflict of interest.

2.1 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

Sir, you just said only the chair of the Scrutiny Panel.

The Bailiff:

I said that it is recognised that serving on the Authority and the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, so anyone who serves on it, it has been recognised as representing a conflict of interest. That is my understanding of the position, yes.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat

My apologies because that is not what I was advised and the Member who I was going to actually select is a member of that panel. I am just trying to think quickly on my feet because ...

The Bailiff:

Can I suggest, with the agreement of the Assembly, we defer this until after luncheon?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes, Sir, that would be helpful. I was racking my brain as to who the other members were and there would be other conflicts, so I think that would be better.

The Bailiff:

We can over that period ensure that we are correct in saying that that has been recognised as a conflict of interest, but I believe that it has been.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

That is fine. Thank you, Sir.

QUESTIONS

3. Written Questions

3.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the Haut du Mont explosion (WQ.1/2025):

Question

In relation to the Haut du Mont explosion, will the Chief Minister advise –

- (a) when the investigation findings and recommendations will be made public;
- (b) when the Government intends to issue its response; and
- (c) how those affected by the tragedy have been supported and compensated for their loss?"

Answer

(a) The criminal investigations conducted by the States of Jersey Police and the Health & Safety Inspectorate into the explosion at Haut du Mont have continued in parallel. A case file was submitted to the Law Officers' Department at the end of September 2024 and a decision regarding prosecution is expected shortly. As the matter is subject to sub judice, details of the investigation and its findings will not be made public or addressed until judicial proceedings are concluded.

(b) As there are potential legal proceedings, it is not appropriate for the Government to comment before the cases have been concluded. Once they are, a formal Government response can be considered.

(c) Those affected by the tragedy have been supported since December 2022 by the States of Jersey Police, the Government of Jersey and Andium Homes. This has included emotional support, regular contact meetings with those impacted as well as practical support, access to health professionals and the opportunity to meet as a community. All those affected have been kept fully updated and consulted, including on arrangements for the first anniversary and on consultation on the future use of the site and a memorial.

The Bailiff's Fund supported those affected and predominantly focused on individuals who did not have insurance and immediate family members who required assistance with unexpected travel arrangements. The appropriate time for compensation to be considered would be after the outcome of any court case.

3.2 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Social Security regarding the payment of Social Security contributions by employers on behalf of employees who have reached pensionable age and who are no longer required to pay contributions themselves (WQ.2/2025):

Question

In relation to the payment of Social Security contributions by employers on behalf of employees who have reached pensionable age and who are no longer required to pay contributions themselves, will the Minister –

- (a) explain why these contributions are being paid by employers; and
- (b) state the annual total value of these contributions for each of the years 2021, 2022 and 2023?

Answer

(a) Employers pay employer contributions for all their employees, so they are treated equally, regardless of whether the employees pay contributions themselves. This ensures the financial sustainability of the Social Security Fund.

(b)

Year	Employer contributions, £m
2021	2.54
2022	2.76
2023	2.97

3.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding annual increases to the States old age pension (WQ.3/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide a comparison between annual increases to the States old age pension and those in the Average Earnings Index and Retail Prices Index over the last 10 years; and will she state whether she has considered raising the States old age pension rate to match the minimum wage rate and, if so, how much such an increase would cost?

Answer

Table comparing annual % increases in the Social Security pension, retail prices index and average earnings index over the last 10 years

Year	Social Security pension	RPI (Pensioner)	Average earnings
2015	1.3%	0.4%	1.8%
2016	2.1%	1.1%	2.1%
2017	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%
2018	4.3%	4.3%	3.5%
2019	2.5%	2.3%	2.6%
2020	0.7%	0.3%	1.1%
2021	4.1%	4.1%	3.3%
2022	7.7%	7.7%	6.2%
2023	7.3%	6.8%	7.7%
2024	5.4%	4.4%	6.4%

The Social Security pension increases in line with:

- RPI (pensioner) in years when this is higher than the increase in average earnings, so that the pension maintains its value during times of higher price increases (see 2017, 2018, 2021 and 2022).
- Above RPI (pensioner) in years when average earnings are rising faster than prices, so that in the long term the value of the pension tracks the growth in the overall economy.

The Minister has considered the implications of significantly increasing the full rate of the Social Security pension, which is currently £286.51 per week.

The full rate of the Social Security pension would need to increase to £466 per week (up by £179 per week) to be equivalent to the wage of a person working full-time at the minimum wage (40 hours per week at £11.64 per hour).

This would be a significant 63% increase in the value of the Social Security pension and would require working age contributors to pay in an extra £156 million per year. This would increase in the future as the number of pensioners increases.

3.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in schools (WQ.4/2025):

Question

In relation to the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages (“MFL”) in schools, will the Minister –

- (a) provide the date on which each States provided school ceased to require mainstream students to study MFL at Key Stage 4;
- (b) explain whether the decision to allow schools to no longer require students to choose an MFL for a GCSE option was subject to a review by the Jersey Curriculum Council and, if so, provide the Minutes and/or details of that review and decision; and if not, state why not; and
- (c) provide a breakdown of Full Time Employees (FTEs) employed directly by the Education Department as MFL teachers in the four non-fee-paying States secondary schools for each year between 2004 and 2024 inclusive, broken down by school, including which MFL subjects were taught?

Answer

- (a) MFL study, French in primary school key stage two and French and other languages in KS3, is a requirement in all Jersey schools as set out in the Jersey Curriculum. The study of an MFL has never been a requirement at KS4 in terms of policy or law. Individual schools have made the decision as to which languages to offer at GCSE and A level year by year, and the decision to make a language option compulsory for every student has been made at a school level. Therefore, there was no specific date by which all States provided schools ceased to require mainstream students to study MFL at Key Stage 4.
- (b) The requirement to take specific GCSEs or other examination entries is not part of the Jersey Curriculum and is not an action that has been considered by the Jersey Curriculum Council (JCC) to date. Therefore, a review by the JCC has not taken place.

In 2018 Jersey adopted the ‘Jersey 8 measure’ in place of the previous ‘5A* to C including English and Mathematics’ GCSE measure. The Jersey 8 measure is used by the Department to measure the breadth of the curriculum offer. It tracks the average examination score at KS4 that their cohorts achieve over each pupil’s best 8 subjects at GCSE or in another approved examination course. The Jersey 8 measure must include achievement in English, mathematics and science entries across the school (as a core entitlement) and then includes the wider optional curriculum subjects taken, from languages, arts, humanities and technical and vocational subjects.

It should be noted that any change to the curriculum, in particular to introduce compulsory subject choices, would require a long-term strategy to address staffing, capacity and quality assurance. CYPES officers recommend this would need to be considered over three years. This is because, should a formal change be made to require a compulsory language at GCSE level, this would have significant implications on whole-school timetabling (both at KS3 and KS4) and the range of subjects that a school or college could offer to pupils both at KS4 and KS5.

(c) Unfortunately, the central HR register of teachers does not record the subject area or areas that a colleague is employed to teach so there is no central record of this data. Schools have swiftly collated the information they hold in their internal employment records and have spoken to long standing staff where available to provide the response in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1 – A breakdown of Full Time Employees (FTEs) employed directly by the Education Department as MFL teachers in the four non-fee-paying States secondary schools for each year between 2004 and 2024* inclusive, broken down by school, including which MFL subjects were taught.

School	Current or moved on/retired	Years employed	Start - end date	FT or FTE	L1	L2	L3
LQS	C	11	2013/14 - current	FT	French		
LQS	C	2	2022/23 - current	FT	French	Spanish	
LQS	C	8	2016/17 - current	0.8	French	Spanish	
LQS	C	7	2017/18 - current	FT	French		
LQS	C	2	2022/23 - current	FT	French		
LQS	M	6	2016/17 - 2021/22	FT	French	German	
LQS	M		pre 2016	FT	French	German	
LQS	M		pre 2016	FT	French		
LQS	M		pre 2016	FT	French		
LQS	M		pre 2016	FT	French		
LQS	M		pre 2016	FT	French		
HV	M	10	Pre 2004/05 - 2009/10 ?	FT	French		
HV	M	17	Pre 2004/05 - 2020/21	FT	French	Spanish	Italian
HV	C	20	2004/05 - 2023/24	FT	French	German	
HV	C	8	2016/17 - 2023/24	FT	French	Spanish	
HV	C	8	2016/17 - 2023/24	FT	French	Spanish	Portuguese

HV	M	20	Pre 2004/05 – 2018/19	FT/PT	French		
HV	M	14	Pre 2004/5- 2016/17	FT	French	Spanish	Portuguese
HV	M	1	2022/23	FT	French	Spanish	
HV	M	5	2003/4 – 2007/8	FT	French		
HV	M	8	2007/8 – 2015/16	FT	French	Italian	
GV	C	23	2002 – current	FT	French	Italian	Spanish
GV	C	1	2024 – current	FT	French	Spanish	
GV	C	5	2019 – current	FT	French	Spanish	
GV	M	1	2023-2024	FT	French	Spanish	
GV	M	1	2022-2023	FT	French	Spanish	
GV	M	6	2016-2022	FT	French	Italian	
GV	M	18	2000-2018	FT	French	Spanish	
GV	M	17	2007-2024	FT	French		
GV	M	5	2002-2007	FT	French		
GV	M	1	2018-2019	FT	French	Spanish	
LRS*	C		current	FT	French	Spanish	
LRS	C		current	FT	French	Spanish	
LRS	C		current	FT	French	Spanish	
LRS			current	FT	French	Spanish	

*LRS response: During this period of time Le Rocquier has consistently offered French and Spanish in both the KS3 and KS4 curriculum. This has also been consistently staffed by 4 full time specialist MFL teachers and each teacher has taught both French and Spanish each year.

*Each school was able to access different timelines of information from their internal records. In most cases the digital records did not go back before 2010.

3.5 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Funding (WQ.5/2025):

Question

Further to the adoption of [P.20/2024](#) (In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Funding), as amended, will the Minister provide an update on the introduction of the new IVF funding model, including, but not limited to –

- (a) when the first Islanders are expected to benefit from the revised model;
- (b) how the new model access arrangements are being communicated and advertised;
- (c) what arrangements have been made with clinics outside of Jersey to provide the services that cannot be delivered in the Island; and
- (d) with which clinics have such arrangements been made?

Answer

Answers are set out below:

a) The new criteria came into force on 1 January. All Assisted Reproduction Unit clients / potential clients who may benefit from IVF treatment are now being assessed under those criteria. The timeframe for provision of IVF treatments funded under the criteria is subject to the treatment requirements of individual clients.

The Minister for Health and Social Services has committed to continuous monitoring against the criteria with a view to reviewing update at the end of Q1 2025. At that point in time information about client numbers and treatment timeframes will be available.

b) The funding information is available on www.gov.je to any person who is considering IVF and is provided to ARU clients / potential clients. Social media messaging is planned for end January 2025.

c) Health and Care Jersey (“HCJ”) has negotiated new, lower rates with two UK based IVF providers, potentially allow for around 90 HCJ funded IVF cycles per year, depending on the treatment requirements of individual clients.

d) The two IVF clinics are Lister Fertility Clinic in London and the Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine.

3.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Town car parks and capacity (WQ.6/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide a table stating how often during 2024 each of the town car parks reached full capacity, including on what days, for how long they were full, and distinguishing between long-stay and short-stay spaces?

Answer

Car parks with available data for 2024

Data for 2024 is available for the five car parks where near-continuous data from automatic counters are reported and stored. These are: Green Street, Minden Place, Patriotic Street, Pier Road and Sand Street. The historical data for these are analysed below.

Charles Street (which opened in October 2024) and Les Jardins car parks also have automatic counters reporting live space availability, but these data are not stored and therefore the historical data for 2024 are not available.

The datasets

The counters record the numbers of vehicles entering and exiting, allowing a running total of spaces available to be kept. The counters are polled every 2.5 minutes and therefore the availability data is also updated every 2.5 minutes.

The data have some limitations:

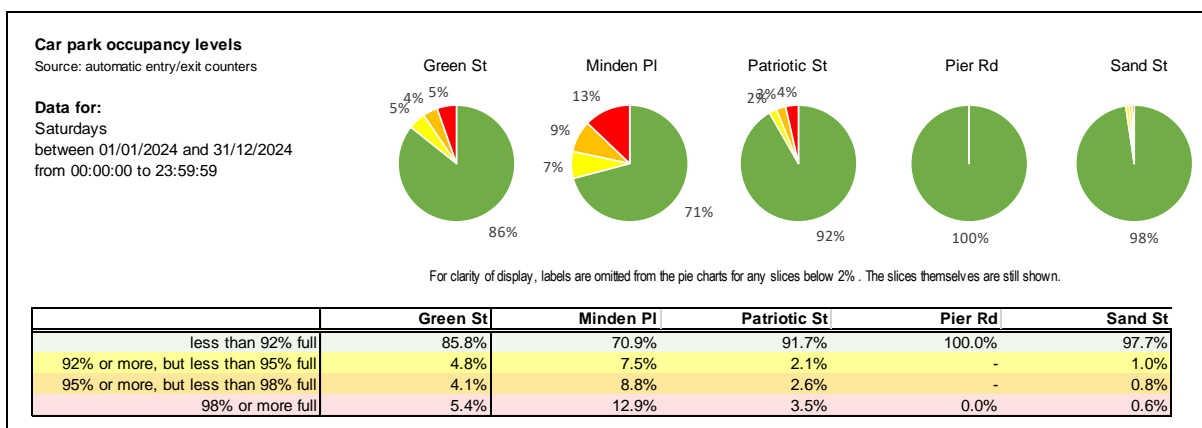
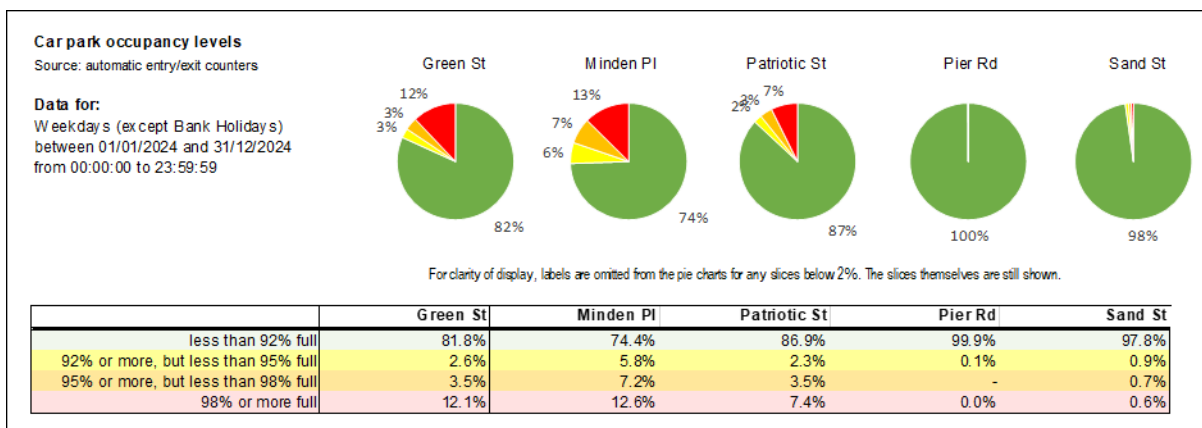
- The counters can ‘drift’ away from the true figure over time. This is corrected by a manual count each day which is used to correct any ‘drift’.
- Occasionally additional spaces can be blocked that are not reflected in the counts – for example if a single vehicle is parked straddling two spaces.
- A space may become available as soon as a departing driver leaves the space, but it is not recorded as being available until the vehicle passes the counter on the way out.
- Certain days are unavailable in the dataset; however 354 of the 366 days in 2024 are available.
- Where a car park has a mix of long stay and shopper spaces, distinctions in usage levels cannot be made as there is a common car park entrance / exit / counting system.

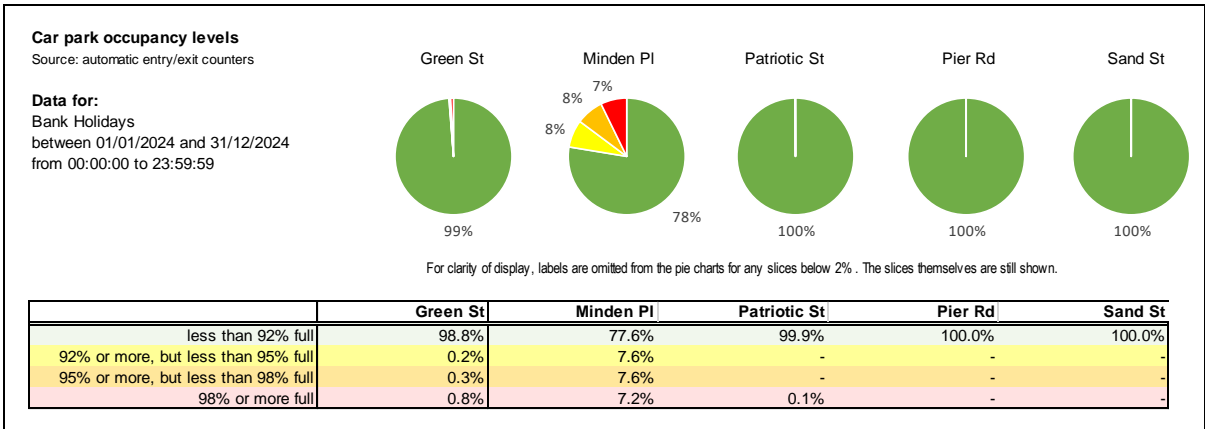
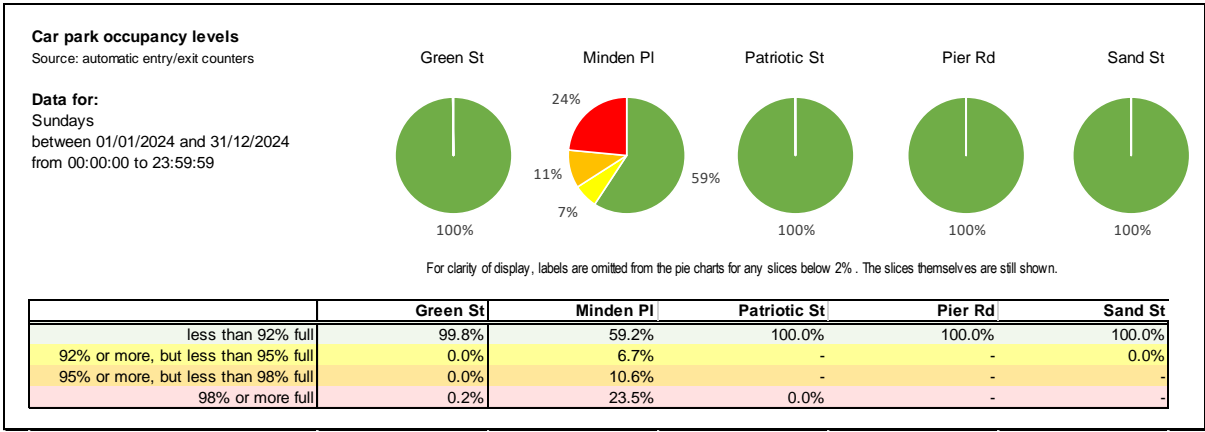
Thus, at any one time the number of spaces available is an approximation rather than necessarily the exact figure. Over the course of a year the data can be regarded as a reasonable representation of the availability of spaces.

Yearly Occupancy Levels (Weekdays, Sat, Sun & Bank Holidays)

The charts below show the percentage level of occupancy in each car park, over the course of the year, for different types of day: weekdays (other than bank holidays), Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

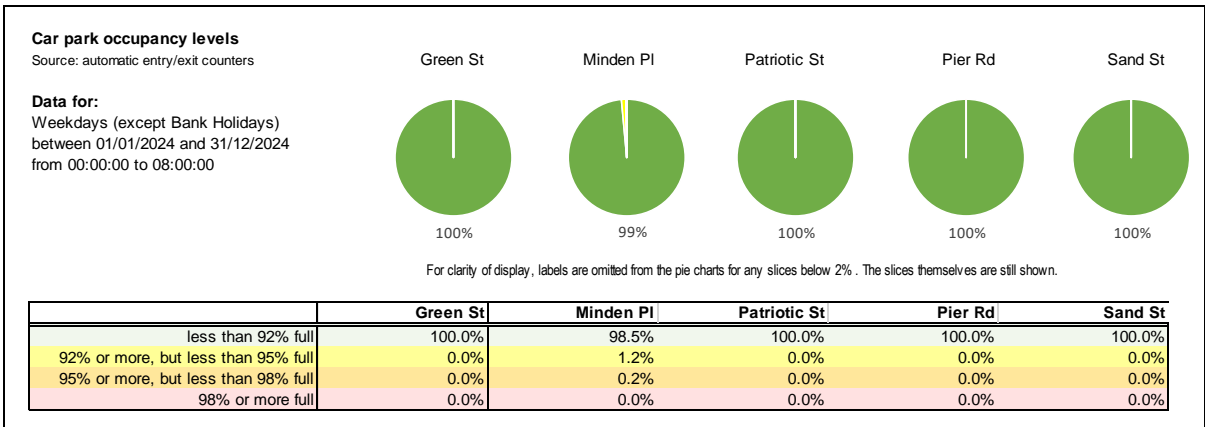
Users tend to perceive a car park as ‘full’ slightly before the nominal capacity is reached. To reflect this, the charts show (in red) 98% occupancy (or above) as being ‘full’. The charts also show when occupancy levels are approaching, but not at, this level (yellow and amber).





Hourly Occupancy Levels

The charts below look at weekdays and drill down to individual periods of the day, to show the times of day when car parks are most likely to be full or nearly so. They show midnight to 08:00, then individual one-hour periods up to 17:00, then 17:00 to midnight.

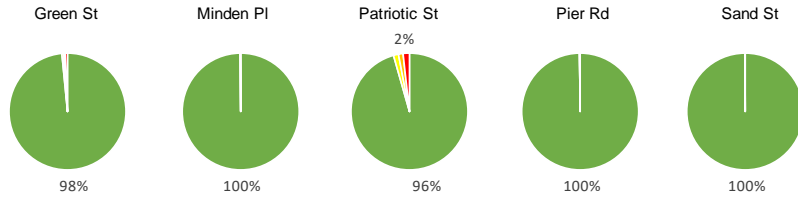


Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 08:00:00 to 09:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

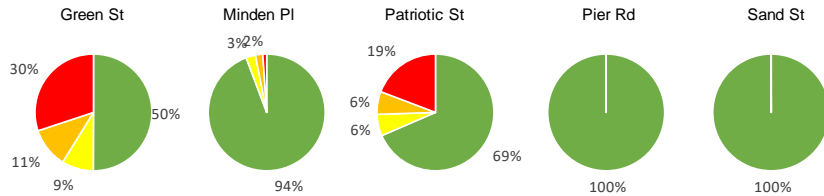
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	98.5%	99.9%	95.6%	99.8%	99.9%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	0.5%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
98% or more full	0.7%	0.1%	1.8%	0.2%	0.1%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 09:00:00 to 10:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

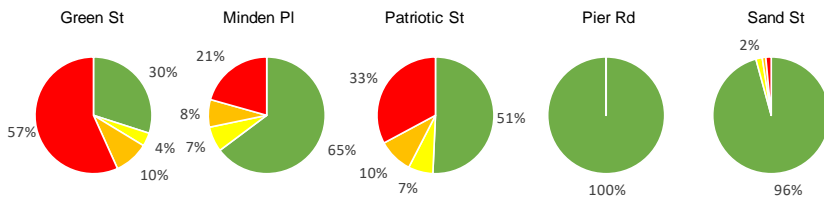
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	50.1%	94.3%	68.5%	99.9%	99.9%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	8.8%	2.6%	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	11.1%	2.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
98% or more full	30.1%	1.1%	19.2%	0.1%	0.0%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 10:00:00 to 11:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

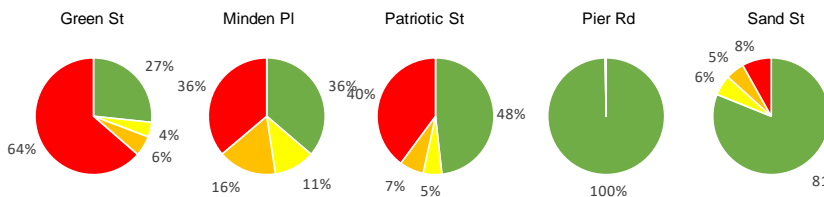
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	30.0%	64.8%	50.7%	100.0%	95.8%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	3.7%	7.0%	6.8%	0.0%	1.8%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	9.6%	7.6%	9.6%	0.0%	1.0%
98% or more full	56.7%	20.6%	32.9%	0.0%	1.5%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 11:00:00 to 12:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

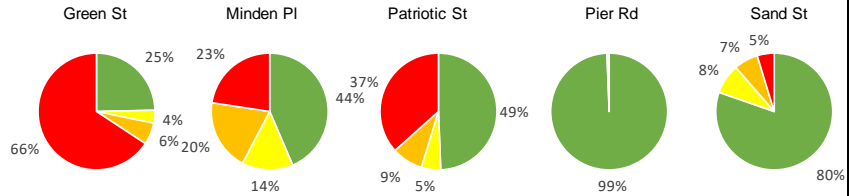
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	26.7%	36.3%	48.2%	99.7%	81.1%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	4.1%	11.3%	5.2%	0.3%	5.6%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	5.6%	16.2%	6.7%	0.0%	5.2%
98% or more full	63.6%	36.2%	39.9%	0.0%	8.1%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 12:00:00 to 13:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

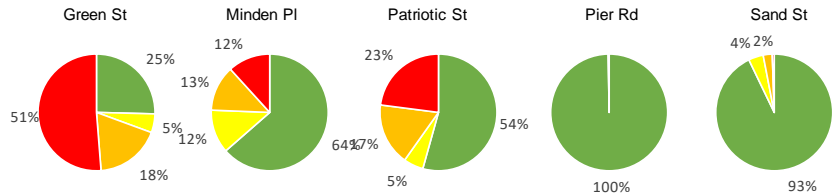
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	24.7%	43.6%	49.4%	99.4%	80.3%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	3.6%	14.2%	5.4%	0.6%	8.3%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	6.0%	19.7%	8.6%	0.0%	6.7%
98% or more full	65.7%	22.6%	36.6%	0.0%	4.7%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 13:00:00 to 14:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

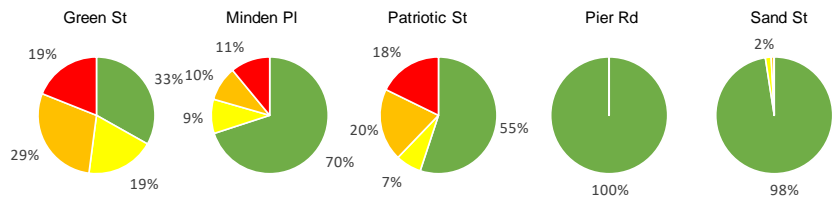
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	25.4%	63.6%	54.3%	99.7%	92.9%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	5.2%	12.1%	5.5%	0.3%	4.1%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	18.2%	12.6%	17.2%	0.0%	2.5%
98% or more full	51.2%	11.7%	23.0%	0.0%	0.5%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 14:00:00 to 15:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

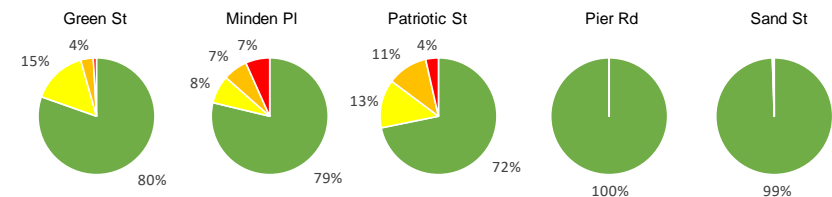
	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	33.2%	70.0%	55.1%	100.0%	97.6%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	18.9%	9.5%	7.1%	0.0%	1.6%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	29.0%	9.6%	20.1%	0.0%	0.8%
98% or more full	19.0%	11.0%	17.7%	0.0%	0.1%

Car park occupancy levels

Source: automatic entry/exit counters

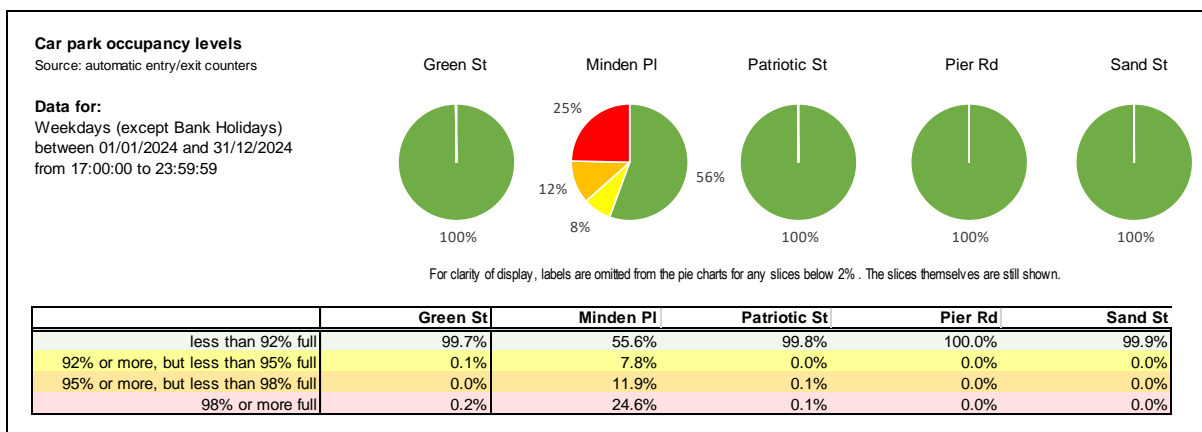
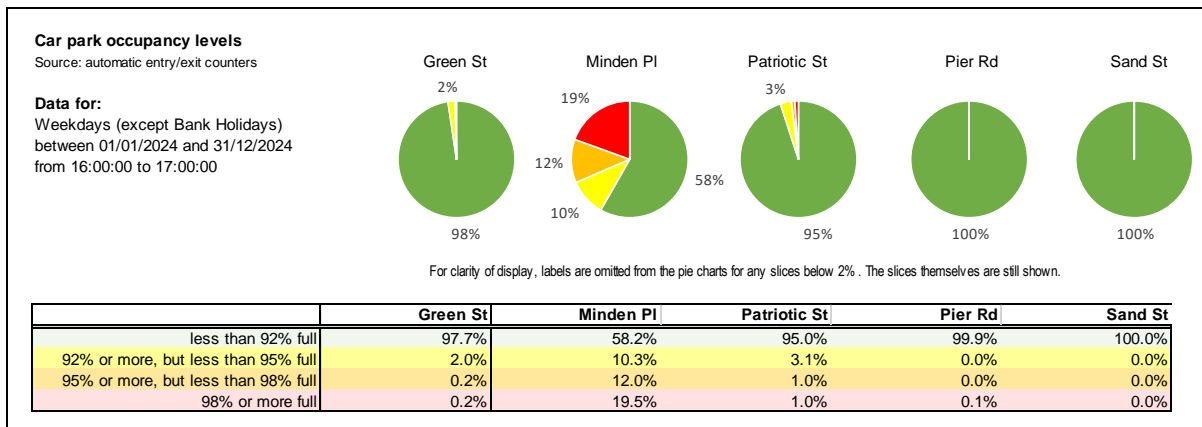
Data for:

Weekdays (except Bank Holidays)
between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024
from 15:00:00 to 16:00:00



For clarity of display, labels are omitted from the pie charts for any slices below 2%. The slices themselves are still shown.

	Green St	Minden PI	Patriotic St	Pier Rd	Sand St
less than 92% full	80.4%	78.8%	71.8%	100.0%	99.5%
92% or more, but less than 95% full	15.2%	7.8%	13.4%	0.0%	0.5%
95% or more, but less than 98% full	3.5%	6.8%	11.2%	0.0%	0.0%
98% or more full	0.9%	6.7%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%



3.7 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Children and Families regarding publicly accessible outdoor play facilities (WQ.7/2025):

Question

In relation to publicly accessible outdoor play facilities, will the Minister –

- provide a map of all the facilities available across all Parishes;
- advise who owns the land;
- state the ages each facility is aimed at;
- detail the source of funding for the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities; and
- advise whether there are any additional play facilities planned in any Parish?

Answer

(a) There is currently work being undertaken on a Play Strategy for Jersey, this will assist in developing an approach on play spaces in Jersey that meets the needs of children and young people in the long term. The Strategy will have a focus on available indoor and outdoor play facilities across the whole island and will be a key document to advocate for long term plans to ensure that play spaces are available and protected.

As part of this work a mapping process will be completed to identify what resources we have across the whole island and where there are areas without play spaces. A priority in the strategy will be assessing which areas need further resources or facilities and what they should be, taking into

consideration that not all parishes will need the same facilities, and we need to have a range of play experiences for children.

(b) The Map will enable the public to see an overview of what play spaces there are in Jersey and will include details such as the ownership of the land. Each play space will be rag rated to demonstrate accessibility, available facilities such as parking and toilets, condition of the area/equipment and the equipment/apparatus available.

(c) The map will help the public to identify suitable play spaces in their location and which ones across the island suit the needs/age of their children. The list of facilities at each play space should enable parents to identify what would be age appropriate for their child, taking into consideration that age appropriateness can range from child to child. Families with children of a broad age range may look for specific apparatus or facilities at a park that all children will enjoy rather than the age range.

(d) Play spaces owned by Government of Jersey are periodically maintained (and funded) by the Infrastructure & Environment Department. There are several play spaces owned by parishes, which are funded and maintained by each parish respectively.

(e) At this time there are no additional play facilities being planned. There are some enhancements being made to existing play spaces such as Millenium Town Park and Springfield. The mapping activity will act as a tool to identify what is currently available and how it could be enhanced. It will also identify where there are gaps in play provision and any actions based upon those identified gaps will need to be considered long term.

3.8 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for the Environment regarding Building Bye-Laws (Jersey) 2007 technical guidance document Part 8: Access to and use of buildings (WQ.8/2025):

Question

In relation to [Building Bye-Laws \(Jersey\) 2007](#) technical guidance document [Part 8: Access to and use of buildings](#), will the Minister state, for each of the last five years, the number of applications for ‘new-build’ dwellings that have had any provisions of Section 11.3 of the guidance disapplied and provide, for each such application, the reason for not applying these provisions and the associated building application reference number?

Answer

I can confirm that the Building Standards Manger has confirmed to me that the guidance under paragraph 11.3 of section 10 of TGD 8 “Access and use of Buildings”, has not been disapplied to any new dwellings in the last five years.

3.9 Deputy K.M Wilson of St. Clement for the Minister for Infrastructure regarding Aviemore and its intended sale (WQ.9/2025):

Question

In relation to Aviemore and its intended sale to the States of Jersey Development Company (SoJDC), will the Minister advise the circumstances of the sale, to include the following –

- (a) why it was agreed to sell the property for £1.5 million (half of its January 2024 estimated value);
- (b) whether a higher price could be secured;
- (c) the details of the advice that was received, if any, to proceed with the sale at this price;
- (d) the names of those involved in the decision-making process and the basis of their support for the sale;

- (e) the reasons, if any, for the urgency of the sale;
- (f) the costs incurred in putting the property out to tender; and
- (g) the number of bidders who completed the tender process and the success criteria which secured the bid by the SoJDC?

Answer

- (a) The property will be sold for more than £1.3 million (see R.11/2025) as the sales agreement includes an overage clause that will realise additional value paid to Government, to be determined by the scale of an approved development.
- (b) A higher price is expected to be realised subject to planning permission being secured, and the scale of development being known.
- (c) The property was valued independently and marketed by a local property agent in the open market to secure the best bid and offer. Having undertaken this process, the offer from the States of Jersey Development Company was the highest value bid, and Ministers were advised accordingly.
- (d) In September 2021, the Council of Ministers agreed to the disposal of the Aviemore site so that the full value of the revenue released from the sale of the site could be used to fund the Endowment Fund to benefit Care-Experienced Islanders. The site was subsequently approved in the Government Plan to be sold by Jersey Property Holdings and developed for open market housing to specifically support the Fund. The decision to proceed with the sale to the States of Jersey Development Company was made by the Regeneration Steering Group.
- (e) This has not been an urgent sale. As referenced in the answer to part (d), the decision to sell Aviemore was first made in September 2021. As referenced in part (a) of the question, the property was valued in January 2024, 12 months before a sale was agreed.
- (f) The cost of the sale was set with the agent to be 1% of the final agreed sale price (including marketing fees).

3.10 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Housing regarding Social Housing (WQ.10/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise the number of Islanders living in Social Housing for each of the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 together with a breakdown of those who receive, or have received, assistance towards their rent and the percentage of assistance received?

Answer

Information is not held on the total number of Islanders who live in social housing, and therefore the number of Islanders who receive, or have received, assistance towards their rent through Income Support. However, some data is held on the number of households who live in social housing and receive assistance for their rent.

The 2021 Census identified that 5,826 households (13% of all household tenures) in Jersey live in social rented housing, including accommodation provided by Andium Homes, housing trusts and the parishes.

The number of households living in social housing who were receiving assistance with their rental costs at the year-end between 2022 and 2023 was as follows:

Year	Andium Homes	Housing trusts
2022	2,830	1,290
2023	2,900	1,210

**Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10*

This data is available on the opendata.gov.je site, and will include 2024 data once available.

Since the Census in March 2021, roughly 1,100 new units of social housing have been developed by Andium Homes and the housing trusts.

3.11 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Housing regarding Islanders in Social Housing who have a household income above the limits to qualify for the Affordable Housing Gateway (WQ.11/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise whether there are Islanders currently occupying Social Housing who have a household income above the limits to qualify for the Affordable Housing Gateway and, if so, would he provide the number and outline what action, if any, he is undertaking to address this situation?

Answer

It is inevitable that there are Islanders residing in social housing who are above the income limits to qualify for the Affordable Housing Gateway, as Islanders are only assessed on their incomes at the point they begin a social housing tenancy, not throughout that tenancy. Islanders in social housing will, like everyone, experience changes in their circumstances over time. It is not possible to determine the number of Islanders whose incomes have risen above the limit during their time in social housing as this will not be data held either by the providers or the Employment, Social Security and Housing Department.

I do not consider this to be a “situation” which requires addressing.

3.12 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding a new Town skatepark facility (WQ.12/2025):

Question

In relation to the development of a new town skatepark facility, will the Minister set out the proposed timetable including, but not limited to, the following –

- (a) the date a planning application is expected to be made;
- (b) when work could start;
- (c) the anticipated opening date for the new park; and
- (d) the budget for the proposed new facility and the source of funding?

Answer

Work on a new town skatepark facility is progressing with stakeholder consultation ongoing at present. Stakeholder consultation will be concluded at the end of February and feedback incorporated into the proposals. Following this, the planning application will be prepared.

The planning application is expected to be submitted by the end of March. Assuming the application is considered a major application, it is expected to be determined by the end of June. The aim is to be ready to start construction as soon as possible thereafter, subject to planning approval. Construction is expected to take four to five months with the facility opening in November or December based on the aforementioned timeline.

The budget for the proposed facility is £585,000 as per the Budget (Government Plan) 2025 – 2028 allocation. The intention is to bring the funding currently allocated in 2028 forward to 2025.

3.13 Deputy L.K.F Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of The Minister for Health and Social Services regarding partners staying at the Maternity Unit before, during and following the birth of a child (WQ.13/2025):

Answer

Will the Minister state the current policy regarding partners staying at the maternity unit before, during and following the birth of a child and advise whether the option for partners to stay overnight with the mother and child/children after birth (as some NHS trusts now accommodate) is being considered or factored into the plans and designs for the new hospital, and if not, why not?

Answer

The current policy regarding partners staying at the maternity unit allows for partners to be present during labour and birth, as well as for an appropriate period afterward to support the mother and bond with their newborn baby. However, overnight stays are not currently accommodated due to space constraints, with only four single rooms and three four-bedded bays available. Privacy considerations and the need to maintain a restful environment for all patients on the maternity unit are also key factors.

The option for partners to stay overnight after birth is being actively reviewed as part of the planning and design process for the new hospital, which will feature all single-occupancy rooms. We recognize the importance of supporting families during this crucial time and are exploring ways to incorporate appropriate facilities, such as sleeper chairs, to enable partners to stay with the mother and baby if they wish to do so.

3.14 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding the current States employee headcount (WQ.14/2025):

Question

Will the Chair provide details of the current employee headcount and the number of vacancies in each Government department?

Answer

In line with the requirements of P.69/2023 as amended, the Government publishes employee headcount and number of vacancies in each Government department at quarterly intervals.

The Deputy can find the latest information for the period ending 30th September 2024 published online here [Microsoft Word - Public Sector Staffing Statistics 30 September 2024](#)

The next publication will be issued on 28th February 2025 and will cover the period to 31st December 2024.

3.15 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding medical appointment cancelled by the Department (WQ.15/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise how many medical appointments were cancelled by the Department in each of the last five years?

Answer

The tables below show the total Outpatient Clinic appointments offered and the percentage cancelled or rescheduled each year between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2024. Additionally, the percentage of appointments cancelled or rescheduled are shown broken down by the care group of the appointment.

For the purpose of this question, “Medical appointments” has been interpreted as all General & Acute outpatient medical appointments. As such, the data presented includes Jersey General Hospital, Overdale Hospital, and Enid Quenault activity, as well as clinics in other locations, such as Dental, Le Bas or Springfield.

An appointment is counted as cancelled

- a. when the Appointment Status in TrakCare/Maxims (the electronic systems that captures appointment slots) has been set to 'Cancelled' or
- b. if in Trakcare the status had been set to 'Not Attended' and the Reason for cancellation was one of:
 - i. ‘Appointment cancelled by service’. Reasons include instances where clinics are cancelled and rebooked in an alternative location or time, which may be on the same day. It is currently not possible to report on these separately.
 - ii. ‘Appointment cancelled by patient’ Reasons include:
 - a. Appointment cancelled by or on behalf of the patient
 - b. Appointment no longer required
 - c. Appointment no longer required (Pat)
 - d. Appt cancellation informed by 3rd party
 - e. Appt cancelled by patient - awaiting patient contact
 - f. Away from Island/Education/Military/Travel
 - g. Earlier appointment requested
 - h. GP instructions
 - i. Later appointment requested
 - j. Leaving island
 - k. Patient transferred to private care

In Maxims, there is no “Not Attended” classification as there was in TrakCare. Appointments in Maxims are recorded as “Cancelled” or “Did Not Attend”. These DNA appointments are not counted as cancellations.

Transferred appointments, are *not* counted. A transferred appointment occurs when the patient will see a different clinician (to whom the appointment has been ‘transferred’), but the appointment date and time remains exactly the same.

When HCJ or the patient cancel the appointment, a new appointment will be given at the next available slot in relation to the urgency of the patient’s referral.

HCJ encourages all patients to inform the specialty service with as much notice as possible to ensure the slot can be re-allocated to someone else on the waiting list. If a patient requires a different date or time, they can find information on how to inform HCJ in their appointment letter.

This answer is an update of previously asked question: WQ.60/2023. Small variation in numbers is as expected – for example there are data quality validations and corrections reflected in the latest data.

Medical Appointments Cancelled (as per above definitions) by year, Health & Care Jersey

Year	Total cancelled	Total Appts	% Cancelled
2020	30664	219413	14.0%
2021	29380	251672	11.7%
2022	37405	275560	13.6%
2023	38726	285158	13.6%
2024	31140	291022	10.7%
Total	167315	1322825	12.7%

Data Source: Hospital Patient Administration System (TrakCare, Outpatient Report BKG1A and Maxims, Outpatient Report OP014DM)

Percentage of Medical Appointments Cancelled (as per above definitions) by Care Group and year, Health & Care Jersey

Year	Community Services	Medical Services	Other	Surgical Services	Women and Children Services
2020	17.3%	13.7%	4.0%	15.3%	12.4%
2021	14.3%	11.5%	8.2%	10.0%	16.0%
2022	17.4%	13.6%	11.4%	10.7%	17.1%
2023	18.3%	15.1%	10.0%	14.8%	15.8%
2024	16.9%	8.8%	8.2%	8.8%	11.0%
Total	16.8%	12.6%	8.4%	11.9%	14.5%

Data Source: Hospital Patient Administration System (TrakCare, Outpatient Report BKG1A and Maxims, Outpatient Report OP014DM)

Note: Since the previous answer, some services and specialties have moved between Care Groups. All data have been mapped to the current Care Group. In particular, Dental Care is now part of Surgical Services and Therapies Care Group is part of Community Services. ‘Other’ Care Group comprises Pre-assessment Clinic appointments (where a patient is contacted by a nurse prior to an inpatient or day case admission) and Phlebotomy appointments.

Percentage of Medical Appointments Cancelled (as per above definitions) by reason and year, Health & Care Jersey

Year	Cancelled by or on behalf of Patient	Cancelled by Service	COVID 19	Reason not recorded
2020	5.6%	5.1%	2.9%	0.3%
2021	6.4%	4.8%	0.1%	0.3%
2022	7.5%	5.7%	0.1%	0.3%
2023	5.0%	3.7%	0.0%	4.8%
2024	3.5%	1.7%	0.0%	5.4%
Total	5.6%	4.2%	0.6%	2.2%

Data Source: Hospital Patient Administration System (TrakCare, Outpatient Report BKG1A and Maxims, Outpatient Report OP014DM)

3.16 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding the Register of Names and Addresses (Jersey) Law 2012 (WQ.16/2025):

Question

Will the Chief Minister confirm if a register of individuals known as the “Register of Names and Addresses” is maintained, pursuant to Article 2(1) of the [Register of Names and Addresses \(Jersey\) Law 2012](#) and, if not, why not?

Answer

Information about individuals is held on various databases across the Government and is collectively known as the Register referred to in this law.

Since the introduction of the Register of Names and Addresses (Jersey) Law 2012, the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018 has been introduced, which sets out how data, including names and addresses, must be maintained, processed and shared between departments in line with modern standards.

3.17 Deputy L.M.C Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding sterilisation procedures (WQ.17/2025):

Question

In relation to sterilisation procedures, will the Minister provide the following details separately for both male and female sterilisation –

- (a) the full range of options available;
- (b) the cost associated with each procedure;
- (c) how many procedures have been carried out each year for the last 10 years;
- (d) what restrictions, if any, are in place, whether in legislation, policy or practice, to accessing such procedures and on what are they based (age, spousal consent or any other reason); and
- (e) the number of times patients have had procedures denied?

Answer

a) the full range of options available;

Available options for women:

- Laparoscopic tubal ligation using ‘Filshie’ clips. This is usually performed as a day case procedure in operating theatre under general anaesthetic. If women are already having laparoscopic surgery for other reasons, they may opt for a sterilisation procedure at the same time (either with the use of ‘Filshie’ clips or salpingectomy (removal of fallopian tubes)).
- Ligation at the time of caesarean section

Available option for men:

- Vasectomy with either local or general anaesthetics

b) the cost associated with each procedure;

The procedures are not funded publicly; however, the consultant may request to have the procedure funded by Health and Care Jersey by exception.

Women and men will be charged the public patient costs. If they choose to have their procedure on a private basis, they will have to fund the private fees (e.g. surgeon fees, anaesthetic fees, theatre charges etc) in addition to the hospital charges for sterilisation/ vasectomy.

The 2025 public hospital charges are:

- £1322 for a female sterilisation if surgery is carried out as a sole procedure.
- £295 if female sterilisation is being performed as a secondary procedure (e.g. at the time of a caesarean section).
- £1,026 for a male sterilisation (vasectomy) if surgery is carried out as a sole procedure.
- £295 if male sterilisation is being performed as a secondary procedure.

c) how many procedures have been carried out each year for the last 10 years;

The table below shows the number of sterilisation procedures performed in Jersey General Hospital in each of the last 10 years. Figures include those recorded as either publicly or privately funded. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of this split due to small numbers.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Female	7	7	8	15	<5	20	11	13	13	<5
Male	6	<5	5	<5	5	11	8	8	11	<5

Data Source: Clinical Coding data and Theatres data held in the Hospital Patient Administration System (TrakCare / Maxims)

d) what restrictions, if any, are in place, whether in legislation, policy or practice, to accessing such procedures and on what are they based (age, spousal consent or any other reason) ; and

Generally, there are no restrictions in place. Spousal consent is not required. There is not an age limit, nor is there a restriction if women have not had any previous pregnancies.

The consultant will discuss the rationale for the procedure with the person and may reject to undertake the procedure if the rationale given is indicating the person has been coerced by others.

Both men and women, are counselled regarding the risks of surgery, the intended irreversible nature of the surgery, the failure rate of surgery. In addition, women are counselled on the increased risks of ectopic pregnancy if they conceive after a sterilisation procedure, and on the implications if they later regret if circumstances change and desire fertility in the future. Alternatives such as LARC (long-acting reversible method of contraception) such as a progesterone-containing coil are being discussed, for example, if the woman has other problems such as heavy or painful periods.

e) the number of times patients have had procedures denied?

Data for refused procedures are not held in a searchable format as they are in individual paper records.

3.18 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the report entitled Health and Care Services Division Annual Plan 2025 (WQ.18/2025):

Question

Further to the publication of the report entitled [Health and Care Services Division Annual Plan 2025](#) and his subsequent answers to an urgent oral question in the Assembly on 21st January 2025, will the Minister –

- (a) provide more detail on the intention to make the Health and Social Services Department “separate from but linked to” Government, specifically what this means in practice, and in particular, in what ways the Department will be “separate from” Government;
- (b) outline what existing funding will be combined to make up the “single, central fund” that is referenced, and if there is any intention for any future health funding to include a new charge or tax;
- (c) confirm what Ministerial Functions, if any, the Minister is proposing to delegate to the new Partnership Board and/or the new Chief Executive, over and above existing delegations;
- (d) advise how the Chief Executive of the Jersey Health System will have authority over partner organisations that are outside Government; and
- (e) summarise any plans, if any, for a public consultation on his proposals?

Answer

(a) As explained at the States Members briefing on 5 December 2024, the intention is to create a more integrated approach to the development and delivery of health and care services in Jersey. This includes government lead health and care functions being delivered by a single government department – Health and Care Jersey - rather than being dispersed across other Departments, for example, Public Health and Health Policy, which have already been transferred to Health and Care Jersey.

Finance, HR and digital development functions are in the process of being delivered by Departmental Directors who are specialists in the health and care sector with their teams being drawn from central government Procurement efficiency, in order to improve.

Health and Care Jersey will be ‘separate’ insofar as central government will cease to perform the functions mentioned above; ‘linked’ to, insofar as functions will operate, at a high level, through the central government system. For example, HCJ’s HR Director will be a specialist in health and care human resources, as distinct from being a generalist HR director, who will manage HCJ’s government workforce in accordance with central SEB standards and policy but will also work

strategically across the whole health and care system to support workforce development across the whole sector.

(b) As explained at the States Members briefing on 5 December 2024, subject to agreement by the Minister for Social Security and the States Assembly, the intention is to transfer the Health Insurance Fund to the control of the Minister for Health and Social Services.

In time, the HIF may be combined into a single fund alongside consolidate funds monies and other income (such as fees and charges) but only subject to the HIF monies continuing to serve the same purpose as at present - i.e. monies that fund / part fund Islanders access to primary care services.

The work to determine what, if any, extra charges or taxes may be proposed to fund health and care services is currently underway and any such proposals will be brought to the Assembly for debate and decision as and when the work has been completed.

(c) As explained at the States Members briefing on 5 December 2024, there are currently no plans to delegate any Ministerial functions to the proposed new Partnership Board or the Chief Officer, over and above existing delegations.

The Minister cannot, by law, delegate functions to the Partnership Board unless the Board is established in law to deliver delegated functions.

(d) The Chief Officer of Health and Care Jersey will not have direct authority over partner organisations who are, and will remain, independent organisations.

The Chief Officer will hold partner organisations to account for delivery against contractual standards, where those partners are contracted by HCJ to deliver health and care services and, as explained at the States Members briefing of 5 December 2024, the Chief Officer will sit on the proposed new Partnership Board.

The Partnership Board will bring together partners from across the health and care system (including HCJ officers who are responsible for delivery of HCJ's hospital, mental health and community) to discuss and agree the actions required government and / or by providers across the whole system to deliver safe, effective and sustainable health and services. There is currently no forum for whole system discussion and decision-making. The Partnership Board will recommend to the Minister the actions it has agreed are required, for the Minister to determine whether to adopt the recommended actions.

The Chief Officer will be responsible for delivering the actions adopted by the Minister where those actions relate to HCJ services, and for facilitating delivery by other partners where the Chief Officer has the jurisdiction to do so (for example, the Chief Officer would, in accordance with the Minister's

direction, oversee development of standards for new community based services as recommended by the Partnership Board, with independent providers determining whether to deliver those services and, where they do deliver those services, being held to account by the Chief Officer for compliance with contractual terms).

(e) No public consultation is planned in relation to the establishment of the Partnership Board, the proposed shift of the Health Insurance Fund to the Minister for Health and Social Services or the internal changes to staff reporting lines with Government, as these are structural changes focused on supporting better decision making and partnership working. There has, however, been consultation with government and non-government providers for health and care services with the feedback report published on 21 November 2024.

In the event that new funding arrangement, services or ways of working are proposed as a result of these new structural arrangements, there would be public consultation and / or service user consultation as appropriate.

3.19 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding making the tendering and procurement process of Government simpler and fairer for local businesses (WQ.19/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what plans, if any, he is considering to make the tendering and procurement process of Government contracts simpler and fairer for local businesses, and if he has none, will he explain why?

Answer

Procurement and Commercial Services are actively considering the tendering and procurement process of Government with a view to making the process and procedures simpler and more proportionate for local businesses.

This activity is set out in the Treasury Business Plan for 2025 in which we will deliver a refreshed Procurement Plan with a focus on proportionate controls and updating tender thresholds providing expert advice, corporate contracts, catalogue and framework reviews, supplier relationships, contract management and enhancing opportunities for local businesses. Regular engagement with local businesses, for example 'Meet the Buyer' events, will be undertaken to encourage feedback on the proposed changes as these are developed.

As part of this review process, we will also be determining if there are any international legal obligations that may affect or restrict consideration for Jersey-only competitions. The Public Finances Manual will be updated as appropriate to reflect any changes that are introduced.

3.20 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier of The Minister for Infrastructure regarding Jersey's current recycling rate (WQ.20/2025):

Question

Will the Minister outline how Jersey’s current recycling rate compares with similar jurisdictions, whether he would wish to increase the rate of recycling in the Island, and if so, detail how this can be achieved?

Answer

Direct comparisons of recycling rates with similar jurisdictions are complicated due to differences in reporting requirements, methodology of reporting, and legal requirements around collections. Jersey’s Municipal recycling rate has remained stable at just over 30% in recent years and is dependent upon public willingness to use available services.

Municipal Recycling Rate			
<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Jersey	35%	35%	33%
Guernsey	59%	59%	No Data Available
Isle of Man	23.8%	17%	No Data Available

I very much wish to increase the rate of recycling in Jersey. Last month, I visited Guernsey to see the good work that they have done in this area.

One means of increasing recycling would be to require a framework for collection services and investment in processing facilities. To ensure the robustness of any such framework, additional legal and/or regulatory requirements would also likely be needed.

Another way of increasing our recycling rate would be for all twelve parishes to offer a kerbside collection facility.

We should also make every effort and take every opportunity, at parish and island level, to promote our existing services to ensure they are used to their optimum, and we should adapt as necessary to meet the changing needs of the community

3.21 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding contingency ferries (WQ.22/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise whether the Government will continue funding contingency ferries after the contract with Condor ends in March, and if they intend to do so, will the Minister provide details of the contingency arrangements and their implications in terms of the DFDS contract, and if not, why not?

Answer

The contingency arrangements are in place until the 31st March 2025. These have been in place to ensure continuity in the Island’s supply chain given the continued ambiguity over the current operator’s ability to underwrite any commitment through to expiry of the existing Operating Agreement.

There is no intention to extend these contingency arrangements beyond March 2025 when the new Operating Agreement will take effect. Ensuring strong financial due diligence of any future operator was an important element in the procurement process which has consequently removed the need for ongoing contingency under the new Operating Agreement

3.22 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding resignations and redundancies within the Department for the Economy (WQ.23/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide a list of resignations and redundancies within the Department for the Economy, including information on whether the vacant roles will be replaced, restructured, or discontinued, and where any role has been discontinued, will he detail the strategic purpose of the change and who made the decision?

Answer

There has been extensive debate in the States Assembly on the size of the public service, pressure on public finances and the need to re-prioritise. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Response to WQ.45/2023
- Response to OQ.151/2024
- Response to WQ.325/2024
- Report S.R.8/2024 and associated response
- Debate and subsequent approval of the Government Plan 2025-28

The Department for the Economy delivers upon the political priorities of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and the Minister for External Relations (for financial services matters).

As part of the wide public sector savings initiatives, the Department has reduced and prioritised headcount where opportunity has arisen to do so to help realise Government wide staff cost savings.

The below list covers personnel changes since 1st January 2024 across the Department for the Economy including both my portfolio and the Financial Services section under the Minister for External Relations.

As per the Codes of Conduct & Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers, employment matters and associated functions are reserved for the States Employment Board and its delegates.

POST	REPLACE/ VACANT	RESTRUCTURED/DISCONTINUED/ VACANT
Group Director Economy		Restructured
Director of Financial Crime Strategy		Restructured
Programme Manager (MONEYVAL)		Discontinued (end of contract)
Project Manager		Discontinued (restructured)
Partnerships Lead		Discontinued (end of contract)
Programme Officer - Future Economy	Replace	
Sector Lead (ACH and Sport)	Replace	

Senior Policy Advisor - Financial and Professional Services	Replace
Senior Policy Advisor - Financial and Professional Services	Replace
Head of High Value Residency Engagement	Replace
Head of Delegation Financial and Professional Services	Vacant

3.23 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of The Minister for Health and Social Services regarding conversion therapy (WQ.24/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise whether any investigations have been undertaken by the Government into whether ‘conversion therapy’ aimed at LGBTQ+ people is currently offered by any private companies in Jersey, and will he further advise whether the Government has plans to legislate a ban on this practice, and if so, when does he intend to undertake this work, and if not, why not?

Answer

Health and Care Jersey does not, and will not, commission or provide any services that would contain practices that could be described as conversion therapy. Furthermore, there is currently nothing that indicates that there are any conversion therapy providers operating in Jersey, this includes no evidence of services being advertised or promoted, and no known informal or formal reports of provision. Whilst conversion therapy is banned in some jurisdictions, with some others considering the implications and limitations of introducing bans, the Council of Minister’s agreed legislation programme does not currently include the development of equivalent legislation in Jersey. This is because it has not been identified as a legislative priority given that there is no evidence of practice in Jersey, and the necessity to focus resources on other health and social policy related legislation. This is a decision that I would review, in discussion with other Ministers, in the event of evidence of provision.

3.24 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the 1% revenue spending for Culture, Arts and Heritage (WQ.25/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide –

- (a) a breakdown of the projected allocation of the 1% revenue spending for Culture, Arts and Heritage;
- (b) the total estimated monetary amount of the 1% of total revenue spending; and
- (c) how much of this funding his Department has been allocated for 2025.

Where the sum received by his Department is less than the full 1%, will he explain where the outstanding amount has been allocated and whether he has asked for the full 1% to be allocated to his Department, and if not, why not?

Answer

The following breakdown of the projected allocation of the 1% revenue spending for Culture, Arts and Heritage (£12,305,000) is as follows:

- Department for the Economy holds £10,552,000;
- Bailiff's Chamber holds £314,000 (Liberation Day funding);
- CYPES currently holds Jèrriais funding of £612,000;
- There is currently a shortfall of £751,000 that is being identified from existing expenditure across the wider government;
- An additional £76,000 inflationary uplift that will be identified as per the point above.

The total monetary amount of the 1% of total revenue spending across government in 2025 is £12,305,000, that has been identified and ringfenced in line with the budget setting 2025-2028. There is currently work underway to identify and ringfence additional expenditure in line with the £751,000 and £76,000 shortfall, as it is estimated that funding for Culture, Arts and Heritage could be considerably higher than 1% across government.

Within the department for the Economy, the Minister has allocated the following:

- £9,657,152 allocated to grant recipients, of which:
 - Jersey Heritage will receive up to £6,517,635 (£6,233,635 as a core grant);
 - Art House Jersey will receive up to £1,231,587;
 - Jersey Arts Centre will receive up to £762,930;
 - Jersey Opera House will receive up to £600,000;
 - Ballet D'Jerri will receive up to £370,000; and
 - £175,000 is ringfenced for sports travel grants.
- £93,438.46 allocated against staff for the costs of administering the £10,552,000 funding.
- £618,000 allocated to other expenditure, of which:
 - £208,000 will support Jersey Heritage to complete the Elizabeth Castle major project;
 - £160,000 will be allocated against various cultural Festivals;
 - £65,000 allocated for Cultural Diplomacy;
 - £60,000 allocated for Heritage Grants;
 - £45,000 allocated for Creative Island Partnership;
 - £80,000 allocated for Arts Grants (£40,000 for music, and £40,000 for non-music).
- The remaining buffer of £153,409.54, will be required to support various cultural events such as the Battle of Flowers and Jersey International Air Display.

3.25 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding a GCSE in French at the four non-fee paying Government secondary schools (WQ.26/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise how many Year 11 students in each of the four non-fee paying Government secondary schools achieved a GCSE in French, providing the totals as the actual number of students, as well as the percentage of year group and a breakdown in terms of gender?

Answer

School	Gender	Total YR11 cohort	Total students achieving French GCSE	% achieved of total YR11 cohort
Grainville	F	66	6	9.1%
	M	65	7	10.8%
	Total	131	13	9.9%
Haute Vallée	F	54	-	-
	M	61	-	-
	Total	115	14	12.2%
Le Rocquier	F	78	-	-
	M	69	-	-
	Total	147	24	16.3%
Les Quennevais	F	70	13	18.6%
	M	76	16	21.1%
	Total	146	29	19.9%

N.B. A gender breakdown cannot be provided for Haute Vallée and Le Rocquier as these include numbers fewer than 5 individuals.

3.26 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of The Minister for Social Security regarding people in receipt of financial support from the Employment, Social Security, and Housing Department (WQ.27/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide details of the number of people over the last 5 years who were in receipt of financial support from the Employment, Social Security, and Housing Department broken down into each of the different types of benefit paid by the Department; and will she further provide the total financial value of each type of benefit paid for each of the last 5 years?

Answer

The tables below relate to spending under the control of the Minister for Social Security. In addition, the Department also administers student finance grants.

The tables demonstrate the significant range of benefits available and the distribution of around half a billion pounds a year to benefit recipients.

These tables use data from internal departmental records and allocate payments according to the date the payment was made. They do not include accounting adjustments which are used to reconcile payments to correct time periods and management of debtors. As such, the tables below present a coherent view of the data included but the detailed numbers and values will not match exactly to audited accounts etc.

1. Number of people

Funding Source	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Health Insurance Fund	Health Access Scheme		9,836	9,269	8,939	8,848
	HIF - all other benefits *	74,895	79,425	80,569	81,672	83,588
	Pharmaceutical Benefit **	2,158,156	2,190,620	2,282,486	2,287,899	2,213,367
Long-Term Care Fund	Long Term Care	1,610	1,690	1,741	1,842	1,872
Social Security Fund	Death Grant	803	803	844	889	839
	Home Carers Allowance	212	218	209	230	244
	Incapacity Pension	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
	Invalidity Benefit	400	366	337	309	284
	Long Term Incapacity Allowance	4,169	4,300	4,357	4,457	4,477
	Maternity Allowance	1,003	242			
	Parental Allowance	33	1,546	2,158	2,140	1,968
	Maternity/Parental Grant	682	953	816	776	688
	Old Age Pension	34,384	34,685	34,730	34,986	35,136
	Short Term Incapacity Allowance	16,558	17,000	18,904	16,048	16,364
	Survivors Allowance	152	152	164	152	133
	Survivors Pension	568	519	463	413	349
	Tax Funded	Income Support	13,500	11,757	10,677	10,110
Income Support Special Payment		3,101	3,060	2,915	2,939	2,886

Funding Source	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Christmas Bonus	4,157	4,117	4,039	4,195	4,321
	Cold Weather Bonus	1,061	1,013	1,607	1,939	1,818
	Community Cost Bonus	506	952	3,596	3,638	3,274
	Diffuse Mesothelioma Special Payment	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
	Pension Plus Scheme	1,530	1,675	1,666	1,872	2,082
Tax funded: Covid-19 Pandemic Support	C19 Children's Dental Scheme			345		
	CRESS (COVID-19 Related Emergency Support Scheme)	408				
	Economic Stimulus	7,640	<10			
Tax funded: Short Term Schemes	Cost of Living Temp Scheme			7,579	<10	
	Parental Support Payment				51	
	Registered Employee Support Payment					288

* The figure provided relates to the number of adults receiving financial support with a GP appointment during the year. There may be additional numbers who have accessed one of the HIF funded services but did not also receive a HIF benefit from a GP consultation.

** the figure provided relates to the number of prescription items funded by a HIF benefit during the year.

2. Value of benefits

Funding Source	Group Description	Total Payments in 2020 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2021 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2022 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2023 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2024 (£,000s)
Health Insurance Fund	Health Access Scheme		£1,268	£1,325	£1,519	£1,866
	Non-HAS Payments to GPs (Medical Benefit, Pathology, etc.)	£6,439	£8,020	£7,718	£11,921	£18,896
	Pharmaceutical Benefit - Dispensing Fees	£7,786	£8,752	£7,812	£8,819	£9,235
	Pharmaceutical Benefit - Drugs	£13,949	£17,386	£15,700	£17,688	£19,099
Long-Term Care Fund	Long Term Care	£57,858	£61,063	£64,247	£77,637	£86,127
Social Security Fund	Death Grant	£702	£720	£780	£851	£864
	Home Carers Allowance	£2,090	£2,141	£2,144	£2,384	£2,878
	Incapacity Pension (included in LTIA total below)					
	Invalidity Benefit	£4,730	£4,430	£4,198	£4,041	£3,926
	Long Term Incapacity Allowance	£20,600	£21,972	£23,587	£26,227	£28,691

Funding Source	Group Description	Total Payments in 2020 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2021 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2022 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2023 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2024 (£,000s)
	Maternity Allowance	£2,624	£384			
	Parental Allowance	£12	£3,795	£5,007	£5,084	£5,009
	Parental Allowance Interim	£134	£18			
	Maternity/Parental Grant	£490	£641	£594	£590	£577
	Old Age Pension	£203,601	£207,460	£218,763	£235,124	£258,671
	Short Term Incapacity Allowance	£15,459	£15,455	£16,341	£16,886	£19,499
	Survivors Allowance	£572	£685	£502	£666	£799
	Survivors Pension	£3,101	£2,941	£2,857	£2,567	£2,516
Tax Funded	Income Support	£83,648	£79,020	£72,902	£77,632	£84,380
	Income Support Special Payment	£1,493	£1,446	£1,401	£1,896	£1,576
	Christmas Bonus	£358	£355	£348	£487	£505
	Community Cost Bonus	£114	£360	£1,870	£1,958	£1,873
	Cold Weather Bonus	£185	£203	£172	£668	£611
	Diffuse Mesothelioma Special Payment	£23	£28	£26	£23	£98
	Parental Bereavement Leave					£29
	Pension Plus Scheme	£369	£460	£479	£637	£954

Funding Source	Group Description	Total Payments in 2020 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2021 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2022 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2023 (£,000s)	Total Payments in 2024 (£,000s)
	Television Licences 75+	£100	~			
Tax funded: Covid-19 Pandemic Support	C19 Children's Dental Scheme			£86		
	CRESS (COVID-19 Related Emergency Support Scheme)	£548				
	Economic Stimulus	£1,267	~			
Tax funded: Other Short Term Schemes	Cost of Living Temp Scheme			£3,112	£2	
	Parental Support Payment				£17	
	Registered Employee Support Payment					£71

~ benefit total of less than £500 in year

3.27 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of The Chief Minister regarding plans to pause, reduce or remove areas of regulation (WQ.28/2025):

Question

Further to the Government Chief Executive Officer's comments on regulation at a recent Chamber of Commerce event, will the Minister advise what plans, if any, he has to pause, reduce or remove areas of regulation?

Answer

The Government recognises that there is a live debate in jurisdictions across the UK and Europe about the level of regulation and number of regulatory systems in place and how this is not conducive to economic growth. The Government has acknowledged that the same concerns exist in Jersey and committed in its Common Strategic Policy to address this issue in two key areas: reducing red tape to enhance opportunities for business, and to reform the planning service to enable sustainable development in Jersey.

The CSP priorities have led to the following actions:

- Planning system – removing regulation by raising the threshold for when planning permission is required so that fewer islanders need to seek approval, introducing a fast-track process for minor applications and improving customer service throughout. This is already having an effect, with the backlog in minor planning applications having reduced by 27% between Q1 2024 and end of Q3 2024;
- International Competitiveness review – the Minister for External Relations and Financial Services has begun a review of Jersey's economic competitiveness and growth, particularly in the financial services sector. This will include providing options for simplifying the legislative framework and ensuring that the regulatory regime is fit for the future.

Changes are also being considered to the alcohol licensing law. A consultation has just been completed on changes that would result in fewer licence categories, a simpler application process, and more flexibility for businesses.

3.28 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding implementing the recommendations made in the 'The issue of violence against women and girls in Jersey' report (WQ.30/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide an update on the progress being made in implementing the recommendations made in the ['The issue of violence against women and girls in Jersey'](#) report published by the Taskforce on Violence against Women and Girls?"

Answer

I am pleased to be able to update Deputy Doublet and members on this issue.

Progress has been made across the VAWG recommendations since the Taskforce published its report in November 2023, with some recommendations met and the remainder ongoing.

Completed recommendations include:

- A review of follow-on accommodation for victim-survivors, published and with its conclusions accepted in November 2024 by the Minister for Housing (Recommendation 59)

- The introduction of a financial concession for migrant victim-survivors without five-years residency and new thresholds for the Indefinite Leave to Remain (Domestic Abuse) application (Recommendation 49 & 56)
- Public information and guidance on online and technology-facilitated abuse published in September 2024 – Online and technology-facilitated abuse (Recommendation 13)
- Guidance on the mandatory reporting duties around female genital mutilation for health professionals created (Recommendation 9)
- The ‘It’s Not Okay’ campaign against street harassment ran in December 2024, with a focus on 16- to 25-year-olds, targeted via social media and posters distributed throughout schools – Learn about street harassment, how to stop it and where to report it or get support (Recommendation 7) (It should be noted that throughout 2025, where there are opportunities to update the media and other stakeholders on VAWG progress, public updates will be given as and when appropriate.)
- The Taskforce Report’s recommendations were included in the Jersey Schools Review Framework, as well as developing a VAWG Schools Toolkit in consultation with schools via the Education Sub-group (Recommendation 76)
- Delivered training on the indicators of VAWG for immigration officers, as well as implementing targeted enquiry procedures within the Customs & Immigration Service (Recommendation 55)

The recommendations currently being progressed include:

- The development of a VAWG Dataset, currently scheduled for end of Q1 2025 and planned for further release every quarter (Recommendation 3)
- Training has been commissioned for training on online and technology-facilitated abuse for delivery between Q2 to Q3 2025 (Recommendation 12)
- An independent Criminal Justice System Review, currently planned for publication in early September 2025 (Recommendation 15)
- A VAWG Health Working Group convened to implement a plan for the recommendations concerning health services, as agreed by the Minister for Health & Social Services (Recommendations 40 – 46 & 48)
- Training on the relationship between domestic abuse and animal abuse for all veterinary staff, which is planned to between Q2 to Q3 2025 (Recommendation 47)
- Training on perpetrator management for public services, which is currently out for tender (Recommendation 68)
- A campaign for raising awareness of coercive controlling behaviour, scheduled for release in early March (Recommendation 73)

Law drafting instructions to meet the legislative recommendations are currently being developed, some are already with the Legislative Drafting Office. It is currently anticipated that all will be lodged within 2025. This includes-

- Strengthening of legislation to address online and technology-facilitated abuse (Recommendation 11)
- Amendment to the Domestic Abuse (Jersey) Law 2022 concerning the introduction of pre-conviction emergency barring orders (Recommendation 24)
- Introduction of a non-fatal strangulation offence (Recommendation 25)

- Introduction of a law to address stalking and related behaviours (Recommendation 26)

In view of the VAWG Taskforce Report recommendations being accepted on 11th March 2024, an annual report is planned for publication which will provide greater detail on the implementation of all recommendations.

4. Oral Questions

4.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the Battle of Flowers Association (OQ.29/2025):

Will the Minister advise how much oversight he has of the Battle of the Flowers Association and explain the rationale behind the Government grant of £270,000 to support the 2024 event?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

I thank the Deputy for his question. The Battle of Flowers is an independent organisation which makes an application for an event grant from my department based on a series of stretching but achievable performance measures. My officers meet regularly with the Battle of Flowers Association to ensure that public money is being spent in accordance with the principles of the Public Finances Manual. The larger one-off grant in 2024 allowed for a reformatting of the event, particularly following disruption after COVID, and participation by every Parish, a headliner act on the first night, and additional concerts on days 2 and 3. As a consequence of this extra funding and reformatted event, more than 22,000 people enjoyed the Battle of Flowers last year; a significant uplift with 6,000 more tickets sold than on previous years.

4.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister has been quoted as saying: “We are awaiting a grant request for 2025 and stand ready to support this.” Is his support dependent upon having sight of the 2024 accounts? Is it true that exhibitors have still not been paid for last year’s event?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Questions as to who has or has not been paid for last year’s event need to be asked of the Battle of Flowers Association. But my understanding is there are some entities, including possibly people, who are still awaiting payment, but I do not know if they are exhibitors or anybody else. That does need to be asked of the Battle of Flowers Association. We are awaiting accounts for the 2024 period, and my understanding is we would want to see those accounts before we are able to supply a grant.

4.1.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister advise if there is a clear government policy in relation to awarding grants and subsidies for cultural and community events such as Battle of Flowers, Battle of Jersey and similar?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The department requires business plans and an agreed set of performance measures for funding to be released. Officers meet regularly with events’ organisers and also acquire a post-event report.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

My question was does the policy exist?

The Bailiff:

I am assuming the Minister has just articulated the policy.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That was my understanding.

4.1.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay, supplementary. Where is the policy published that the independent organisations and charity can review it before applying for the grants?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

With regard to arts, culture and heritage grants, because they are wide-ranging from hundreds of thousands of pounds all the way down to hundreds of pounds, I do not believe there is one policy paper for all of those. What we have is a set of criteria. These can be found on the Creative Island Partnership, particularly for those smaller grants. For the larger grants it is in accordance with the Public Finances Manual that we determine whether grant funding is made available.

4.1.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Minister is potentially going to be handing over hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money to support this year's Battle. Can he confirm that he has full confidence in the Battle of Flowers Association?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is something that I would have to refrain from giving a view on at the moment because I think it has been well-publicised following recent meetings that there is concern among the Association and questions are being asked among the Association. It would be my requirement that we need to understand that the Association is in good order and is working in the appropriate ways to stage this year's event before being able to provide that funding.

4.1.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Is the Minister going to be taking any actions to try and ensure that the Battle of Flowers Association meets the standards, shall we say, to which he would expect for an organisation that he is handing public money to?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Actions in terms of officers engaging with the Battle of Flowers Association, trying to understand where the Battle of Flowers Association is in terms of its governance structures and procedures, these are the sorts of actions that I will be taking. It is understanding where the Battle of Flowers Association is. It is not, in my view, my remit or my jurisdiction, so to speak, to go into the Battle of Flowers and engineer, let us say, change myself. That I think is for the Battle of Flowers Association itself. This is the sort of situation that we see in Jersey where independent third-party organisations, which are not Government organisations, the Minister has no vires over them.

[9:45]

They therefore have to apply for grant funding in an appropriate fashion, as has been previously mentioned in these answers. It is on satisfaction of those criteria, particularly with regard to the Public Finances Manual, that any funding would be permitted. But, it is not for me to go into the Battle of Flowers Association to "sort it out". That is not my role.

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

Having been in the Minister's position before in relation to Battle, I was looking in advance of this question to a 2015 report. Would the Minister agree that it is now well past the time that there is a decisive, forward-looking, positive review of governance of the Battle of Flowers because I do not accept ... does he not agree that he is responsible for ensuring that the organisation in which he is putting public money should be fit for purpose with appropriate governance?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The grants are given on an annual basis ordinarily for some organisations such as A.L.O.s (arm's length organisations). We are seeking to see whether it is possible to provide funding on a 3-year

basis, but still those grants would be handed out on an annual basis. In terms of independent third-party organisations, such as the Battle of Flowers, I do feel it is the role of the Association to get itself in order. I do not think it is the role of Government to do that. I think that is Government ... again, it is this idea that everyone seeks to Government to sort it out. The Battle of Flowers Association is decades - maybe a century - old organisation. I am not sure exactly of its age. It is up to those members of that Association to ensure that they are fit for purpose. We will determine whether we agree with that in terms of whether then funding is made available. What we will do is provide support, and I am keen to support the Association as it sorts itself out, but it is not for Government to sort it out.

4.1.7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Minister speaks French and he is aware of the word *responsabilité* and there are three words in English: responsibility, accountability and liability. Does he really think that he can stand in this Assembly where numerous predecessors of his have also, together with our Constables that are in this Assembly, and say that his Department is not really going to have anything responsible or accountable for sorting out what is a long outstanding issue of a float builders' association and a commercial event organiser? Does he not think it is now time to put the Battle on the right footing going forward and not have these endless questions about public money being wasted and unaccountable?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not believe that is what I was talking about. I believe the Deputy, to some extent, misrepresents what I was saying. The Battle of Flowers Association is a third party independent organisation run by its members. It is incorporated as an association. I am not a member of that association, maybe the Deputy is a member; if so he is well-placed to help try and sort that out. We, as Government, will provide the support and advice to the Association. We can provide ideas about how they could resolve their problems and we are more than happy to support them in these ways. But the Association itself has to make its own decisions as to how it wants to structure itself otherwise it is no longer an association, it becomes just a part of government and they are set up as an independent association. We will support them however we can to help them through any changes that they wish to make. As I said, we are willing to suggest changes but we cannot make those changes ourselves.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I just want to understand, Sir, I am hearing the Minister talk about a word "association" and I know it is wrong, so what am I supposed to do? Can I just say to the Minister that he is not intentionally misleading the Assembly?

The Bailiff:

The point of a point of order is on what do you wish me to rule?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

How I can correct the Minister's assertion that it is an association when it is actually a limited company?

The Bailiff:

Well, I think you have said that.

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

If the changes that the Minister is expecting are not made, is the Minister prepared to limit or not give funding to this organisation? What are the Minister's boundaries in terms of expectations and whether the money is given or not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think the Battle of Flowers, which has been going for more than a century, 120-odd years, is an important part of Jersey's calendar and cultural calendar. Therefore, I think it is ideal that we have the Battle of Flowers taking place in the summer. We, as a Government, can look to provide the event ourselves, we can ask the Battle of Flowers Association to continue to provide the event, or we can seek another means of providing that event. I will make a decision according to the information provided to me by the Battle of Flowers Association. I apologise if it is a limited company, then it is a limited company and the Deputy is fine about that. It still does not change the fact that it is third party and independent of Government. It is its own entity. The States Assembly is not responsible for the Battle of Flowers Association. The Government is not responsible for the Battle of Flowers Association. It is entirely responsible for itself. I will only provide funding when satisfied that that funding will be spent appropriately. Ideally, we would love to see a Battle of Flowers going ahead this year, and I will work with them in all sorts of different ways to try to ensure that that does happen. But I think the Battle of Flowers Association, whether it is a limited company or an association, needs to make some decisions itself, and it needs to get to grips with those decisions quickly, otherwise it will find itself in a very difficult situation.

4.1.9 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Would the Minister keep the Assembly updated on this and whether the appropriate changes have been made? Also, could the Minister reassure the Assembly that the pot of money for events such as this, that there is enough to go around for other events that are important to the community such as Pride and other cultural events?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There is enough for many events. It is impossible to say there is enough for all events because the list of potential events is never-ending. At some point the pot of money does run out. But we have budgeted for certain major events this year; Battle of Flowers being one of them. Pride, I believe, being another. But, every Member of the Assembly and every person in Jersey could come forward with a grant application for an event, and obviously we could not fund all of those. So it is not a never-ending pot of money.

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

Could the Minister confirm that he or his team had sight of the 2023 Battle of Flower accounts before they gave out a larger sum this year?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I would have to confirm with my team.

4.1.11 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Can the Minister confirm that he is funding the Battle of Flowers for their 2024 overspend, in addition to the grant funding they are applying for in 2025?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am unable to confirm that because those decisions have not yet been made.

4.1.12 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister has stated that he will be working with the Battle of Flowers Association to secure the long-term future of the event. Is there any limit as to how much the Minister will grant to the Battle of Flowers Association and will this lead to underfunding of other Island events?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

A question in the similar vein to Deputy Doublet's question. Yes, there are limits, absolutely of course there are limits because there is no never-ending pot of money. There are definitely limits as to how much I would be prepared to fund. I could not say exactly what that limit is because I would

need to see a proposal from the Battle of Flowers Association before I can fund it. Last year, it was such a proposal that led to slightly increased funding in order to get the event back on its feet, particularly after the disruption caused by COVID. It made sense. I think there is an understanding in the Island and a desire in the Island to see the Battle of Flowers modernised. A 120 year-old event does need to move with the times. It is an incredibly valuable community event. I have sat in battle sheds helping build floats with my parents, with my daughter. The fact that so many generations of Islanders can come together to work on floats is absolutely magnificent, and that is the heart of the actual community element of the Battle of Flowers Association. I agree with Members, that is what is so wonderful about the Battle of Flowers. But the event itself has, I would say, in my personal view, not moved with the times in the way that it has needed to. Last year was an attempt to do that and future funding will depend on a proposal that satisfies the requirements, both in terms of governance and ambition in terms of wanting to put on an event that people wish to see.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Just quickly, will it lead to underfunding of other Island events; can the Minister respond please?

The Bailiff:

You have about a second and a half to respond to that, Minister.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Not intentionally, no.

The Bailiff:

We come to Question 2, the Connétable of St. Helier will ask of the Attorney General.

Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

I understood from the Greffe this question was being put to the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. Is that now not the case?

The Bailiff:

I have simply gone from the Consolidated Order Paper, which I understood to be ... Well, as I say, I have gone from the Consolidated Order Paper. Do you have any objection?

4.2 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of H.M. Attorney General regarding time between being charged with an offence and subsequently discharged from prosecution or acquitted (OQ. 21/2025):

No, not at all, Sir. I just have to change the beginning of my question. Will His Majesty's Attorney General, for 2024, advise the average length of time experienced by Islanders between being charged with an offence and subsequently discharged from prosecution or acquitted, to whom defence costs have been awarded?

Mr. M. Jowitt., H.M. Solicitor General (rapporteur):

The Law Officers' Department does not keep statistics on cases in which defence costs have been awarded. The Magistrate's Court and the Royal Court do maintain some statistics and we have made inquiries of them. The Magistrate's Court only keeps statistics where an award of defence costs has gone to taxation, which is to say where a dispute over the amount of costs claimed has been resolved by a taxing officer. There were 2 cases in 2024 in which an award of defence costs by the Magistrate was taxed. The Magistrate's Court does not keep separate statistics on the length of time between charge and conclusion in cases in which an award of defence costs has been made. The Royal Court statistics record that in 2024 there were 3 cases in which an award of defence costs was made. Across those 3 cases, the average length of time between charge and conclusion was 131 working days. I think a little over 26 weeks.

4.2.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

In the case of a local couple whose nightmare began in January 2023 when they were charged with a driving offence and acquitted in August last year, a year and a half later, does the Solicitor General believe it is fair and reasonable that they are still waiting for reimbursement of tens of thousands of pounds of legal costs without any communication from the department concerned?

The Solicitor General:

First of all, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to discuss a specific case in a forum such as this. Second, I cannot comment upon the delay, if there is one, in the execution of an award of defence costs by the court administration. That would be a matter for the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs or ultimately can I suggest something that the Connétable might take up with the Royal Court Greffe or the Magistrate's Greffe, depending on which court made the order.

4.2.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Solicitor General advise who is monitoring the refunds that needs to be given to the people? Who is monitoring and if the Law Department has any communication regarding them?

The Solicitor General:

No, it is not a matter which the Law Officers' Department has any involvement in. When the court makes an award of defence costs, as I understand it, those costs are paid out of the court and case budget. That is a matter for the court administration to take care of. It is not a matter for the Law Officers' Department, which is quite separate from the court service.

4.2.3 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Could the Solicitor General answer to whom the courts and the administration of the courts are answerable in a case such as this, where there is a complaint being made by constituents to a politician about a matter like this?

The Solicitor General:

I assume that the court administration ultimately lies in the responsibility of the Bailiff as the Island's chief judge.

4.2.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

How does the Constable or any Member of this Assembly seek restitution or resolution to such a matter in this Assembly on this? I presume if the question is being put to the Attorney General it is because he has some remit in this area. Can he advise maybe what the course of action for the Constable should be?

The Solicitor General:

The Attorney General has no remit in this area. He is quite independent of the court service and the court service is quite independent of the Attorney General.

[10:00]

I do not know the answer, shortly, to the question that is asked. If there is an issue with a court costs order not yet being paid, that is a matter that has to be taken up in the first instance with, I would think, the Judicial Greffier either of the Royal Court or the Magistrate's Greffe, if the order was made by the Magistrate's Court.

4.2.5 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am in a slightly difficult position because I was going to ask my final supplementary question of the Minister for Justice Home Affairs. I do not know that it would be appropriate to ask it of His Majesty's Solicitor General, but could I just ask, perhaps in principle, that does the Solicitor General think it would be appropriate for a Member of this Assembly to bring a matter like this to the States Assembly for a decision, as in fact I did - the first proposition I ever tabled as a Deputy - which was

in respect of a local hotelier whose building had been undermined by the actions of the then Housing Department?

The Solicitor General:

I am not sure I understand the Constable's question. I am sure that is my fault. If I am asked do I think it is constitutionally appropriate for this Assembly to involve itself in matters to do with the courts and the award of court costs, the answer is no, I do not think it is appropriate.

4.3 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding an IT strategy and IT security framework for Government (OQ.22/2025):

Will the Chief Minister detail what work, if any, has been undertaken with regards to an I.T. (information technology) strategy and I.T. security framework for Government to ensure that they are fully equipped to handle the growing use of A.I. (artificial intelligence) tools?

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

An A.I. working group was set up by Digital Services in July 2023 to advise on the Government's strategic direction in that area. As a result of this group's work, Digital Services developed draft A.I. policies and standards, which are currently under review but aiming to be published shortly. The Government's approach to I.T. security is guided by well-established national frameworks and best practice, including from the U.K.'s (United Kingdom) National Cyber Security Centre and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which helps protect our Island systems and data. We also have change control processes for our digital systems to ensure we can embed innovative technologies such as A.I. while maintaining the appropriate safeguards, not least to protect Government and Islanders' data.

4.3.1 Deputy T.A. Coles:

As I recently went on a C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) trip around A.I. security, part of the influence is on how our security frameworks work around critical infrastructure such as energy, supply and telecoms. Is the Chief Minister confident that the policies that are produced nationally would include Jersey in such a scheme?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Jersey works closely with the U.K. agencies in those areas and looks to adapt or adopt the safeguards and procedures that would be relevant to us. The answer I think in most cases would be yes.

4.3.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The question of A.I. use in Government has been debated quite a lot in the U.K. at the moment and being seen as a potential to massively increase the efficiency of delivery of government services. I wonder if the Government is approaching A.I. from this angle, not just from a security angle.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think A.I. will increasingly be embedded in the lives of everyone and everyday tools and applications to enhance personal and professional tasks. For example, in Government, it could include integration into daily life and processes, healthcare advancement, workplace transformations in relation to how routine tasks are dealt with. I think A.I. will touch all areas of personal and professional life as it develops. What we want to make sure is we have the appropriate safeguards in place from a Government perspective for when we utilise A.I. that first and foremost Government and Islanders' data is protected.

4.3.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think the Chief Minister's response was quite a passive description of the role of A.I.; it will do things to us. I wonder if he could perhaps take a more interventionist view, and could I ask the question, therefore, would he consider putting anybody in Government, either at a Ministerial level

or at an officer level, in charge of seeing how A.I. could be positively used to increase efficiencies within Government?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would not think at this stage we need to create a Ministerial role for that. That sits in the Department of the Chief Minister and for the Assistant Ministers. But, as I stated in the opening answer, an A.I. working group has been set up and have developed draft policies and standards, which will, as I understand it, also address how we might apply A.I. in certain aspects, certain streams of Government work.

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

Given the exponential rise in the use of A.I., both in Government and by what I might describe as bad actors, would the Chief Minister confirm that he feels that his department has got adequate resource to deal with this at the moment?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes.

4.3.5 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will the Chief Minister confirm that he will be using A.I. to write his own speeches in the future?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No comment.

The Bailiff:

I am tempted to ask if you wrote that yourself, Chief Minister? **[Laughter]**

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I did, Sir.

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

The Chief Minister mentioned that we leverage national frameworks and in January 2025 the U.K.'s Government digital service published a policy paper titled *A blueprint for modern digital government* in which it outlines its vision and strategy to continue to deliver modern digital public services. Has the Chief Minister considered the vision and action points outlined in this and whether there are any lessons to be learnt?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, but I was not aware of its existence. I thank the Deputy for pointing me towards it. I will certainly take a look at it.

4.3.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

One of the action points in that is harness the power of A.I. for public good, but whether looking to the U.K., Estonia, Denmark, New Zealand or others, does the Chief Minister not see a significant risk to Jersey's reputation if we are not investing in better digital services and using any tool available to deliver better the public services?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think the short answer to that is we want our digital services to be at the forefront of technology. We want to make sure we utilise the skills and resources we put into that to deliver the very best outcomes for Islanders through the use of technology. We want to be at the forefront and that is why we are taking the use and development of A.I. seriously. It is a work in progress, and I hope we start to see, not just as an organisation, more use of it internally. But I would like to support the way we can help it embed itself in to enhance the use for Islanders on an everyday basis.

4.3.8 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

In the absence of the I.T. Government strategy in the Budget for 2025, departments had to cut 20 per cent of each department spent on I.T. How has the Chief Minister prioritised technology project, including I.T. across the departments, ensuring alignment with overall Government priorities rather than on a departmental basis?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I do not like to correct the Deputy, but we did not have to cut the I.T. budget by 20 per cent. Previous year's growth bids were reduced by 20 per cent, which is a significantly different situation. I am confident that our Digital Services Department has the right budget and resources to do all of the work we are expecting it to do to maintain the standards and levels that we would expect in relation to the development of our I.T. strategies and policies and the integration and the way we embed A.I. in our government services moving forward. We are well-resourced and adequately budgeted for 2025.

4.3.9 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would ask if the Chief Minister can emphasise how he prioritised between the departments across Government priorities, and when the I.T. strategy for Government could be seen and delivered?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That was all done as part of a lengthy Budget process, which was explained in detail during the Budget debate. That is how we re-prioritised, and that is how we allocated the budgets.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It was not a question about the Budget. When is the I.T. strategy planned to be delivered?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Well, we have a number of I.T. strategies, if you like, in progress, and I am not sure if she could be a bit more specific; is there a particular part of the I.T. platform?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It has been promised that I.T. internal government strategy, which overarching strategy for digital services within the Government has been developed over the last several years. My question is when this strategy will be presented.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am trying to relate that to the question on A.I., but I mean if it is related.

The Bailiff:

Yes, I have to say, having heard you redefine the question, Deputy, I am not sure it is directly related to the use of A.I. and the growing use of A.I. tools and therefore I do not allow it.

4.3.10 Deputy T.A. Coles:

I will try to keep this simple, but it is not a simple question. A.I. to be properly functioned requires access to appropriate amounts of data, as well as ... sorry, I am trying to consolidate that. A.I. requires data to make informed decisions. So, for A.I. to function properly, it would need proper data-sharing agreements and systems that communicate with each other. Does the Chief Minister believe that proper data-sharing agreements can be established within Government so that any A.I. tool can make proper and informed decisions? If so, will those decisions have a human input rather than A.I. delivering the final decision?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think that is a question for A.I. I think in principle, yes. I think that can be achieved by the Digital Services Department of putting the emphasis on change control process in the digital systems to ensure they can embed A.I. and other innovative technologies while maintaining the appropriate safeguards of Government and systems data. That is at the forefront of the work they are doing. I am not sure how they will achieve that, but I know that is high priority. That is the aim, I think. If we are going to use A.I. we need to make sure that private data is protected.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Sorry, Sir, there was the point about human decision-making.

The Bailiff:

Will it ultimately be human decision-making assisted by A.I., or will it be A.I. decision-making, Chief Minister, I think is the question?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think the objective of A.I. is to reduce the input of human decision-making. But, of course, at the end of the day, it is only as good as the information that it has access to. While we can never let it replace human intervention, it is growing and expanding so fast across how it impacts positively on society, I think it is a question that needs very careful consideration and cannot be answered on the hoof by myself. But from a Government perspective, we would like to use A.I. to improve productivity and improve government services to enhance the experience of Islanders.

4.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding corporate manslaughter (OQ.31/2025):

Will the Minister detail why Jersey has not introduced specific legislation to regulate corporate manslaughter, particularly given its adoption in other jurisdictions?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

Work began on corporate manslaughter in 2023 to develop a domestic offence broadly in line with the U.K. Government Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007, with improvements based on lessons learned from case law. A set of initial instructions was developed in September 2023 but there were still some outstanding questions, including how to address small jurisdiction issues such as where an offending organisation may be a monopoly service provider or the local arm of a larger organisation headquartered in other jurisdictions. Officers then moved to joint working with legal advisers to address those questions. However, since early 2024, resources have been redirected to meet the commitment of this Government to progress all recommendations of the taskforce on violence against women and girls, which has required me to deprioritise other work, including the development of the corporate manslaughter law.

[10:15]

Therefore, it will not be brought to this Assembly within this term.

4.4.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Does the Minister believe that existing legislation in Jersey sufficiently addresses corporate accountability for fatalities?

Deputy M.L. Le Hegarat:

There is actually other legislation and I can never ... it has gone off the top of my head in relation to what it is called but it is common law. However, that is not really quite as sufficient as a corporate manslaughter law would be because it is very - how can I put it - finite in what it would capture.

4.4.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Minister has said that the work has been deprioritised because of work on the violence against women and girls work. Can she say what legislation has been paused; give the Assembly a list of what legislation has been paused in order to prioritise that work and indeed what other work has been given priority? In other words, a list of the priorities and things that have been deprioritised so we can understand what work is actually underway.

The Bailiff:

Firstly, thank you for the contribution to the fighting fund. Secondly, I am afraid that question really takes us outside the parameters of corporate manslaughter unless it is limited to corporate manslaughter.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I thought that if the answer given raised issues that you could follow up with a question on those.

The Bailiff:

It has to be reasonably tied to the original question otherwise it is not a supplementary question for the original question otherwise one could end up potentially down a rabbit hole. I am not suggesting that in this case. Did you wish to link your question to corporate manslaughter?

Deputy J. Renouf:

No, Sir.

4.4.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

It is very disappointing to hear from the Minister that she has de-prioritised such important work because in the U.K. when it justified the introduction of corporate manslaughter law it was due to create a framework for prosecuting organisations rather than individuals when serious management failures led to fatalities. Why does the Minister believe this does not qualify in Jersey, especially due to recent events?

Deputy M.L. Le Hegarat:

I think the Deputy has actually misquoted what I said. I did not say that it was not important because it is exceptionally important, and I fully understand what she is saying in relation to corporate manslaughter. But of course, corporate manslaughter is not a magic solution to hold people accountable necessarily for deaths. It is directed at a company, not a person, so it can only result in a fine. If that fine is sufficiently large, it can therefore put a company out of business. But it goes no further than current law to directly penalise the guilty person behind any negligent death. Obviously, there can be things that are made in relation to remunerable work in relation to that company, but it does not actually hold an individual to account in those circumstances.

4.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding structural inflationary pressures in Jersey (OQ.30/2025):

In light of the higher living and housing costs in Jersey compared with the United Kingdom, will the Minister state the specific long-term policies, if any, she intends to introduce to address structural inflationary pressures in Jersey?

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

In most economies there will almost always be some degree of inflation and therefore, the term “structural inflationary pressures” is a little confusing. Small amounts of inflation are positive and indeed deflation can be as bad, if not worse for the economy, than high inflation. Comparing jurisdictions is always difficult and must be done with great care. Indeed, currently inflation is lower in Jersey than it is in the U.K. That said, the measurements themselves are often different and therefore comparisons can be misleading. R.P.I. (retail price index) in Jersey is currently 2.5 per cent

and falling. This contrasts well with the U.K. R.P.I., which is currently 3.5 per cent, and the U.K. consumer price index, which is also 2.5 per cent. Both of which are calculated differently from Jersey's R.P.I. Guernsey, as another comparison, is currently 4.6 per cent. That said, we are not complacent about the cost-of-living pressures and the impact of recent high inflation. The Deputy will also know that monetary policy, the key lever to tackle inflation, is not in our control and, in fact, with higher interest rates, are contributing to the cost-of-living pressures for Islanders. This means that fiscal policy and other levers, such as competition, become even more important for a small Island economy. The Ministerial Cost-of-Living Group is tasked with addressing those issues in as strategic a manner as possible. Examples of work that this Government has taken forward include increasing the minimum wage to counter cost-of-living issues, while providing support for productivity, improvements to the competition law and a commitment to keeping Government fees and charges as low as possible.

4.5.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the Minister not agree that the results of, albeit an imperfect comparison with the United Kingdom, but she is right to say R.P.I.X. (retail price index excluding mortgage interest) versus the U.K. consumer prices index, does she not agree that there is a structural problem, because the F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel) warned her of that?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

To the extent that there is a structural problem, it must be due to the fact that we are a small Island that has to import everything. We are importing inflation that arises in other jurisdictions as a consequence of that. As I have just said, there is very little that we can do because we cannot control interest rates and we are subject to interest rates in other jurisdictions. We are seeking to address those as best we can and will continue to do so.

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

To address the high cost of living and high housing costs just mentioned, would the Minister agree with rental stabilisation measures being introduced and if not, why not?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think rent stabilisation measures is moving into another realm and I think they could equally ... while they may be beneficial, they could have many adverse unintended consequences.

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

Although our inflation rate is running at 2.5 per cent, I notice that the cost of the *J.E.P.* (*Jersey Evening Post*) has risen by 20 per cent yesterday. Does the Minister condone such rises?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I cannot possibly comment on the costs of the *J.E.P.*, and I am sure they have to take its own pressures in terms of print and staffing into account as well. I think that you will have to ask the editor that question.

The Bailiff:

Presumably no supplementary questions.

4.5.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the Minister, given the fact that many Islanders, as she has explained very well, are clearly feeling the pinch and feeling the effects of the cost of living, would she be of the view that there is a need to ... not accepting the fact that you cannot do anything about it, would she believe that a wider group of Back-Benchers or Ministers together would be useful in dealing with what is, I think, the problem I hear, the biggest issue that Jersey people are facing, the rising cost of living and the thing that we can do something about, which is the domestic economy? Would she think that we need to

have some more thought and work done on this rather than just relying on simple statements that we cannot do anything about it?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

What I said was that we cannot do anything about things like interest rate because we cannot control monetary policy. Government is doing everything it can to address cost-of-living issues for Islanders, which all the figures tell us that the cost of living ... inflation is falling, and it has fallen quite considerably since its peak in 2022, and even then that was lower than the U.K.. We are doing what we can. The Cost-of-Living Group is considering that closely. I will ask the Ministerial Cost-of-Living Group at the next meeting whether they think there is merit in including more Back-Benchers in that group or taking views of Back-Benchers. But I would just say, as someone who does travel to the U.K. regularly and who watches the news and has been in other countries, we are not alone in facing cost-of-living pressures. Cost of living is as much an issue in the U.K. as it is in very many other jurisdictions worldwide and across Europe. We are doing everything we can to minimise the impact of that on Islanders on low incomes.

4.6 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South of the Minister for Social Security regarding the practices of Employment Tribunal (OQ.19/2025):

Will the Minister undertake to investigate the practices of the Employment Tribunal, in particular whether dates for tribunals are set for when complainants are out of the Island and whether this has caused any problems due to poor internet connection or power sources in the complainants' location?

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

I thank the Deputy for her question. The legislation governing the function of the tribunal for which I hold Ministerial responsibility requires that the tribunal ensures that both parties are treated fairly and that proceedings avoid unnecessary formality and can also respond flexibly as the demand of the case requires. However, the day-to-day operation of the tribunal is and must be a matter for the tribunal itself as an independent judicial body, free from political interference. As such, I am not able to comment on the detailed operational issues, such as the ones the Deputy sets out in her questions. If the Deputy does have any concerns in relation to a specific case, I suggest that she refers them to the Judicial Greffier or to the courts.je website, which details the appropriate complaints process.

4.7 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding evidence that informed the proposed reorganisation of the health service (OQ.25/2025):

Will the Minister provide details of the evidence that informed his proposed reorganisation of the health service, with particular reference to the relationship between the service and Government?

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

The proposed reorganisation of the health service relies on the evidence obtained by talking extensively to a wide range of health professionals, patients, charities and health service providers. Then, in conjunction with my Assistant Ministers, applying a combination of commercial experience and common sense to reach a conclusion. It may be helpful to mention that 2 of the Assistant Ministers are experienced healthcare professionals, and the other has considerable commercial experience. That is the same combined and, I believe, sensible approach that has informed the desire to make the health service more self-sufficient.

The Bailiff:

Does that answer include reference to the relationship between the service and Government, which was part of the question, Minister?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I believe it does in the last sentence, the same combined approach that has informed the desire to make the health service more self-sufficient.

4.7.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

One aspect of the relationship between the services that he is proposing and Government is unclear to me. Can the Minister confirm that there is no intention to run health as an A.L.O.? In other words, that the Health Partnership Board would commission services perhaps or be separate from the Government and therefore be run as an arm's-length organisation?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

No, there is no intention for it to be an arm's-length organisation.

4.7.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Usually, this type of change is accompanied by the report of impact, cost-benefit analysis or study or business case. Has the Minister commissioned a cost-benefit analysis?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

No, I have not.

4.7.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister explain why not?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Because I do not deem that to be necessary. We are just taking the component parts that we have at the moment and reorganising them.

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

My vice-chair actually asked the question I wanted to ask about A.L.O.s. I am still not entirely clear, though, if it is not an A.L.O. and it is not going to be entirely part of government, can the Minister provide some clarity on what type of entity exactly it will be?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Well, under the old system, an awful lot of the affairs of Health were taking place in central Government. It is my opinion that they were not really receiving the right amount of focus. They were being done away from a health setting. I believe some of those decisions are better off made by people specialising in those areas. I would refer particularly to finance. I think we are spending well over £300 million a year. We have now got a finance director appointed who specialises in Health finance, and I think that is to our advantage, having just paid half a million pounds to KPMG to try and sort the finances out. I think going forward, we require that function to be done in a health setting. Similarly, digital health, a number of other areas, procurement and H.R. (human resources), I think that focus needs to be within a health setting.

[10:30]

Ultimately running through Government, but actually all of the day-to-day stuff being taken care of by people who specialise in that area.

4.7.5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

The proposed changes that the Minister is talking about, has the full Council of Ministers seen the changes and agreed with them? If that agreement is in place, was it unanimous?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I keep the Council of Ministers updated on what is going on and I continue to have their support.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Sorry, Sir, I am not sure the Minister fully answered the question. Was the agreement unanimous?

The Bailiff:

Has there been a vote on anything?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

No. As I have said, I keep the Council of Ministers updated as we go. It is a progressive situation and I continue to enjoy, I believe, the full support of the Council of Ministers. I have not heard anybody arguing against what I am doing at any point.

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

Has the Minister found any examples of places where the model he is planning already works and works well?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

No, and I have to confess I have not looked elsewhere. I have just spent quite a lot of time taking a look at what seems to be wrong, and have done my best to put it as straight as I can.

4.7.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Just to follow on from that answer, does that mean that the Minister came to this specific restructure without testing other alternatives? Is this the only one that he came to or were there other ones ... a selection of choices of restructuring of what that could be and he chose this one as the best from a cost-benefit analysis?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

This is the only one. I make the point again, I have not done a cost-benefit analysis. It is basically looking at what is going on, trying to apply a little bit of common sense. We have consulted very widely with probably hundreds of people in a good number of consultation processes and I have to say I cannot recall a single health professional arguing against these essential principles. Perhaps I should have spent a little bit more time looking at other jurisdictions, but there is a job to do and I think the health service requires improvement and we are moving as quickly as we can.

4.7.8 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Could the Minister tell us how the reorganisation will deliver improvements to things like waiting lists, safety and quality of patient care?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

My experience of it in the 12 months that I have been there indicates to me that all the various sections of health provision are too distant from one another and a lot of things fall through the cracks between departments at this point in time. I am putting together a Health Partnership Board where all the key players sit around the table at the required times and make those decisions together. I think decision-making is going to be a lot better and I am going to be looking at digital in a different way, and I will be coming back to the Assembly on that because I think digital connectivity is also going to help. It is basically people talking to each other and connecting with each other. I think we can create a great deal of efficiency that will bring down waiting lists and improve the service, hopefully quite dramatically.

4.7.9 Deputy J. Renouf:

We are talking about a very major reorganisation of health delivery. The Minister has said in a written answer that he is not planning a public consultation. He has confirmed in this session that he has done no cost-benefit analysis. There are no examples of anywhere that has tried this before and no alternatives have been considered. Is the Minister comfortable that he is essentially making us all the subjects of an experiment for which he has no evidence?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I was asked in the initial question about evidence and I said quite clearly that the evidence was obtained by talking extensively to a wide range of health professionals, patients, charities and health service providers. These are the people that are providing the care. They are all in agreement. Deputy Renouf may choose not to be in agreement, but that is a matter for him. I tried to explain this at the last Assembly. I am trying again, I seem to be failing. I am very happy to entertain the Deputy to a private meeting to go through it in more detail if he still has concerns.

4.8 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for External Relations regarding the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Global Tax Deal (OQ.18/2025):

Will the Minister advise how the Government is responding to the statement by President Trump that the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Global Tax Deal has "no force or effect within the United States" and whether, in his assessment, it will affect companies registered for tax in Jersey whose business is with the United States of America and the impact, if any, on tax receipts in Jersey?

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

The U.S. (United States) President's executive orders are directed at taxes in other jurisdictions which are characterised as being discriminatory and extraterritorial. Informed U.S. and global commentators interpret this to mean digital services taxes and the Pillar Two under-tax profit rule. Jersey's multinational corporate income tax was specifically designed to support U.S. groups given the mismatch between the U.S. tax system and the O.E.C.D. Pillar Two rules. It is a domestic Jersey tax on Jersey profits, which is not discriminatory or extraterritorial. As with other jurisdictions globally, we await the publication of further information about the US Treasury's review in 60 days' time, which will provide a better understanding of their focus. But the Government remains confident that our Pillar Two framework is appropriate.

4.8.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Could the Minister give some detail to what assessment he has made about the potential for any regulatory change?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I wonder if the Deputy could just give a little bit more clarity?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

We are actually trading with America and Europe and I wondered whether the Minister could explain how we might balance those and whether there will be any changes to our current regulatory arrangements?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I am quite happy to do that. It is not directly connected with Pillar Two, but the Deputy raises an interesting point whereby we are currently used, particularly in the fund sector and increasingly, and we hope increasingly, in the private wealth sector for American funds who are investing globally, some of those in the E.U. (European Union). Although it is not the Pillar Two work because that is dealt with by the O.E.C.D., the other executive order about American trade first and what we see in regard to tariffs may have implications in due course that we will have to understand and manage when again there is further clarity on that.

4.8.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Is the Minister concerned that behind President Trump's specific executive orders lies a wider desire to repatriate business to the United States to enhance U.S. tax revenues? For example, the Republic of Ireland has highlighted the danger that some of their large American corporations may be

persuaded to repatriate to the United States. Is he worried about that wider point that may arise as a result of the continuing development of President Trump's thinking beyond the executive orders?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Of course, we know that the new President made great play about putting America first and delivering on his policy aims, and we have seen that playing out very publicly in regard to his near neighbours over the last 24, 48 hours. The reality is that we in Jersey must hold our nerve, because in times of global uncertainty we are a safe harbour and we can be used to garner investments and offer security and stability right at the core of our economy and facilitate those who want to invest globally, be they European businesses, be they U.S. businesses or be they global businesses. We actually can help facilitate some of the policy aims of President Trump by offering access into Europe and more globally, and offering certainty, stability and a safe harbour.

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

I am mindful of the fact that the U.S.A. never actually signed up to the O.E.C.D. Pillar One in the first place. They had, as the Minister will know, the G.I.L.T.I., (Global Intangible Low-Taxed Income) version. Jersey did not seek to try and get double tax in the arrangements that were debated before this Assembly. Still, subject to all of those positive caveats, does the Minister have any concern about the likelihood of the profits from the revenues from Pillar Two actually being remitted and collected by Jersey, and I say that because of the importance of funding the hospital if we do not get it. Is he happy that we can still rely upon that income in this global world?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy is absolutely right of course. The U.S. Government did not change its tax code to deal with the O.E.C.D. global tax initiative. Rather it felt initially that its G.I.L.T.I. was just going to be accepted as compliant. That was not the case and that is why we see the situation that we are in now. It does not come as a surprise to us here in Jersey because we have engaged with both Republicans and Democrats in the House over the course of the last couple of years so we knew what Democrats were thinking. There will be more certainty when U.S. Treasury have published their report in 60 days. We remain confident about our overall framework but we have to be careful that we are equally not over confident. We gave a very cautious projection about our base case. We know that there are only 1,400 in-scope companies anyway. There is a small subset of U.S. companies. Until we understand what the U.S. Treasury says in its report and how the O.E.C.D. responds to it, we remain confident. But there could in due course be implications, and that is why for us it is important that we maintain those relationships in Washington, we maintain those relationships in the O.E.C.D. But when it comes to Pillar Two, as the Deputy next to him asked about how we straddle those 2 things, we will need to continue to do that.

4.8.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not want to take the fire away from my colleague Deputy here, who is absolutely right in answering the question. Could I say: is the Assistant Minister still content then, in this global tectonic changing world of needing to go for growth and getting business to Jersey, is he still going to stand by the fact that Jersey Finance's grant was cut?

The Bailiff:

I am not sure that stays within the parameters of the question.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It does, Sir, because it is about going and selling Jersey, is it not?

The Bailiff:

In your view it does.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It is fundamental.

The Bailiff:

Well, it may be fundamental to something but it is not fundamental to the question, Deputy, and I am afraid I do not allow it.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I think the question about remaining competitive and being a safe harbour and playing to our strengths of certainty and stability in a ...

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Can I raise a point of order?

The Bailiff:

You may raise a point of order, Deputy, yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If the question has not been ruled in order, is the answer allowed to be given?

The Bailiff:

My own view is no, it is not, and I was about to come to say that. It may be there are opportunities to say the sorts of things that need to be or wish to be said either here or in another place, but I have ruled the question out of order, yes.

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

In fact, Deputy Ozouf asked my question regarding the fact that the Council of Ministers' budget referenced Pillar Two tax receipts and paying towards the hospital as part of that. Though the Minister has said that the policy at the moment is wait and see, will the Minister and the Council of Ministers be discussing alternatives on how to fund the hospital if the Pillar Two tax receipts are not able to be retrieved from 2026?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

As I said, U.S. potentially affected companies ... although we will not know until the U.S. Treasury publishes its report what its recommendations are to the O.E.C.D. around rule or order and, therefore, what the O.E.C.D.'s response will be about those requested or suggested changes. So despite it being a small subset of a small subset anyway, we remind ourselves that we were very, very cautious in our base-case analysis that went into the Budget, just over £50 million coming in from Pillar Two, so we reduced that down by the subset. In regard to the hospital, the allocation from that money was allocation to provide the interest on the funding of the hospital, not the funding directly.

[10:45]

So we will continue to, as I say, work with our partners. We remain confident at this point in time, but it is a highly uncertain world in which we live. We believe that we can continue to win business and, therefore, mitigate any downside or detrimental effects that might come in due course.

4.8.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I would like to understand from the Minister and from his answer just then whether Jersey will join other partners in ensuring that Pillar Two is kept to the agreement of what it should be in ensuring that there is fairer taxation around the world and if Jersey will ensure that they will keep that message as they go forward in negotiations of the O.E.C.D.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

So the Jersey Government will always put - be careful how I assign this - the people of Jersey first, and I think that is exactly what Members of this Assembly and Islanders would expect. By doing so

we want to remain competitive and be attractive to business. At the same time, of course, we engage with international fora to make sure that we can play our part. The U.S., the main funder of the O.E.C.D., has through its new President said that it withdraws from this particular tax agenda. We have seen overnight it also withdrawing from the U.N. (United Nations) tax agenda. So that is not surprising. We will continue to engage. We will continue to make our case so that both the U.S. and the O.E.C.D. understand the nuances and the positivity of what Jersey offers as a centre for global investment around the world. That is the position that we will continue to take.

4.8.7 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I thank the Minister for his response on that. I wonder if he could expand more on the statement he has just made about how he will put Jersey first and how the position that is currently being stated from the U.S. President will affect plans to grow and expand financial service provisions in the future.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I thank the Deputy for that question. It is incredibly important, as I have said, that we continue to remain engaged, both in the U.S. at Washington and at the O.E.C.D. in Paris and with wider colleagues. We believe that our framework for Pillar Two stands us in good stead but we are not complacent, which is why at the end of last year, the end of November or probably just in December, I reallocated some of my departmental budget to Jersey Finance, roughly the amount that the other Deputy was questioning me about, in order to absolutely focus on growing our presence in the U.S. in order that we are and remain in a good place. I cannot overemphasise in times of global turmoil that we are seeing all around us, whether that is in Europe or it is emanating from the U.S.A., we are a safe harbour. We offer stability. We offer certainty for investors and we must make that noise loud and clear from the rooftops. We will put Jersey first. We will maintain Jersey as a competitive environment that investors can choose with confidence.

4.9 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Commercial Services Procurement systems (OQ.27/2025):

Will the Minister advise what work, if any, is being undertaken to review and update the scoring systems and methodologies used by Commercial Services in procurement to ensure the recognition of the value of procuring locally and of building talent and skills in the Island and, if this review is not being undertaken, why not?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question. The Treasury Business Plan for 2025 includes a refresh project of procurement in Commercial Services, which will include consideration of ways to measure and improve current procurement practice. This will include the scoring systems and methodologies which form part of a selection and award process with a view to making the process more proportionate and to support opportunities for local businesses. There is already a requirement for social value commitments to be included in all tenders with a value of over £100,000, with a 10 per cent weighting of the evaluation score for social value commitments. Examples of where this has provided benefit to the Island in 2024 include the creation of 7 apprenticeships, 8 prison leavers having been employed on projects, the creation of 27 new roles for local people with 6 people hired through Back to Work and 2 people hired through the Jersey Employment Trust, 170 young people engaged with live government projects, and 30 work experience placements filled. So this Government absolutely understands the need to ensure that we are supporting local businesses and that we are helping to support and develop local skills and talent.

4.9.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

In some recent projects I have seen, no scoring was given to the ability to attend meetings in person. No scoring was given to the knowledge of local government or the processes essential to that procurement. Scoring was rated on corporate rate card per hour and not the total proposed project spend, and technical scoring was inherently weighted to larger organisations who could demonstrate

resources aligned to single skills, despite the risks of subcontracting. Does the Minister consider that the knowledge of the local context and the ability to deliver services in person has any value and, if so, why are these not being scored in so many procurements?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not know what procurements the Deputy is talking about, nor why he would have seen them, so I cannot comment on those specific cases. We have to accept that there are some skills we simply cannot source on-Island. There are some things we simply cannot provide locally. Often when there are off-Island suppliers they are partnering with local businesses. An example of that: a local provider has recently expanded capability and developed junior resources in Jersey to support SAP systems working closely with Digital Services. That company, via involvement in Project Trident, has sponsored 13 individuals over 3 years. Current engagements have led to continued collaboration with Highlands College, leading to the sponsorship of 2 local individuals and SAP training leading to employment. So, by virtue of that partnership a local business has clearly developed resources and skills to support SAP by virtue of working with an off-Island partner. We do, however, have to look at who is capable of delivering the services we need, but the involvement of local businesses is very much at the forefront of our continuing efforts.

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

In the recent Public Accounts Committee review on the Government procurement process, which I am part of, representatives of local businesses raised strong concerns about the complexity, lack of communication and inflexibility of the procurement process, not being aware how far they were to be selected. How is the Minister intending to solve these issues to make sure that the procurement process better values local sourcing and uses any time, when possible, the local talent?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Deputy for the question. I do not believe I have seen a report from the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) on that piece of work so I do not know exactly what was said. But I do accept that local businesses have expressed some concerns about how the project works. We are continuing to try to work on that. Part of the new process will look at how we engage in a better way with local businesses. For example, meet the buyer events will be undertaken to encourage feedback on the proposed changes as these are developed, and that will be part of our review. I think we also have to just have some degree of context. I think the businesses that P.A.C. saw ... I do not know how many businesses those were, but the Government of Jersey has some 2,500 suppliers. I have asked for breakdowns of where those suppliers are based. It can be difficult to assess, but we absolutely have heard that there are local businesses who struggle with the process and we are looking to improve our processes.

4.9.3 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Following the Minister for Treasury and Resources' response, I would like to emphasise that the Public Accounts Committee has seen a representative from the Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of Directors and the Construction Council, all 3 organisations representing their businesses. Committee evidence is that the business owners feel unable to raise these concerns with the Government for fear of being rejected from the future tenders. They raised it on behalf of the organisation. What is the Minister going to do to encourage and to have proper communication, that the businesses will not experience fear to give feedback to the Government?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I just find it astonishing that in Jersey people are supposedly afraid of talking to Government. Perhaps they are, but I just find it astonishing that people think they cannot talk to Government for fear of being excluded. We have to remember that procurement decisions are not made by Treasury in the great main. Treasury set processes and policies and procedures and those are then effected within departments across government. Clearly, we have issues to make sure that those processes are

effected properly, and while I accept that the Chamber, I.O.D. (Institute of Directors) and the Construction Council will have come forward, we do not necessarily know of their total membership how many businesses. There may be a small number of businesses out of the 2,500 are not having a positive experience. I hear that and we will seek to address that as best we can. But really, if people do not come forward and tell us about their experiences we cannot fix the problem. I am sure there are lots of sources that they can come forward and tell us where there is a problem and we will listen.

4.9.4 Deputy I. Gardiner:

The evidence of the survey that the Chamber of Commerce conducted, 79 per cent of the businesses are not satisfied with the Government procurement processes. Would the Minister personally find a way to engage with the organisation and to ensure that they can speak openly and not have consequences of them feeding back to Government direct?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, indeed. The Chamber of Commerce shared those survey results with me at the end of last week. She says 79 per cent were not satisfied. My recollection is that there were 43 businesses replied to that survey and of those 43 some did express themselves to be either satisfied or not engaged in the procurement process. Not all of them completed every question. So again I am coming back to the issue of context. We have 2,500 suppliers. It is absolutely right that the system works for everybody, but we appear to be talking about a relatively small number of suppliers who are having issues with the procurement process. There may be a great range of reasons why that is, but we will be looking into that. I have gone back to Chamber and said we are very happy to work with them to understand what the issues are and to try to resolve them so that local businesses can engage properly in our procurement processes.

4.9.5 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

It has been interesting listening to these exchanges because what it seems to me is that there is a set of policies that the Government has and then there is the execution of the policies. From Deputy Alex Curtis we heard very clear demonstration or example that he has heard of what seems to be where the policies are not being applied properly. Does the Minister think that the problems here lie with the policies or with the execution of the policies?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I say, without having seen the paperwork that Deputy Curtis has seen, I cannot comment on that. Much will depend on the nature of the procurement, the nature of the supply. If you are looking for ... it really depends on the nature of the supply and whether those are available locally. Value, there are various criteria that are involved in a procurement process and there will be issues. I have no doubt there will be issues in a small jurisdiction. You have to think of your own ... we all, I am sure, have the same thought process. If you are wanting some decorating done, do you go and get 3 quotes from 3 completely independent people or do you go to the person who did the decorating for you last time and did a great job? We have to address personal relationships in small islands and if somebody has gone to someone previously who has done a very good job, it may be they are more inclined to go back to that person the next time they need a similar job done. That is speculation, I emphasise. We will continue to work with departments to make sure that procedures are rolled out and are operated effectively, but we are doing a project to try and make this as good as it can be.

4.9.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

Implementation is often a question of leadership and it could be that a strong lead from the Minister and from the Government in instructing departments to ensure that they follow the processes in place and do not use, for example, devices of the type that Deputy Curtis mentioned, where you can surreptitiously exclude organisations by changing criteria and so on to the advantage of some others.

[11:00]

So would the Minister agree that she could do more perhaps to enforce those rules that are already in place and encourage people to follow them?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do somewhat object. I am sure he did not mean offence, but I do somewhat object to the use of the word “surreptitious” because that suggests a degree of bad faith in the procurement process and, indeed, manipulation of the process to make sure that some people get work instead of others. I would certainly hope that is not the case and it would be ... I think if people were doing that we would have to look at that very, very seriously. Leadership does come from the central team. They are there to provide advice and support. The accountable officers have their part to play. Ministers have a part to play in their own departments. Accountable officers in those departments have to feed that message down to everybody doing procurement in their own teams, that procedures must be followed properly and that they should not be simply giving jobs to their next door neighbour, for example. Procedures have to work. That message I think is very clear, will be coming very clear from the centre, and we will continue to emphasise that, but we need everybody in Government involved in procurement to play their part and make sure that those procedures are working fairly.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Bailhache.

Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:

I think my question would be repetitious.

4.9.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Minister asked why I have seen procurements. I have seen them because industries are tired of seeing the procurement system that scores ... well, it sees ...

The Bailiff:

No, could you ask a question, not respond to a question posed by the Minister?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I can, Sir, yes. Of course. Does the Minister seriously consider 10 per cent weighting on social value to be any more than a fig leaf and will she commit to examining the scoring methodologies used and ensure that common sense metrics such as those I gave are considered?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not believe they are a fig leaf. I think they are one of the best mechanisms we have to make sure that we are getting social value out of our procurement process and that local businesses are very much involved. I will give you one further example of that. In the digital sector, the development of a system and support for Pillar Two that we have just been discussing is aimed at on-Island capability and inclusion as a key requirement. A seminar of over 40 local on-Island suppliers was held just towards the end of January to tell them about what we are looking for, to allow people to prepare for that procurement, and further engagement with suppliers will be planned as part of that procurement activity. We are doing everything we can to make sure that we get the best people in Jersey. Of course, we do have to recognise that while we want local people we must also get the right degree of skills and value for money and those also have to be at the forefront of our minds.

The Bailiff:

Did you wish to raise the default on Deputy Moore?

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

The default is raised on Deputy Moore.

4.10 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Housing regarding processes that ensure social housing providers set rents at 80 per cent of free market levels (OQ.24/2025):

Will the Minister explain the processes and procedures that ensure social housing providers set rents of 80 per cent of free market levels and advise what independent checks are made to verify that this policy is adhered to?

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

Just by way of brief correction, the rule is not that social housing providers set rents at 80 per cent of market levels. It is that they set them up to 80 per cent of market levels and they are more than welcome to charge less than that. There are many tenancies in the social sector that charge less than that. For the policy of setting rents at up to 80 per cent of market levels, there is not a government-imposed system on the social housing providers to calculate that. They have their own. By way of example, Andium uses the services of estate agencies and surveyors to inspect a significant sample of their stock throughout the year. They establish what market rent would be across 45 archetypes of homes, which they use to extrapolate across the whole of their stock. Andium's asset management team use that to then establish what an 80 per cent target rent would be and check against what they have in existing tenancies to make sure that it is consistent. If any evidence is presented to me that suggests that processes are not being applied properly, I would take that up directly with the social housing provider as it is the Minister for Housing that sets that rent policy. We do not have a fully independent process for checking that. That would be the role of a social housing regulator, but this Assembly in the past has not supported establishing one.

The Bailiff:

Supplemental question, Deputy Warr?

4.10.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I have, Sir, to an extent in that the Minister has kind of answered to an extent the ... I will give this a go and then maybe he can comment on this. I have been contacted by a constituent who is currently resident in a 3-bedroom home provided by a social housing provider. They currently pay £2,160 per month. A leading property agent advises that depending upon location current rents for 3-bed properties range between £1,800 and £2,200. This is easily double checked. Can the Minister explain why this tenant might find themselves in this situation and would he be willing to intervene to ensure this family pays a rent in line with social housing policy?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If this is the person who I think it is, it is someone who I have met on multiple occasions and I have explained to this person that I am simply not convinced that Andium have not followed their processes accordingly for that property. If I can be physically given some evidence that suggests otherwise, then I certainly would take it up, but from what I have seen I am not convinced that that is the case.

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

I am sorry that I cannot ask the question in detail because the States website says that it is currently undergoing maintenance so I cannot get the house price index up. But from memory, the house price index shows quite rightly both purchased houses and rentals. Does the Minister not agree that the situation in relation to rent levels has got so high in recent years because of a lack of supply and other matters that he is probably needing to review the maximum rate of 80 because it is simply not affordable? Does he not agree?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes, I do agree and I am always honest about this point in that I think that benchmarking social housing rents against market levels is not the best calculation system for social housing rents because it does not take into account the affordability for the tenant. If the point is to provide affordability for the tenant, you would think that another benchmark might be more appropriate. But we are where we are. That is the system that the Assembly adopted 10 years ago when establishing Andium Homes, and if we were to move to a different system that would require a significant look at Andium's financial model, including the financial return that Andium provides to Treasury. I have made clear that I am absolutely in favour of examining that, but I will say that there is at the moment no foundational document that says what our social housing rents policy is because it is split over different documents, different Ministerial Decisions, different States decisions. I am in the process of trying to consolidate that all into one official foundational policy document and from there that would provide a basis for further alterations to the policy in future.

4.10.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the Minister understand the frustration that a Back-Bencher such as myself has when he says: "Oh, that is the problem. I am going to regulate it and I cannot do anything about it"? Would he agree that he needs to get in front of the problem and deal with the supply side issue rather than trying to basically deal with the proverbial bolted horse?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am pleased to say that I have not the faintest clue what the Deputy is talking about. Andium is on site delivering hundreds of homes. They are a significant provider for supply in our rental housing market. He asked about getting in front of the issue. I voted against the social housing rents policy 10 years ago when it was brought forward. He voted in favour of it. I would absolutely like to see it changed but that will require funding and every time I or a member of my party proposes changing funding mechanisms the majority of the Assembly vote against it. So we have to deal in the real world and not where I would prefer things to be.

4.10.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can I confirm that the calculation that is used to calculate rents for social housing would enable rents to fall should rental prices go down, as I believe they have done? Is he able to comment on whether this process is currently going on?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It would fall for new tenancies, but the process for existing tenancies if there is a change in market conditions is that the rent itself would not be reduced but it would be frozen until the effect of inflation would be that it would hit the 80 per cent point. That I think was established when the policy was changed from 90 per cent market rate to 80 per cent market rate, so there are lots of tenants in Andium properties at the moment who are in the middle of a multiyear rent freeze.

4.10.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Is he aware that any social housing providers have adjusted their 80 per cent rule for new tenants in line with what would be expected, given that rents have been reported to have fallen? Can he confirm that?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No, I cannot because ... well, firstly, because they have a consistent, ongoing process of analysing their stock and engaging with private sector advisers on that, I am presuming that it is already being done. I do not have any reason to doubt that system but, as I said, if there is any evidence of cases of it not being applied, then I would go by that. Let us just remind ourselves that we do not have exactly accurate rental data for how rents are being charged in the market. We have the house price index, but that is only for advertised rents, not actual rents. We have a complete gap of data at that

point, so there is a degree to which some of this is done in the dark based on the best advice that can be gotten.

4.10.6 Deputy D.J. Warr:

When does the Minister anticipate building the database for calculating rents?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

As part of the proposed changes to the Residential Tenancy Law, I will be proposing that a requirement is put forward for landlords when they apply for their rented dwellings licence to fill in one extra box that just says: "This is the actual rent that we charge." That I think is the least bureaucratic way of possibly doing that. If that is adopted, as I hope it is, it would take a little while from that point to then start getting the full picture because we would only get that when they renew their licence. That is a 2-year licence so it would take a little while.

4.11 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding changes to the contracts for the sale of Government mapping data (OQ.28/2025):

Further to Oral Question 100/2024, will the Minister advise whether any changes to the contracts for the sale of Government mapping data have occurred since January 2024, and when the contracts for the 2 current providers expire?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question. I can inform Members that the Geospatial Board agreed on 7th March 2024 to a further 12-month contract extension in line with clause 50.1 of the current business partner mapping contracts. The contracts for the 2 current partners have, therefore, now been extended to expire on 31st October 2026. Ideally, I would have been able to provide this information to the Deputy when he asked his question in May 2024. I should also inform the Deputy and Members that Ministerial responsibility for this subject is due to be transferred back to the Minister for the Environment in the coming weeks.

4.11.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Will the Minister, before he hands that power back, commit from his side not to renew such contracts again until a broader review and consultation of the commercial model for data is agreed, as we discussed back in 2024?

The Connétable of St. John:

The contract does not allow for it to be extended any further. So it has been extended to the furthest point back in March and cannot be further extended.

4.11.2 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

Does the Minister think that the charges made for accessing this public data are fair and reasonable?

The Connétable of St. John:

I think I have answered this question before. The mapping information is available free of charge for the public online and at the library, but there are commercial benefits to using this and I think before any new contract is entered into the whole framework will need to be reviewed.

4.11.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Just listening to the careful wording of the Minister there, can he confirm that the renewal of this contract happened without his notice, without him being involved?

The Connétable of St. John:

That is the case.

4.11.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

Therefore, when he gave the answer earlier, last year, to Deputy Curtis on this matter, was he not informed at that point by officers that the contract had been renewed?

The Connétable of St. John:

I can only give the information that is presented to me and, as I said in my initial answer, I would have much preferred to have been able to give the information to the Deputy when he first asked me in May 2024.

[11:15]

4.11.5 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could the Minister advise whether the Minister for the Environment will be taking responsibility for the officers in the geospatial team who will obviously manage a future contract or whether it is just the Ministerial responsibility?

The Connétable of St. John:

The detail is yet to be worked out and that is why the transfer has been slightly delayed.

4.12 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding food supplies (OQ.20/2025):

Following recent occasions when food supplies in shops have been low, will the Minister explain the reasons behind this shortage and advise what steps, if any, are being taken to ensure that there is consistent and regular supply of food in the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

All the recent cancellations have been due to seasonal bad weather. The winter season can make sailing cancellations more likely, as I am sure we all know. However, as of 31st January there were, in fact, fewer sailing cancellations this year than across January 2024. In events such as these, consumers sometimes may notice depleted stocks of certain fresh food items in some retail stores. Whereas this is often a visible indicator of a certain level of sailing disruption, retailers are able to maintain good levels of dry and ambient food products for longer periods. We have seen in recent years that the Jersey supply chain is resilient, particularly during COVID and through Brexit, but Government closely monitors risks and any impact to its operation. In collaboration with the emergency planning teams the Government and Ports of Jersey maintain a number of functions to monitor and secure Jersey's supply chain.

4.12.1 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

Can the Minister outline what the trigger points are for any emergency supplies that would come into the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That would depend on which emergency supplies the Deputy is referring to.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I think in this instance we are referring to a lack of food supplies within our supermarkets.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am not aware of those trigger points. What I know is that my department and, as I said, even the emergency planning team maintain good and close links with supermarkets to understand their stock levels and when there is a depletion of stock to an extent, then they would act on that. During the whole of COVID and during disruption caused by Brexit, at no point was it needed that we had emergency food supplies delivered to the Island. That was never necessary. I can certainly seek to find out if there are particular trigger levels, but I am not sure that there would be.

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

A fish processing facility for freezing fish and shellfish could assist in ensuring food security in Jersey. Is the Minister informed of the progress of this processing facility, which was also a priority in the Marine Spatial Plan, and if so can he update us on the progress?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am unaware that any fish processing facility appears in the Marine Spatial Plan. That would not seem an appropriate place for such a facility to appear. There is, as I understand it, at the moment no work ongoing on a fish processing facility.

4.12.3 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I believe that it is in the Marine Spatial Plan, but this has been a matter in discussion since 2021. So could the Minister explain why he is not up to date on any progress on this matter?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

To date I have received no business plan. I have received no proposition from anyone in the marine resources sector with regard to a fish processing plant. All I have heard is people mention that it could be a good idea to have one, and I have said to the marine industry provide me with a business plan and show me how that will operate and then we can talk about it. But to date I have not received any of that information.

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

Given this growing and ongoing concern over empty shelves when ferries cannot deliver for any reason, which strategic recommendations from the recent food system resilience report commissioned by his department to Hypha will the Minister prioritise to address this issue long term and ensure a more reliable food supply?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am sorry, Sir, I am going to have to ask the Deputy to repeat the question.

The Bailiff:

Yes, Deputy, could you say that again? I absolutely did not hear almost any of it.

Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

No worries. Thank you. Given this growing and ongoing concern over empty shelves when ferries cannot deliver for any reason, which strategic recommendations from the recent food system resilience report commissioned by his department to Hypha will the Minister prioritise to address this issue long term and ensure a more reliable food supply?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The report that the Deputy mentions was commissioned by Farm Jersey, and I could not state which strategic recommendations from that report are appropriate for this.

4.12.5 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

If the Minister had to choose one key action to reduce our reliance on the ferry for a consistent food supply that he could start implementing now, what would that be?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

One key action is to have a much more reliable ferry service. Indeed, the new ferry service that we will see come into operation at the end of March will be providing greater lane meterage, which will enable faster reduction in backlogs. Obviously, because it is a Jersey-only service, those vessels will have greater space on them so we should be able to see any backlogs being reduced much more quickly.

4.12.6 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

I thank the Minister for his initial answer. I really feel that the answer of the Minister saying the food supply is robust is not the case day to day. So is it fair to say that the Minister is relying on the new boat coming in March with the new contract to improve considerably the food safety of the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Food security is of the utmost importance to me and my department. There has been no evidence to date of our supply chain resilience being in any way endangered. It is life on an island. It is the case that there are times when supplies are disrupted. We live on a small Island in the sea. That is a reality of life here. But to date - and I spoke to a big supermarket retailer recently - yes, supplies get run down but they do not run out. We live in a just-in-time society where food is expected to be delivered at all times but, living on an Island, that is difficult. But to date there has been no problem with food security.

4.13 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding registered or licensed workers (OQ.34/2025):

Will the Minister state the total number of individuals working in the Island broken down by registered or licensed status for each of the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 and detail the total amount of revenue generated by the issuance of licences and whether the revenue has been ring-fenced for Skills Jersey?

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

As at December 2022 there were 5,240 registered roles. As at December 2023 there were 5,890 registered roles. The December 2024 figures have not yet been published, but as at June 2024 the total registered roles was 6,170. In 2022 the registered fees income was £329,600. In 2023 registered licences fees total was £342,658, and in 2024 the total was £356,527.50. Skills Jersey receives a guaranteed amount each year of £300,000 from the income received from registered fees. The publicly available labour market report published by Stats Jersey report on this data in June and December each year.

4.13.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

My question to the Minister is an attempt really to demonstrate the level of what is effectively a stealth tax being levied on local businesses by government departments. Of course, add charges which are applied by J.F.S.C. (Jersey Financial Services Commission), J.O.I.C. (Jersey Office of the Information Commissioner), places of refreshment alcohol licence, et cetera. The consistent theme in all of these are charges made by Government. If the Chief Minister had a magic wand - I am sure he wishes he had one on occasions - which charges does he believe could be removed tomorrow and give some solace to local businesses?

The Bailiff:

That does somewhat stretch outside the ambit of the question. You may have intended a result, Deputy, but you have asked about the particular number of individuals and money raised under a particular regime and system and I am not sure, I am afraid, that that falls to be answered, if I can say so. If you wish to rephrase it in some manner, but I do not think you can stretch into all other areas.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

How would the Chief Minister look to ... apologies, I will just get my brain working here.

The Bailiff:

That is quite all right. Take as long as you need. [Laughter]

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Thank you. Lunchtime? What strategy could the Chief Minister employ to reduce the cost of business that is driven by government charges?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Well, we want to keep government charges to business as low as possible. In relation to the charge for registered staff, that was introduced in 2018, approved by the States Assembly, to deliver us an income to put towards Skills Jersey, as is happening now. It was considered during the discussions in relation to providing support on the journey to a new minimum wage that this fee be reduced, but it was decided to keep that going and continue to support the provision of skills. That is perhaps one area for consideration: do we think it is worth charging employers for registered fees, because if we did not we would not be able to use that money into skills. So there is a method and a reason for why we do it, but of course that can be open for debate at any time. I think it is up to Government ... a lot of these fees are based upon a cost recovery calculation. Where we are not using the money to put into something like skills, we look to recover costs, so I suppose the best strategy is for Government to be as lean and productive as possible so the fees we charge to businesses can remain as low as possible. We have also capped increases on Government fees and charges at 2.5 per cent to help in the battle against inflation in our own small way.

The Bailiff:

I might say, Deputy Warr, of course, the Chief Minister will be asked questions and if you wish to move in that direction it would be open to you to do so.

4.14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding amend the Freedom of Information (Jersey) Law 2011 (OQ.26/2025):

Following recent comments from the Deputy Chief Minister to the media on this matter, will the Chief Minister detail what plans, if any, there are to amend the Freedom of Information (Jersey) Law 2011?

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

There are currently no firm plans to amend the law, but the Government would like to review the law to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Ministers have, therefore, asked officials to consider some options and recommendations. It is now more than 10 years since the law was introduced and, as in other jurisdictions, I think there is an opportunity to review, look at the lessons learned and potentially make improvements to the law. Ministers are conscious that F.O.I. (freedom of information) requests now cost in excess of £1 million a year and that the volume of requests has increased considerably, now exceeding 1,000 requests a year. A reasonably small number of requesters make up around 50 per cent of the 1,000 requests we are receiving per annum, but of course we do not want to restrict provision to freedom of information; quite the opposite. I think the Deputy Chief Minister raised one of the things we would like to do is make information more available, more readily available to the public, to perhaps reduce the necessity or the need for a freedom of information request.

4.14.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can the Chief Minister give us a little more detail on this review that he is proposing? Who is leading the review? Does it have a terms of reference? When will it be expected to report?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I can provide terms of reference to the ... I cannot recite them right now. The review is being led by the Cabinet Office and it is expected to report later this year, but I will tie down those details and let Members know once we have agreed internally the parameters and the timescales.

[11:30]

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

The Chief Minister mentioned an aspiration to make data more open. Can the Chief Minister give any examples of where a freedom of information request has led to the continued and automated publication of the data requested?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am sure there has. I could not list any examples right now, but it is a good question and I think it is valid. Because the information we give out under F.O.I. requests, that data will be important in guiding how we might make improvements and what information we make more readily available.

4.14.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Does the Chief Minister agree that as part of any review understanding how many times the same data is repeatedly published versus the opportunity to publish it open by default as mentioned should be a key part of that review and that the Minister should look to implement more open data prior to looking to cost cut by reducing access to data?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, absolutely. We do need to learn from what has happened over the past 10 years, all sorts of lessons, both positive and negative. So I would agree with that.

4.14.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

There is a long outstanding action from the Government to extend freedom of information to arm's length organisations. How will this action progress forward or will it also go back now to the review?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That will be part of the review of the legislation because we would have to change the legislation if we were to extend that. We are currently developing proposals, as requested, to extend law to A.L.O.s in a phased manner alongside strengthened commercial exemptions. As part of this, officials may also come back to the Council of Ministers with other suggestions for improving the law. All that is yet to be decided, but it is work in progress.

4.14.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I welcome that freedom of information to extend to A.L.O.s is in progress. Would the Chief Minister give a bit more detail what "phased approach" means?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

A phased approach broadly means we would, depending on what the proposals are and what we decide to accept and how we decide to implement them, could mean ... it is difficult to say exactly what it means without knowing what the detailed proposals are, but it broadly means that rather than bring everything all at once we will bring it in in a phased and timely manner to allow the organisations that it impacts upon to deal with it appropriately.

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

Deputy Alex Curtis asked a question about availability of more data. I was wondering whether the Chief Minister could maybe explain a bit more about what he means by the Government being more open so that hopefully that will then reduce the amount of freedom of information requests that were needed. But what kind of actions does that entail when he says about openness and what kind of instructions would he be giving his civil servants to be more open?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Initially, that looks at the information we gather from government functions and using our I.T. platforms to make that information public. As Deputy Curtis pointed to, we can look, we can get a theme from previous freedom of information acts to look at specifically areas and requests where we get repeated information from difficult ... off the top of my head, but there are facts and figures and

statistics that we have that we do not publish that perhaps we could do. All of that will help, of course, to promote the democratic principles that the Government want to continue to promote.

4.14.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I believe many times those that use the freedom of information tool is because they may have tried to begin with to get the information from civil servants but they have been told that they are unable to disclose that information. Therefore, could the Minister give assurance to Jersey citizens that when they are phoning up for that kind of information from now on that they will have much more access to that and not have to do freedom of information requests?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Well, of course it depends what is being asked for, how commercially sensitive it is, but the aim is to make more information public to reduce the requirement for a freedom of information request. I cannot say exactly what that looks like, but the aim is to be more transparent, to provide more information, to make more information readily available, to potentially extend some freedom of information to arm's length organisations while at the same time protecting the commerciality of some of those organisations. That is all the work in progress, but I want to stress that the aim is to do this more productively, to make information more readily and more easily available.

4.14.8 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think the thing about freedom of information is that it is very easy to champion in principle but harder in practice. The Deputy Chief Minister was quoted as saying that people should just pick up the phone and ask government departments for what they need, the issue being that the Freedom of Information Act sits there as a backstop to when those requests are turned down. Does he agree that that backstop is very, very important and the independent oversight that comes from the Information Commissioner of that law is the thing that means that there can be independent arbitration of whether or not something is in the public interest or not?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would think so. Obviously, it can depend upon ... I certainly agree with that principle wholeheartedly, yes.

4.15 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding PFAS contamination in Jersey's water (OQ.32/2025):

Will the Minister outline what specific actions, if any, are being implemented to reduce P.F.A.S. (perfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in Jersey's water and environment and provide a timeline for achieving measurable progress in addressing this pressing issue, and if no actions are being implemented, why not?

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):

Can I start right off at the beginning by saying that I am committed to ensuring the safety and quality of our water supply and mitigating the effects of P.F.A.S. to protect public health and our unique Island environment. In conjunction with the Minister for Health and Social Services, I am taking action and have done so most recently by putting together and prioritising a multidepartment water quality and safety programme that consolidates various projects into a single governance structure and provides a complete and co-ordinated response to P.F.A.S. concerns. This programme involves many officers and resources and they are focused on providing information to the public and delivering the results of research on this emerging field of science. We also have the expert advice of our P.F.A.S. panel, which is an independent, scientific advisory panel who provide evidence-based advice, guide public health policy and environmental management. They ensure that our actions are grounded in the evidence and research from world-leading and emerging science. The panel have delivered 2 public health reports last year and are due to publish the findings of report 3 next month. The fourth report will be delivered in 2025 and will focus on P.F.A.S. in the environment, reviewing

the latest global standard and treatment technologies. Finally, our regulatory framework under the Water (Jersey) Law 1972 ensures that water quality is monitored. Jersey Water's 2024 report has demonstrated 100 per cent compliance with current U.K. and E.U. regulatory standards for P.F.A.S. However, with the work of the panel on report 4, I will be working towards improving regulatory specific standards in Jersey.

4.15.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for his response and the actions that he has outlined. One hundred and five Islanders who have not lived in the Government-tested plume area have independently tested their blood for specific firefighting foam P.F.A.S. and reported levels higher than the average, in many cases by a significant margin. What is being done to verify these results and assess the full extent of the Island-wide P.F.A.S. contamination?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

As I have said, we have had 2 reports; we are having a third on public health. We are working with those people who had been tested originally on how we can help them at the hospital with advice and treatment. Of course, as the Deputy raises, certain people have had their blood tested outside of the plume area. The decision was taken by myself and the Minister for Health and Social Services that we did not see any point in asking those people to be retested under our own regime. We accepted their results and we are moving forward to see as a result of the hydrogeological survey ... which I did not have time to mention in my original response but I will do now. We have been conducting recently a hydrogeological survey in the last 12 months. The outcomes of that will be published in the coming weeks, and that is a survey looking at the way groundwater is moving underneath the ground and how other people may have been affected. I can say to the Deputy that we are doing all we can to solve these problems and to see what we can do to make them better. But I accept that there are people outside of the plume area who have had their bloods tested themselves. Some results are showing levels above the standards we would wish to see and we want to understand better how those results may have been achieved. Certainly, the fourth report of P.F.A.S. in the environment will help us to do that as well.

4.15.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Could the Minister comment on the potential impact of P.F.A.S., if any, on agriculture, farming in particular, because of either the use of pesticides which might have P.F.A.S. in them or the spraying of crops with P.F.A.S.-contaminated water?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

If the Deputy had asked me this question 72 hours ago, I would not have had an answer for him, but it has appeared over the weekend that an information request was put in and the answer was ... is there P.F.A.S. in agricultural sprays, horticultural sprays? The answer has come back yes, there is. The work has been done and it was as much of a surprise to me as others in the industry. But yes, there are 4 products which contain small levels of P.F.A.S. and one in particular is used on the potato crop. I have spoken to farmers over the weekend and again this morning. It is a spray which is used for blight. It is used in small amounts at the end of the growing season. It is a contact spray so it does not work its way through the plants, it just sits on the leaves. But nevertheless it is a spray which contains P.F.A.S. and my initial discussion toward the industry, if focused around how we can find an alternative and take it out of use just as soon as possible.

4.15.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

On the subject of irrigation water being used on crops, or not necessarily irrigation water but the fact that water in the soil has P.F.A.S. in it, is there a concern about that in terms of root crops or other crops?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

There is not a concern as such. I am aware that the water from, for example, the St. Ouen Sandpit is not used to irrigate crops and while I say there is not a concern, that does not mean to say that I am not looking into the subject. The hydrological survey which I mentioned previously, the results of which will come out, will help inform us as to how much P.F.A.S. is moving around under the ground. The other thing I can say to the Deputy is part of the ongoing work of the P.F.A.S. group will be to look at foods grown on the Island, and certainly potatoes, to assure the public that levels of P.F.A.S. in potatoes that are exported do not exceed any acceptable limits.

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

The Minister mentioned in his first answer that he intends to bring forward regulatory standards for P.F.A.S., our own for the Island. Could he tell the Assembly when he proposes to do that?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot say exactly when, but I can say that the fourth report from the independent P.F.A.S. panel will include recommendations from the research they are doing around the globe. While we meet all the current standards, I think it would be fair to say that countries around the globe are looking to review standards and they certainly will be coming down. Let me say, the panel of independent ... I have had no contact with them other than the one thing I did was to impress upon them the need for timely report for I do not want to be waiting. I do not want to be held up, so I have asked them to report back to me on water as soon as they possibly can. Once I have their report and their recommendations, I will be sitting down to look at where those levels might be. In the meantime, and because I do not want to waste any time on this, I am already in discussions with Jersey Water about where those levels might be, how they might mitigate, what treatment works they would need to put in place because Members will appreciate, I am sure, that large infrastructure projects do not happen in a matter of months. They take some years to deliver but, nevertheless, I am working towards new regulatory standards as fast as I can.

[11:45]

4.15.5 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Has the Minister for Health and Social Services declared an interest on this matter given his former ownership of a company relating to the potato industry and his current continuing ownership of a company that provides water filtration systems?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

No, he has not, and I cannot think of any way that he would be conflicted in that way.

4.15.6 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

My question follows the response that 105 samples were accepted and people were at least taking care. Would the Minister advise if any consideration was given, together with the Minister for Health and Social Services, to do a wider sample to establish concentration of P.F.A.S. across the population?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

As I said, we have had 2 rounds of blood testing, if you like. The first one from residents who live in the plume and then another private round of blood test was also taken from people who live outside of the plume. The Minister and I spoke about whether we wanted those people to be retested. We could not see any point in that. What we have done is accepted their levels. The third report from the P.F.A.S. panel will guide us in that, but I have to say to Members, it is not just drinking water that might put P.F.A.S. through water ingestion into your body. There are other things as well. The fourth report from the panel will start to look at other ways of P.F.A.S. entering your body. There are many different ways and those people who have been living outside of the plume area, there is a lot of work to understand their history and whether they have lived in Jersey all their lives, whether

they have moved around the Island, whether they are mains, borehole, maybe they have drunk bottled water or the type of food you eat. Everything can have an effect. There is a lot of work to do to understand how P.F.A.S. is ingested into your body, so all I can say to the Deputy is work is ongoing, and we hope to have those answers in the future.

4.15.7 Deputy I. Gardiner:

If I understood correctly, and I would ask the Minister to correct me, the results for the people who lived outside of the area would be categorised and according to this, other groups of the population will be offered blood testing by the Government to establish if there is a concentration of the P.F.A.S. with them as well?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

All I can say is we will continue to work with all these people. Many of them turn up to regular meetings, not only with myself and the Minister for Health and Social Services, but with officers and also independently with the panel without any politicians or civil servants present. Lots of work is going on. We want to understand these problems just as much as anybody else does but there is more science needed to understand how people who may not live anywhere near the plume area may have elevated levels of P.F.A.S. in their blood.

4.15.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Following the very recent ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that failures by Governments and businesses to address pollution amounts to human rights violation, the Minister just explained that he will revisit Jersey's current legislative framework to tackle P.F.A.S. but also hopefully other pollution and contamination effectively. Could the Minister advise further what new environmental laws or regulations he is looking at to address these issues and does he have the necessary resources to do this work effectively?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

That sounds like a hugely complicated question to me, way above my paygrade potentially, but what I can say to the Deputy, outside of the P.F.A.S. work, we continually monitor a whole range of subjects within the environment in the Natural Environment Department. If she is looking for other instances, I could point her to an ongoing group of people who have been together now for over 10 years and looking to reduce nitrates. It started off as a nitrate reduction group, worked very, very closely between Government and the agricultural industry, has been hugely successful in reducing nitrates in our water and that group continues, and I am happy to be back sitting on it and we continue to look at ways that we can work with Jersey Water to deliver better water. The P.F.A.S. issue is in addition to that, if you like, and one which is vastly more important, but I think they all come under the same remit. Certainly, working with Jersey Water into the future, which I want to continue to do, the treatment works which we will have to put in place to reduce P.F.A.S. will also help us to address many of the other issues that may or may not be present as some sort of contaminants in our drinking water.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sorry, and just for the Minister about the resources; does he have the resources to effectively address these issues?

The Bailiff:

That was part of the question, yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Resource is always a challenge, certainly in an environment where Government is trying to reduce the amount it spends but I can assure the Deputy that priorities like this one that affect not only our

environment for the Island but more importantly the public health of the Island, we will always find a way to fund those.

4.16 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Housing regarding a mix of housing types (OQ.23/2025):

Will the Minister advise how he is currently working with private developers and landlords to ensure a mix of housing types are made available in the Island?

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

The last time that I was the Minister for Housing, I commissioned an Objective Assessment of Housing Need, which provided projections for the types and tenure of housing we would need over subsequent years, and this helped inform the Bridging Island Plan process to ensure that developers have the framework to guide their proposals to ensure it matches what we need. On a number of occasions, I have met with developers as they have been exploring ideas on what kind of housing mix they might apply for permission to build and we have explored with them what kind of demand there is at the moment, what sites might lend themselves well too, within the rules of the Island Plan. In particular, right-sizing was an issue that some developers wanted to explore with me. I also often encourage engagement with officers in my department so that they can make sure that what they are applying to build matches what we know we need. On top of that, I am frequently submitting comments to the Planning Applications Committee as developments are coming forward to be proposed, and I may comment on what the mix of tenure or sizes that they are proposing to say whether that matches what we assess to be what we need based on the data.

4.16.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Could the Minister advise us what data sources he has at his disposal which are informing his plans for delivering the range of housing need?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I mentioned the Objective Assessment of Housing Need previously. I think there was an update done on that - I think that was by Statistics Jersey - at some point in the last few years. They go based on everything: census data, population projections - they do their updates on that every year - and, of course, what has been built in the previous years because what we project we may build based on Island Plan projects is not necessarily what does come to pass in those years so they will look at what happened and what tenure mix and size has been delivered on.

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

It was the Future Housing Needs of December 2023, published by Statistics Jersey, but is the Minister aware of any data that catches housing desire or want because there is no point building stuff people need if they would rather live in another jurisdiction because what we are building does not suit their long-term desires or long-term needs?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That is such a good question and, no, there is nothing that I can certainly recall of what you might attempt to call tangible data about desire out there. I am not sure if there have been questions in the Opinions and Lifestyles Survey. I would have to doublecheck whether that is the case and building to people's expectations is something that, obviously, we have to contend with. Just anecdotally, what I can say is that I know that the shortage of family-sized homes with parking spaces and gardens is something that has been of great concern to Islanders in past years because of their worries that if they want to have a family, that will be a difficult option for them. When I speak to people who make that point to me, I do say that that does not mean that we should not also be building small homes. We do often get feedback that we are building too many flats but the more that you do build and the more supply that you provide, the more affordable you may be able to make them. If you get your foot on the ladder, it is then hopefully easier to get your second step-up on it from that point. There

is an interesting dialogue to be had on that and I am not sure that proper data on what public desire is on that is collected.

4.16.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Given previous questions that have been used for this data often look at the 2 to 5-year range, will the Minister support any move to collect in future surveys longer-term understanding of what housing desire there is? Would he support those moves?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am sorry, I did not quite understand that question. Could you rephrase it?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Would the Minister support any questions used in future surveys that understand long-term housing desire, not short-term housing need?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It is a good suggestion, and I will mull that over. If that is something that could be included in a future survey, then I am sure that will be of great interest to us.

4.16.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I think the Minister may have partially answered the question I was going to ask in his previous answer, but could he state what he believes from his analysis of the data where he does think the greatest areas of housing need are at the moment?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think the family-sized home is a serious issue that we did not provide a good enough supply on that for multiple years. I am going to be biased towards the affordable sector in that there has been a great provision of one and 2-bed apartments in the affordable sector and that has enabled us to widen criteria for the Affordable Housing Gateway, for example, but it is the case that there are lots of people - lots of children in particular - who are in homes that are not the right size for them and we have not provided that supply. That is why I am very pleased that we are now starting to see planning permissions coming through for some of the Bridging Plan rezone sites and some of that is now underway. I hope with a focus on that we can alleviate that part of the need that I see, certainly, when I speak to people and people who come to me to tell me about the inadequate situation in their housing.

4.16.5 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Could I ask the Minister what specific initiatives he has in place or examples of co-partnerships aimed at delivering a diverse range of housing types and is he minded to do something about the need to ensure choice in the market?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I do not know what constitutes a partnership in that sense. We obviously have a constitutional partnership with Andium Homes and we have one with States of Jersey Development Company, of course. I work particularly closely with both of them but a bit more so with Andium and I am exploring with them options for different pathways that they might be able to provide for people into home ownership. There are different offers or products we can give to people to move in that direction, but Andium is in a position of being able to use some of its stock to innovate. There is one developer in particular that has been innovating with different schemes to get people into home ownership and they have not needed my incentive to do that, but I have told them that I support what they are doing with that. I think they are interesting ways forward. I do not know if that answers the question? Hopefully, it does.

4.17 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Five Oaks Masterplan (OQ.33/2025):

I was just going to say I know the Minister is going to want to end question time with good news for St. Saviour. Will the Minister provide an update on delivering proposal 23 of the Bridging Island Plan regarding the Five Oaks Masterplan, that was approved for delivery before 2025; and, given the delay, lack of public consultation and the submission of a planning application in the area without a masterplan in place, will he confirm whether it remains a priority and when parishioners of St. Saviour can expect to see it implemented?

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):

The first thing to say is that consideration of a planning application for the development of affordable homes at Five Oaks on a site specifically zoned for this purpose in the Bridging Island Plan, as approved by this Assembly, is not contingent on the preparation of a masterplan for Five Oaks. Having said that, however, like many parts of the Island, there would be considerable value in undertaking work with the local community to consider the current challenges and opportunities for change in and around the local centre at Five Oaks and any such work might explore how to improve the local community infrastructure and to make Five Oaks a better place to live. This is, however, subject to the availability of resources and capacity which at the present time is focused on the Government's priority for wider planning service reform.

[12:00]

I remain committed to undertake this work and to deliver on the Bridging Island Plan proposal to do this work during the current plan period, but I am unable, unfortunately, to provide a definitive timeline for this workstream at this time.

The Bailiff:

That brings the time available for question period to an end and the first period of questions without notice for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development.

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

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

What action is the Minister taking to address the number of empty shops in town which seems to have reached a record high, particularly in regard to Horizon and the waterfront?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

As I mentioned previously I believe in this Assembly, there are a number of actions that we are undertaking with regard to empty shops, but these always have to be mitigated against the fact that they are, in the main, private landlords that own those empty shops. I think it is, first, important to state that Jersey has a good occupation rate, but the vacancy rate has risen to just shy of 10 per cent in the past month and that is the highest on the records that I have. I have instructed officers and the words I used were: "We need to sell Queen Street", in the sense that we need to advertise Queen Street to potential retailers who would want to potentially take up premises there. We have been doing that. We have engaged with retailers in the U.K. and we have interest from 5 well-known retail brands about coming to Jersey who previously had not considered Jersey until we approached them, and we approached them through a conference format. They were at conferences and my officers went there with that. They were armed with a brochure which told prospective tenants in Jersey about the benefits of retail in Jersey, such as the very high footfall, 7½ million footfall a year, the very low crime and other benefits. These were things that they had not thought about and now are doing. I am very pleased that we have engaged and there are a number of retailers now actively looking at St. Helier. With regard to the waterfront, that is very much in the hands of S.o.J.D.C.

(States of Jersey Development Company). I do not have personally any actions around the waterfront area. I think Horizon being a relatively new building, it has been open for a year ...

The Bailiff:

I have to ask you to bring your answer to a close.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There is work to be done, but it is with S.o.J.D.C. at the moment.

5.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister mentioned footfall. Can the Minister advise whether the number of empty retail outlets has had an effect on footfall through St. Helier and is he funding the cost of measuring such activities?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I believe it is Government-funded. I am happy to be corrected if I am wrong. The additional footfall cameras in St. Helier ... so there are now, I believe, 3 footfall cameras in St. Helier but they are operated by the Parish of St. Helier, as is my understanding. I have not seen the results of those recently and so I have asked my officers to engage with the Parish of St. Helier to make sure that I receive the footfall counts, so to speak. To my knowledge, we have seen no reduction in footfall over the past year or so. The main impact on footfall was COVID and hybrid working that has resulted at the end of that. We believe that many office workers in Jersey are now working effectively 3 days in town, 2 out of town, which significantly reduces your footfall by up to 40 per cent, but since COVID I do not think we have seen a reduction in particular.

5.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

In July, the States voted to preserve the one per cent for arts, culture and heritage which meant an additional £438,000 over and above what had been proposed in the 2025 Budget. Can the Minister confirm that this additional revenue has been allocated to his department, and can he give an indication of what it will be used to fund this year?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am still not entirely sure about where those funds will be used. Treasury have put a proposal to the department, but I was not satisfied. I have asked officers to push back on that proposal, so until that is settled I am unable to say. But the money - in terms of the amount of money - has been calculated and I am aware of what that is. I think it is in excess of the £400,000 that the Deputy mentioned but we are still in conversations with Treasury as to how we will use that money.

5.2.1 Deputy J. Renouf

I wonder if the Minister could give us a little bit more detail on what that point of disagreement is and can he confirm that extra money has been allocated to arts, culture and heritage and it is not the case that Treasury have asked for simply reallocation of funds that had already been spent to be called arts, culture and heritage and therefore meet the requirement that way?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I can confirm that numbers have been said, and I can confirm that allocation has been proposed. As I said, I was not particularly happy with that proposal, and I have asked my officers to go back to Treasury and suggest that that is not an appropriate proposal because it was in the vein the Deputy has suggested.

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

The Minister's policy framework for the ports sector notes that while Ports of Jersey has a public service obligation in law to act as custodian to Jersey Harbours that no formal agreement between

Government and Ports has been reached. Is the Minister aware of any work to formalise how Ports of Jersey should act as said custodian that has occurred in the past 12 months?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Off the top of my head, I really cannot answer that question. I will have to go back to the department to get an answer and I will circulate that afterwards.

5.3.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Given the increasingly commercial attitudes of Ports of Jersey, if none has been undertaken, will the Minister consider formalising some expectations on Ports of Jersey to ensure it gives sufficient weight to serving the wider public interest?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think that is a really important suggestion. Yes, there is a public service obligation which extends beyond coastguard-type services and does extend to Jersey's historic harbours. It is important that Ports of Jersey do maintain them as they should be maintained and, I believe, there is - particularly when you look at Gorey Harbour - the potential for commercial use there. I do not have a problem with Ports of Jersey becoming more commercial in the way they operate. The incorporation of Ports of Jersey was entirely, as I have said here before, to relieve the States Assembly of the need to find hundreds of millions of pounds in development costs for future harbour and airport infrastructure. They do need to be commercial of course but they do have a public service obligation as well which they do need to maintain.

5.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Following the question about food security, one of the ways to ensure food security is to increase locally grown food that can be distributed on the Island. Would the Minister advise how the funds that were allocated for fishery and agriculture in 2024, which is £6.7 million, affected increase - if it was an increase - of local supplied food on the Island.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I could not say whether there was a quantity increase but I can tell the Deputy that there has been an increase in the number of smallholder farmers as a result of the rural strategy that we established a couple of years ago and the funding that followed as a result. We now have, I believe, 80 smallholders who are all producing for the local community as opposed for export, and so there is an increase in smallholder farming. Some of those smallholders we hope will go on to become larger commercial farmers and some of those smallholders will potentially remain smallholders and serve in the Island's needs. I think it is important there is a balance to be struck between exports which bring the Island in money and, obviously, food for local consumption and at the moment, for instance, the potato crop is principally for export, but our milk production is principally for local consumption and some of it is used for consumption. I do not have the actual quantity figures as to how much more or less is being produced, and I would have to ask officers for those figures.

5.4.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for the answer. When is the Minister thinking to evaluate the impact of the rural strategy and the funds that have been spent and what are plans for 2025 to increase production for local consumption?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As I mentioned, the support to smallholders is currently the main way we are encouraging production for local consumption but also we work very closely with not just Farm Jersey but through the Cultivate Programme and Regen as well. There is a whole movement about growing food in a much more sustainable manner and that is being encouraged by Government, directly by us, and we are

seeing the result of that through the growth of this smallholder sector who are entirely providing food to the local community.

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

I have received a number of complaints from constituents about DFDS' terms including high helpline charges, £100 roundtrip fees for bikes, slow boats, restrictions on dogs staying in cars and inconsistent pricing; some seeing trip costs to France rising by over 35 per cent despite discounts. Were these terms clearly presented to the Minister when the contract with DFDS was signed?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Their terms of sale were not part of that contract. I have spoken to DFDS about bikes, and I expect to see some change in their costs around that. Any change is difficult and any change, somebody, somewhere will find something that was different to last time in a negative way. We are here creating a ferry service that is going to be resilient and reliable for the next 20 years and, most importantly, get £300 million of investments in our fleet which will be paid for by DFDS and not by the Government of Jersey because we would not be able to find £300 million, would be my guess, to buy new boats. We are getting new vessels, and we are going to have more resilient and reliable service. There are some changes in some areas and, where I have seen those concerns, I have asked DFDS to address them. I think one thing DFDS needs to do is have a greater local social media presence so that they can respond to these queries as and when they arise as opposed to me having to do so for them.

5.5.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

What I am hearing from the Minister is that, and could the Minister confirm, whether he is then confident that Jersey citizens are receiving a better deal under DFDS compared to the previous operator?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

In terms of pricing, they are receiving a very similar deal to the one before. Pricing through the tender process was very much: "There is the mean value, the mean average price and then there is the lowest price and the highest price", and through those 3 mechanisms we control the prices through the contract. They will in future go up by R.P.I. so there will be no large price jumps as there have been in the past under the previous operator. There is no big difference in pricing. One of the main changes or one of the main areas that people are complaining about was day trips to France and the reality is DFDS have not loaded on their daytrip prices yet so Islands should refrain from buying day trips to France at the moment because they will get special prices in the future. As a result, some were surprised by the prices that were being returned to them for what they thought was a day trip but there will be special day-trip pricing in the future.

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

Further to the Better Business Support Package being offered in November 2024, can the Minister just update the Assembly on the uptake so far?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I could not hear the last couple of words.

The Bailiff:

Could you update the Assembly on the progress so far?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Progress. I could not hear progress or update. The Better Business Support Package grants, the applications, it will be live in March and so there have been no applications that have been processed yet. Jersey Business are providing information to businesses that enquire, and the information is on

the Jersey Business website as to the conditions, et cetera, around the applications that they can submit but it will not be until March that we see any progress as to how many businesses are applying and how many grants are being provided. That will happen after March.

5.6.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Can the Minister clarify which area of the economy is most in need of a support package and are officers currently engaged in encouraging businesses to come forward in a proactive way and access the support available?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Better Business Support Package, because it is focused on the impact of the living wage and helping businesses that are impacted by the increase in the minimum wage, it is focused on hospitality, retail and farming and marine principally, but that said, there are packages within that that are open to all businesses in the Island and charities and other organisations as long as they employ people. My view is that across the economy we need a step change in the productivity levels of businesses across the sectors. That includes finance. That includes hospitality. That includes retail. Where we have seen already large increases in productivity over the last 10 years, let us say, is the agriculture sector. They have done amazing things in terms of productivity but there is a reality here which is that the whole of the Island's economy needs a significant increase in the productivity and so there is no one sector that needs it more than any other. All sectors need to engage in productivity increases.

[12:15]

The Bailiff:

I am afraid there is only 20 seconds left to go, and I do not suppose you can ask and answer within 20 seconds, Deputy, so that brings the period for questions to this Minister to an end. The next period is for the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Treasury and Resources

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

Does the Minister for Treasury and Resources have any plans to review, reduce or remove the buy-to-let surcharge, and if so, what steps are being considered to address its impact on the housing market?

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

Can the Deputy clarify what she means by buy-to-let surcharge, please?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sorry, I mean the stamp duty specifically for buy-to-let.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I have no plans to amend that for time being.

6.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister advise if the company at the time of requesting dissolution is required to submit confirmation there are no liabilities to social security, G.S.T. (goods and service tax) and tax?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Deputy for her question. That is a very interesting question. I think like most things, there is a right way and a wrong way to do things, and I fully anticipate that our laws require that if a company owes tax or social security, it must contact Social Security or Tax and pay those debts

before it is dissolved. If directors of a company wish to wind-up the company, then they may do so through a solvent winding up where they pay the debts and distribute any assets to the shareholders or through an insolvent liquidation where they will appoint a liquidation practitioner or the Viscount to ingather the assets and settle debts with creditors. I think the issue that the Deputy may be alluding to is a situation where people simply walk away and in situations where people simply walk away from a business that is insolvent or struggling, we may not know for some time. I think there is a chance that people can simply leave things. If you do not, for example, file annual returns, a company will be struck off and that makes it then very difficult for any creditors, whether they are trade creditors or members of the public or Government, to recover because you then have to pay a significant sum of money to reinstate the company and then try and locate assets and cover them. I have on a very high-level basis spoken to someone in the Financial Services team to see if there is something we can do about that, where people do just walk away. I know that in Ireland, they looked at trying to make people personally liable if they allowed a company to collapse with unpaid debts. That may be controversial in some quarters, but it is something that I do think we should look at. I hope that answers the question.

6.2.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Another scenario, if the company has dissolved and gone through the process of full dissolution and it has been signed off by Financial Services, by the Registry, does the Registry have a confirmation that they do not have any liability to social security?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I could not speak for the Companies Registry but I think as a matter of Companies Law, the directors have to give certain certifications that they have no debts if they are going to wind up a company properly through Companies Law processes, so I am sure they should technically and correctly give that degree of confirmation but there will be cases when people simply do just walk away.

6.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

With regard to Project Breakwater, the Minister told Scrutiny last week that she had a briefing a long time ago but had not been involved since because it was still a work in progress. Was she therefore surprised to hear the Chief Minister announcing on Friday in an interview that Project Breakwater proposals are due to be published next month, that it includes some really good proposals, including how it will be paid for?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sure when Project Breakwater is duly announced we will have a full idea of funding. It is clear that ongoing investment in our Island is important and in recent years we have successfully increased our capital spend to the levels needed to maintain assets. Treasury is working on an up-to-date long-term capital plan. That is included in our business plan for this year. Work will be iterative. It will include Project Breakwater in due course and is expected to show significant levels of investment will be needed to maintain our assets. Project Breakwater will be properly considered by Treasury in due course and before publication.

6.3.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Is the Minister content that all the key decisions so far seem to have been made without her in the room?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I believe that my officers have been involved and are giving guidance. The full project has yet to come to C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) and I would expect to be briefed at an appropriate time, as you would normally expect.

6.4 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

As we move to independent taxation, the Tax Department have been making contact with the husbands either via email or via leaflet in the post. What steps is the Minister for Treasury and Resources taking to ensure that her department are engaging with the people that are going to be most affected by this change, i.e. the wives?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Deputy for her question. She raised this with us at Scrutiny. It is a very valid point. We have done what married man's taxation requires us to do, which is to write to the taxpayer, and I think we would have assumed, perhaps wrongly, that the married man will share the information with his wife. I accept that that may not be the case and we are now considering actively how we reach all people who will be affected by independent taxation to make sure that they are fully aware that it is happening and to make sure that where they wish to make an election to continue submitting a single form, that they are able to do so within appropriate time scales but we will be reviewing our communications plan very carefully to ensure that is the case.

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

I know the Minister is very busy and has one Assistant Minister who is also a Minister so I am not expecting her to be an expert on everything, but can I just ask: has she had any informational briefings concerning the activities and the oversight of the Receiver General?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I have not, but my understanding is that the Receiver General is entirely independent. I am not sure he is funded by Government, and he is an appointment of His Majesty and will be accountable to His Majesty accordingly.

6.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

The Minister announced at the end of last week, I think, that she was discontinuing work on a private jet tax, and this was in response to Ports of Jersey having increased the landing fees for private jets. Those fees, I think, were put up to somewhere in the £60, £70 region. Other airports in the U.K. charge hundreds of pounds. What level does she think would be appropriate for private aircrafts to be taxed in?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Perhaps I could just clarify, I am not sure if the reporting on this has been as clear as we might have hoped. What I have said is that I am pausing work on development of a private aircraft charge this year. That does not mean to say it is gone for good. It has just simply been paused because Ports of Jersey are going to increase their fees for private jets. It is not any private aircraft. I believe it is private jets of more than 3 tonnes so those will not catch, for example, some of the smaller planes owned by members of the Aero Club. It will attach to the luxury end of the market, shall we say. Our landing charges are low. I do not believe they have come into force yet. Ports of Jersey are planning a consultation in the early part of this year with a view to the increased charge coming into play, I think, by the end of quarter 2. The extra money raised will be ring-fenced by Ports of Jersey for Ports of Jersey's own decarbonisation initiatives at the airport. In view of the fact they are increasing their charges and they are limited - I think it is fair to say - in how far and how quickly they can increase charges because those charges are regulated by the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority) so hence the need for close consultation. Given our ongoing work of competitiveness and ensuring that Jersey remains an environment that people want to work, much of this traffic will be for business purposes, I do not think it is a good idea right at the moment to add additional taxes to additional charges. It will be kept under review. We will continue to ...

The Bailiff:

I ask you to bring your answer to a close, please.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sorry, Sir. It will be kept under review.

6.6.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think the point I am trying to get at is I welcome the fact that Ports of Jersey have made this move and that they are going to fund decarbonisation measures, but the fees still seem very low. I wonder what argument could be advanced given that these sums are pretty well small change to the people concerned. What argument could be advanced against putting them higher and using that money to fund decarbonisation more aggressively?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think at the moment it does still come back to the question of competitiveness. I agree when I have seen some comparative numbers, Jersey's figures do look very low in comparison with other jurisdictions, but I can only emphasise that Jersey remains a place where competitiveness in the business environment is very important, particularly with the Pillar Two changes and it is something. This is a starting point and, again, I believe from Ports of Jersey that because those fees are regulated, they simply cannot double, treble, put them up by multiple amounts. This is a starting point. Ports of Jersey will continue to review the consequences and the impacts of the increased charges. They would hope the increased charges will lead to more sustainable behaviour by the operators of those jets and if they do not see more sustainable practices, the charges will be increased further to generate more funds.

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

Can the Minister inform us what work, if any, has been done so far in forecasting budgets for the impending health facilities estate, excluding Overdale?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think this was covered to some degree in our Budget discussions this year. We have a budget of £710 million for the new hospital facilities as a whole. That will cover the new hospital facility at Overdale and it will cover some work in St. Saviour and Kensington Place, I believe, is the ambition/approach of the team. The breakdown of the allocation of the budget among those 3 different pieces of work has not been published. It is a phased approach because a phased approach will generate best value for the public and ensure competitive tension when we come to procurement.

6.7.1 The Connétable of St. Clement:

Can the Minister tell us whether the Minister for Health and Social Services has given her any budget forecasts or estimates for more capital expenditure in the foreseeable future?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Sorry, can I clarify, does the Constable mean for new healthcare facilities or for health, as in services?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Capital expenditure.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, we have a budget of £710 million. I have not been asked for further funding, I believe.

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

I will be quick. Does the Minister believe she has sufficient flexibility to authorise payments to purchase strategic capital assets mid-year should the opportunities arise, for example, commercial space between the price of £1.5 million and £4.5 million?

[12:30]

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I suspect that is a loaded question. I am not sure I fully understand it. Can I have the question again, please?

The Bailiff:

I am afraid if you have the question again, we are out of time.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It was not loaded, Sir.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That was not a device, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I think we have to say we are out of time; we only have 2 seconds to go. The next period of questions is to the Chief Minister.

7. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

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

The Chief Minister will be aware of President Trump's announcement that he is freezing all foreign assistance for 90 days which has resulted in the immediate cutting of humanitarian operations across the board. Will the Chief Minister assure the Assembly that he has no intention of doing the same and will he pronounce his support for Jersey Overseas Aid and all the excellent work that they do to those who are displaced, ravaged by war and suffering from famine?

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

Yes.

7.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Will the Chief Minister maintain his support for the 0.01 per cent increase in the funding for Jersey Overseas Aid in his final Government Plan at the end of this year to show his continuing endorsement for humanitarian aid?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would like to, but I am always reluctant to make financial commitments in this uncertain and unsettled geopolitical position. All things being well, I am sure we would like to do that, but we have to reserve our position just in case.

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

I am getting in here early, obviously. Completely different question. We heard the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development speak earlier about how productivity needs to improve across the whole of the economy. In answer to my Written Question 2/2025, I discovered the Social Security Department collected £2.97 million from businesses who employed people of retirement age but who are no longer paying social security. If we are to encourage businesses to employ retired individuals, is it right that businesses are once again still continuing to make these payments?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure I fully understand the question. I do not think I have enough knowledge on the subject to provide an answer. I am sorry. That is something the Minister for Social Security needs to answer or perhaps the Deputy could put that in writing, and we could answer it. I do apologise.

The Bailiff:

Supplemental question, Deputy Warr?

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am not doing very well here today, Sir, am I?

The Bailiff:

We all have days like that.

7.2.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I guess let us return to my earlier question and my earlier thrust, which was around charges to businesses and, again, if the Chief Minister had a magic wand, which charge which is currently applied by Government would he remove from businesses?

The Bailiff:

I am going to allow that.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

If I had a magic wand, I might quite like to find another use for it, I think, **[Laughter]** in relation to the challenges we face as an Island. I mean I know charges of approximately £54 for a registered licence is to what he is referring to, but I did explain previously that charge was introduced in 2018 to provide funding for Skills Jersey. I think generally that is working well. The answer is if I had a magic wand, I would probably use it to treble or quadruple the size of the Strategic Reserve in the first instance.

7.3 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

In a recent interview with the BBC, the Chief Minister explained that involving the Minister for Treasury and Resources would be a distraction to the progress of Project Breakwater. Would the Chief Minister like to explain how?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I did not say that. I did not use the word “distraction” at all, and I wish Members would pay more attention when they watch interviews with me on television. **[Laughter]** I know it is challenging. No, the point I was making ... and Council of Ministers have received an update on Project Breakwater. Deputy Binet, along with officials, is leading on that work and Treasury officials are also working with him because it is important that when he comes back he wanted to present an option, a solution that is not only a design but fully funded. That will go through all the relevant procedures. It will go through the Minister for Treasury and Resources ultimately, come back to Council of Ministers for fine tuning, go to consultation and it will have public consultation on that and ultimately be a decision for the States Assembly. The point I was making in that interview is sometimes when we go off and we try and put projects together, if there are too many people involved at the early stages, it can be distracting and it can take more time, so I applaud Deputy Binet’s focused approach. That is not to say that we are wanting to exclude anyone from that process because everybody will be involved in the fullness of time.

7.3.1 Deputy H.M. Miles:

Can the Chief Minister give other examples of where the Minister for Treasury and Resources has been excluded from projects that will cost taxpayers millions of pounds in funding?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not aware of any where the Minister for Treasury and Resources has been excluded because the Minister for Treasury and Resources controls the purse strings. That, I did say in the interview on Friday and so ultimately, as somebody once said: “I do not care who runs the country, put me in charge of the money and I will control everything”, and we respect the Minister for Treasury and Resources’ position but we cannot run the process and spend money, ultimately, that is not budgeted for. If we want additional funds, it goes through the Minister for Treasury and Resources and

ultimately to the Assembly. If the Minister for Treasury and Resources ever feels left out on anything, I am the first to know about it usually.

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

Following my last set of questions without notice concerning the fuel farm, would the Chief Minister kindly update the Assembly concerning the known expiry and the various trigger clauses embedded in the lease that were put in there to be exercised by the Government in the public interest in relation to making sure that the Island is both appropriate, economic, has resilience and the leases used in the trigger points are used to align Jersey's future use requirements and land use?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The current lease for the La Collette fuel farm runs until 31st January 2026 and the Government, led by the Minister for Infrastructure's department with support from law officers, are currently reviewing the procurement options for a new lease or a tender process, one that will ensure the fuel market is as competitive as possible and there is long-term resilience in the supply of fuel for Islands. Both cleanup works and the purchase of equipment clauses relating to the fuel farm have been extended until 30th April 2025 by agreement with the Minister and the current leaseholder in order to provide the Government with time to consider the procurement options. The current fuel farm is an essential facility for the Island and is in the optimum location given its adjacency to the port and gas fuel storage facilities, but that is not to say we might not consider other options for the supply and distribution of fuel in the longer-term. The facility is able to provide long-term resilience to the Island and can be adapted to react to changes in fuel markets and fuel technology.

7.4.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I had this issue on my agenda since I was first elected in 1999. I do not want to take up the Assembly's time, but I think it is important. I am grateful for the Chief Minister to say what he is doing. I have got some concerns, but would he - perhaps with the Minister - agree to briefing the Scrutiny Panel, which I am not on, on this most important issue because it is fundamental for Jersey's supply resilience and competition, which he will know well?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I would, and I know the Minister for Infrastructure would be supportive of that course of action.

The Bailiff:

If Members are concerned that I have not noted them, I have noted to speak Deputies Wilson, Renouf, Jeune, Doublet and Alex Curtis. Whether we are able to do that, I do not know, but they have been noted.

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

Sorry, I did put my light on right at the beginning, at the same time as Deputy Warr and I am not sure if you noticed it because Deputy Ahier was stood up. I did leave it on until you nodded at me.

The Bailiff:

Yes, well, that is the order in which I have noted. There is nothing deliberate about it. I take it from the screen. When it comes on the screen, that is when I note it.

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

Further to his answer on Written Question WQ.28/2025, does the Chief Minister also agree that regulation of our health service is needed and will not be suspended?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes. The Regulation of Care legislation that Deputy Luce is leading on, approved by the States in 2022 which ultimately regulates the hospital and the ambulance service, extends regulation to that.

We will proceed with that. We are going to phase that in. We are going to introduce the regulation to the ambulance service earlier on and in 2022, when that was approved by the Assembly, we did not have a health board in place. Now, we have the Health Board in place, and we have plans - hopefully, with everything crossed - for the new hospital to be approved imminently. It is going to the Planning Committee later this month. We will be in a position to accurately provide the timeline for the completion and opening of the new hospital. We want to ensure that we dovetail the regulation of health services in the hospital with that timeline and that is what we are working on at the moment.

7.5.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I am just bit concerned about that response. Will he commit to upholding the Regulation of Care Law to protect patients from harm by supporting the full implementation of the work the Jersey Care Commission are undertaking to ensure compliance with professional and regulatory standards in our health service?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, absolutely. We are aligned with that. We are talking about the timing and how we introduce it but, absolutely, we are fully aligned with that.

7.6 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Minister for Health and Social Services has talked repeatedly about the need for further spending on health. One option is a top-up charge on tax, similar to, say, the long-term care charge. Will he confirm that his Government are considering this option?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, the Government are not considering it. I know Deputy Binet has talked about various ideas in his capacity as Minister. It is not on our agenda to discuss at this stage. It might well come on to the agenda if Deputy Binet requests that and, for the record, I, at this stage, cannot support any additional taxation. I think we need to find a way to manage from the taxation levels we currently have. The answer is, no, that is not on the agenda to discuss but Deputy Binet might well ask for that to be discussed.

7.6.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I guess the converse question is, will he rule out a top-up health charge?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I do not have that autocratic authority over the Assembly or the Government unfortunately, that we tend to come to decisions by consensus. But I shall certainly not be supporting it, based on current information.

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

Could the Chief Minister explain why his Minister for External Relations has chosen not to issue a formal statement on Rwanda's illegal occupation of territory in the D.R.C. (Democratic Republic of Congo), which constitutes a clear violation of international law? Given Jersey's special relationship with Rwanda and numerous financial sector collaboration projects, what message does this silence send about Jersey's stance on international law and ethical partnerships?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe the Minister for External Relations answered the question earlier and I cannot answer why he at this stage is not putting a statement out and that he may well do that. It is a fast-moving situation and we do of course welcome a cessation to hostilities that has come about in the last 24 hours. I also would remind Members that the Jersey/Rwanda M.O.U. (memorandum of understanding) signed last year has not resulted in any direct funding from the Government of Jersey to the Rwandan Government or vice versa and there is no specific financial commitments made under that agreement.

I will leave that in the hands of the Minister for External Relations. I know he and we, the Government, are monitoring the situation closely and we will fund appropriately should things develop further.

7.7.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

As the Chief Minister stated, though there was a ceasefire that has been called recently, the Rwandan-backed rebels continue to control Goma, a region rich in raw minerals essential to global technology and there is growing concern that Rwanda seeks to exploit these resources, which could involve facilitation by the finance sector.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, you do have to ask a question and there are lots of people waiting.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Could the Chief Minister clarify what steps have been taken to ensure that Jersey's finance industry does not unwittingly facilitate or support such illegal activities?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I cannot state at this stage what steps the financial services sector might take but I am sure it is a matter that is being considered. I will discuss that with the Minister for Financial Services.

7.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Have the plans for a health restructure been brought to the Council of Ministers?

[12:45]

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

There has been no official decision by the Council of Ministers. Sorry, I am trying to remember. No, we have agreed, sorry, I am getting mixed up. We have agreed the name change. No, the Council of Ministers is aware of Deputy Binet's intention on that, we are monitoring the situation. He is keeping Ministers updated. No formal permission or proposition has been made to the Council of Ministers as yet but we are aware of the work that is happening in that area.

7.8.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can the Minister advise when this will happen?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That is really largely up to the Minister for Health and Social Services. We are out of time but I believe it will be this year.

The Bailiff:

We are out of time. I just remind Members that we will seek to deal with the appointment to the Authority immediately after the luncheon adjournment. Is the adjournment proposed?

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

Very well. The Assembly stands adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:46]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:16]

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS - resumption

8. Appointment of one Member of the Jersey Police Authority

The Bailiff:

We pick up where the Assembly agreed that we would, which is appointments of committees and this is an appointment to the Jersey Police Authority. The reason that we left this over to this afternoon is because I gave an indication that it was recognised that serving on the Authority and serving on the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel could represent a conflict of interest. I have reviewed that matter over the luncheon adjournment. It is clear that whereas one member who was appointed to both that panel and to the Authority in years gone by took the view that was a conflict of interest and accordingly resigned from one, there has never been a formal ruling to that effect. In my view, because the statute provides for people who may not sit, it is not really open to me, other than the most obvious case, to declare that there is a conflict of interest or not, as the case may be. I do not think that there is certainly a conflict of interest but what I would say is that matters of conflict of interest in any respect are always matters for those seeking to hold the office, in particular as to whether they believe they have a conflict or they do not and of course, in the context of an election, how the Assembly votes. I withdraw that observation relating to the conflict of interest and I invite the Minister to propose who the Minister wishes.

8.1 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

I would, firstly, like to thank those that showed an interest, of which there was 4. I would like to nominate Deputy Miles as the representative for the Jersey Police Authority.

The Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? [**Seconded**] Are there other nominations? If there are no other nominations, then in this fiercely contested battle I can announce that Deputy Miles has been confirmed and duly appointed as a member of the Jersey Police Authority. [**Approbation**]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Bailiff:

We now move on to Public Business.

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

Sir, if I may, just before we move on to Public Business, I just want to clarify from an answer I gave in questions without notice earlier about the Marine Spatial Plan and fish processing plants. It has been brought to my attention that fish processing facilities do appear in the Marine Spatial Plan and I was not sure. At the time I did not recall that that was the case but it is.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy.

9. Reporting on Ministerial Activities (P.71/2024)

The Bailiff:

The first item is Reporting on Ministerial Activities, P.71, lodged by Deputy Moore and the main respondent will be the Chief Minister. Deputy, you have also lodged an amendment to your proposition and I assume you wish to take it read as amended.

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

Yes, please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I assume that Members are content that we may take the proposition as amended. Very well. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition as amended.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion to request the Chief Minister to update the Codes of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers before 30th April 2025 to enable new practices to be implemented on 30th June 2025, to include the requirement for (a) details of external meetings attended by Ministers and Assistant Ministers regarding Government matters to be published monthly in arrears on the government website and (b) details of all off-Island travel by Ministers and Assistant Ministers, including the costs incurred, to be published within 30 days of return to the Island on the Government website.

9.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

During the previous debate a motion was passed to move to the next item in order to allow me to amend the timeframes for setting a Code of Conduct. It was a pity that some chose to pitch this topic as a battle between the former and the current Government and it is a matter of some disappointment that the comments published on Friday by both the Council of Ministers and the P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) have continued in that tone. As parliamentarians we are guided by the 7 Nolan Principles. This proposition relates to several aspects of those principles; openness, transparency, accountability and leadership, values that are critical to building trust with our community. Let us not forget that the Jersey Opinion and Lifestyle Survey published in December found that this Assembly is the least trusted institution in the Island and that trust has declined significantly since the question was last put in 2022. The amendment I have proposed simply allows a greater level of flexibility, following a suggestion by Deputy Bailhache. It extended the time period for the Council of Ministers to agree its own Code of Conduct because the ball is being placed in their court on this matter. They are simply being asked by the Assembly if they support the proposition to look to some of the many examples of similar systems that are operated in most jurisdictions, both small and large, and agree their own way of doing it. We are where we are, as they say, and that will be a matter for the public at the ballot box. Had I been able to remain in office this should have been achieved by now. I had discussed the topic with the relevant officer and I am sure that they were able to assist Ministers in their consideration of this matter. Unlike the current Government, I also made my best endeavours to communicate clearly about the meetings I held that were of interest to people by using social media channels that are available to us all. One of the strengths of our system is our accessibility, along with our ability as politicians to move around our community without too much concern for safety, unlike in other places. However, a lack of openness in this regard has left people to make their own assumptions about what goes on behind closed doors, hence the low levels of trust in this institution. To be absolutely clear, this does mean lobbying both formal and informal. At the last election the people made it abundantly clear that they wanted to see an end to what is termed “the old boys’ club”. This proposition helps to offer greater comfort to those members of our electorate who hold that view, simply by opening up a diary and communicating about what it contains. This is achieved in most jurisdictions without causing issue to people’s privacy or that of a Minister. It is a matter of regret that the P.P.C. do not appear to share this view and instead have added complexity to the argument. Their role is to uphold standards and I urge them to revisit the matter. This debate, however, is a partial victory and I am grateful that the Government is committed to publishing travel expenses on a quarterly basis, which is a step in the right direction. We should all expect both the P.P.C. and the Council of Ministers to uphold and champion the Nolan Principles of openness and transparency, as they are important factors to maintain and to gain the public’s trust. Having reflected upon this and having read the comments that were published on Friday, I do not wish to take up any more of the Assembly’s time on this matter. With some regret I withdraw the amendment and the proposition. I apologise to those Members who may have taken the time to kindly prepare once again for this debate but I do not think that now is the time. I hope that the P.P.C. will take the matter in hand, along with the Council of Ministers, and we will see some delivery of openness and transparency.

The Bailiff:

You are withdrawing in full the proposition at this stage. As the debate is not opened, it is open to you to do so without the leave of the Assembly, therefore, the proposition is accordingly withdrawn.

10. Modern Languages in Schools (P.74/2024)

The Bailiff:

We come now to Modern Languages in Schools, P.74, lodged by Deputy Tadier and the main respondent is the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. Amendments have been put forward but, Deputy, I notice there was an email that you forwarded to Members and perhaps you could explain which amendments, if any, you are accepting and where we are left with amendments that need to be debated by the Assembly.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Yes, just to clarify for those listening and anyone who did not see the email, I have stated that I will be withdrawing my part (c), so part (c) in the original proposition which deals with the review into the delivery of Portuguese language tuition. That will fall away and of course any subsequent amendments that were made to that would also fall away. I will be accepting the amendment to part (b), which I think is the addition of clarification of mainstream-provided secondary schools. I will not be accepting or supporting any of the other amendments.

The Bailiff:

Very well. Those other amendments will need to be put in due course after you have made the proposition. Greffier, would you read the proposition with the amendment that the Deputy is accepting under (a) and without reading (c) but the rest as drafted by the Deputy originally? Is that correct, Deputy?

Deputy M. Tadier:

That is right, Sir. If the Minister is happy with the acceptance of part (b) and does not want a separate debate on it.

The Bailiff:

Minister are you content? Yes, the Minister is content with that. If Members agree we will read them amended in that way and we will come to the amendments that are not agreed when they naturally arise.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion to request the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to undertake any necessary actions to ensure (a) that all students, both primary and secondary, should receive support from their school to access and develop their home language, in accordance with the rights afforded by Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; (b) that all mainstream-provided secondary schools should continue to offer a choice of at least 2 modern languages, other than English, one of which must be French and (d) that the requirement for students to study at least one modern language, other than English, should be extended from key stage 3, ages 11 to 13, to key stage 4, ages 14 to 16, from September 2026.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Because I have been caught slightly off guard, Sir, could I ask if the usher could bring some water for me, just so that I do not dry up?

The Bailiff:

Yes, I am sure, certainly.

10.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Also, I thank Members for their attention and indulgence in advance. As I said, not that it should make too much difference, I was hoping for maybe half an hour or so to be able to compose myself. But it is obviously a subject in which I have given a lot of thought, not just over the last year but in fact as the information I have circulated to Members will indicate also really over the last 15 years that I have been in this Assembly. Maybe let us start with that point. I know that I am not the only Member in the Assembly who cares passionately about language provision, both in schools but also in the wider community and in fact in this Assembly. I think it is really important to remember that Jersey has so many uniquenesses and also when it comes to our own Assembly that we might find ourselves in 2024 as an Anglophone Assembly to all intents and purposes. But we are also a Francophone Assembly in fact and officially and also when we wish to use that. We do, alongside our very valuable adhesion to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, also have that membership of the Assemblée Parliamantaire de la Francophonie, which opens so many doors to us throughout not just Europe but the rest of the world, and not just to French-speaking countries but those who value French as a cultural or diplomatic or economic language. Also, we have to remember that English that we are speaking today and I have got no intention, it might relieve some Members, of speaking French or Jèrriais, although I am allowed to do that if I wanted to. We have a community which has always been informed by lots of different cultures and languages and that English is the new kid on the block, so to speak, when it comes to modern languages. I also have to apologise in advance if I am going to not be politically correct because I know that there will be, potentially, people listening outside, maybe academics and I am sure those in the Education Department, if I use terms that are outmoded because I think nomenclature seems to change so quickly. I might refer to things like foreign languages, which I think are probably not entirely P.C. (politically correct). We should probably refer to them as additional languages or such because of course “foreign” is a relative term.

[14:30]

If you are speaking French here it might be considered a foreign language; if you are in France it is certainly not foreign. I make those opening comments and also recognise the fact that there have been other champions in this Assembly that are currently here. I look over to Deputy Bailhache, who has been a strong proponent of multilingualism, multiculturalism. Deputy Ozouf of course, and I think of former Members in this Assembly who, when I have been doing my research, have asked questions; ones like Constable Juliette Gallichan and Constable Ken Vibert, both of whom were very competent linguists in their own right but also passionate former Présidents of the Assemblée Parliamantaire themselves. I also want to put this in context, that this is not something that is new or directed at this particular Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning or department. This is something that questions have been asked about for a long time. If I refer Members to the papers that I circulated over the lunch period, there was a question from 2019, essentially which asks: “Would the Minister consider the reintroduction of at least one modern foreign language as compulsory until G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) as part of the standard curriculum in States schools and, if not, why not?” It also asks about what the resourcing might be for that. There has been plenty of time for successive Education Departments to look at that. The answer came back that the 2015-2019 Business Plan stated its aspiration: “For a modern language qualification to be part of every students’ G.C.S.E. portfolio in the long term.” They went on to say that: “As the first step towards this aspiration, the department have supported the effective teaching of French in primary schools.” We also find that more recently, in fact very recently, only this week, in answer to a question that I put about French in particular, that we see, I think, some very worrying statistics that basically if we look at the 4 non-fee-paying States schools, 11 to 16 schools, that 85 per cent of students in year 11 who finished those schools leave without a G.C.S.E. in French, which I do not know about anyone else but I think that is a remarkable statistic. Because if we go back only 20 years it was a requirement really for most of those students ... not all of them because there will always be carve-outs and I think we will get on to that but the vast majority would leave with a G.C.S.E. and a language, and that would more often than not be French. How we get to a point

whereby 85 per cent of those students in, ostensibly, a French-speaking Island where French is not officially still a language of our community, we can be in that state and shows the trend that has happened in the last 20 years. How did we get to this point? It is quite interesting, we are going to hear arguments later on, I think, from the Minister about the fact that this needs to be referred to the Jersey Curriculum Council because this a change to the curriculum. I would contest that, and we will deal with that when we come to the amendments by looking at the 1999 Education Law, that this is a political decision that was being made but I think one that we have sleep-walked into. It was a political decision that was made, not by Jersey but it was a directive that was given by the U.K. Secretary of State for Education back in 2003, 2004, where the U.K. policy, the English curriculum policy, was changed so that a second language was no longer required for key stage 4. What happened is that over a period of time Jersey schools simply adopted that position gradually. Some schools held out longer than others. I will not mention the schools but some adopted it more quickly. We have got to a point now that if you want to be guaranteed for your children to do a language for G.C.S.E., whichever that is, you either have to send them to a fee-paying school, which is J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) or a selective school, which is Hautlieu. There is still a requirement at the former to do French G.C.S.E. and at the latter to do a G.C.S.E. of your choice. But for all other schools, including Victoria College, where that was a longstanding position that French was required, that has fallen by the wayside. Of course why does that matter? First of all, it matters because we are not England and we have by default somehow got ourselves into the position where we are following a policy which has at its roots been dictated by a U.K. Minister some 20 years ago. As I said, this has to be referred to the Curriculum Council but the original decision, I have asked in a recent written question about when this meeting took place to adopt this. The Curriculum Council in Jersey never met to endorse a policy which would see the requirement for G.C.S.E.s to be removed in the first place. Of course there was no decision to pursue that particular avenue. I will just refer now to the other parts of my proposition. Essentially, what we are looking at here, and I will talk to the contentious part of this proposition, rather than necessarily what we all agree with but there is, first of all, some common ground here. The first part of that I think we all agree on, and I think the Minister and I are certainly shoulder to shoulder, is that all students, both primary and secondary, should receive support from their school to access and develop their home languages in accordance with the human rights and their rights as children. I think that is key because, as I have said in my report: "Every language is an asset, every person needs to be respected and every culture needs to be acknowledged." What I am essentially looking for in this wider proposition are 3 things; I am asking us to recognise the fact that, first of all, the learning of one's native tongue or home language, as it should be called, is the first building block to learning more generally. I am not sure if it is the case in this Assembly. There are certainly a few examples of esteemed Members, valued Members here, who have English as an additional language, whose home language was not English. I know that we are likely to hear from them during this debate; I welcome that. I think their contributions would also be very valuable to us in that respect. The second point is that the learning of a second language, an additional language, has so many advantages and provides a further platform for learning. This is not just simply about languages which are discreetly in one box. It is about how languages are a building block for lifelong learning in fact. I know that is another area which both I and the Minister are really keen on promoting and making sure that adults can go on to learn, even long after they have left school. Here is the third critical point, which really speaks to the nub of part (d), which is where we are going to have the main debate today, is that if you cease to study a language at the age of 14, that is far too young, certainly in my book and I think in the book of most academics out there and it is completely out of kilter with the rest of Europe. This is what I would say, is that what I am asking for today, I am not asking for the earth here, what I am saying is it is a fairly low bar at saying that until the age of 16 if you can, and there will be carve-outs, that you should do an additional language. That could be French, could be Spanish, could be Italian, could be Portuguese, could be Polish, could be Romanian, whatever it is, you would do that in addition to English, which is a requirement of the curriculum. But the bar is set so much higher in Europe. What we should be talking about of course is you should be doing 2 languages until you are 18, 2 additional languages.

If we look throughout Europe, somebody sent me a video which I thought was really useful over the weekend, in fact they sent it to me before the weekend and it was of a Finnish primary school class. I say they are primary school, they are about 10 years old; I think they are called fourth grade, so there must be an American slant to it. They were having a normal lesson, they were being taught about fake news, really important subjects. They were being taught about this in Spanish and they were also being taught about this in English. You have got this 10 year-old Finnish young lad who is talking to the camera about the importance of being able to distinguish fake news and he is learning it in Spanish and he is also talking about it in English. Of course his native tongue will be Finnish and it is really important for him and his fellow pupils because they are right on the border of Russia. These things are not mutually exclusive. When you learn another language you learn so much more. You are learning about art, you are learning about history, you are learning about geography, you are learning about science and maths because you have to learn how to count in another language or at least have to know what the numbers mean. But you do not have to learn everything again if you are learning another language. I think we had these comments and I thought it was a very good debate on the bilingual schools; very informed debate. Did not win of course but I think a lot of the themes were supported in that. The question that might come is: what do teachers think about this? What do headteachers think about it? Headteachers possibly do not want this, as the Deputy engaged with schools on this. I am quite happy to say that I could not get round to all schools but I did make sure that I wrote to a number of schools and I got invited to 2. I went to see a school in which languages are required for G.C.S.E. and I went to one school, a States school, where it is not required. I was impressed by both schools; they both had a commitment in different ways to languages. They both had different starting points. It is fair to say that in the school where it was not a requirement the headteacher, although he was, I think, very much pro-languages, was pro-choice. He said he did not want to oblige some of his students to have to do languages, and we will hear all those arguments come forward. The head of languages, on the other hand, was much more open to the fact that she thought, he or she thought - the cat is out of the bag - that it should be a requirement. Of course when she was at school, like many of us, it was a requirement to at least carry on studying the language until the age of 16. One of the teachers at the other school said something interesting because one thing that might come up as a counterargument here - and I am trying to pre-empt some of those thoughts - is can you imagine teaching a class of students who do not want to do the subject? He said: "It is not just about forcing children to do, say, French at the age of 15 when they might not want to be doing French, they might want to be playing football." But of course we can make all of those arguments about maths, English, science and English literature where they have to do them. He said: "Can you imagine teaching a class of 12 year-olds French when they know that the next year they are going to drop it?" He says: "We have got a problem in some schools between the ages of 11 and 12 and 13 where they are just not interested because they see that languages are just not important." Why do they think they are not important? Because we have, effectively, told them that. They can give them up as soon as they are able to, as soon as they turn into what used to be the fourth year, year 10, the end of year 9. You have got your options and a language does not have to form part of them. I am sorry, that is not a holistic education in my book. We already know that we have got an issue following the English system where we have got a very narrow ... we specify far too early for A-levels. It means that we specialise in an age where most of our counterparts in Europe are receiving a much broader education. I turn to the other statistic that is being put out, that there is no problem because 51 per cent of students leave school with a G.C.S.E. in a foreign language. If you turn to page 8 of the report we would see that ... I do not know if I can say this, Sir, but: "There are lies, there are damned lies, and there are statistics"; it is a well-known expression. The key point here is that ...

The Bailiff:

I am not entirely sure it makes it parliamentary. There are lots of well-known expressions I would not like to hear on the floor of the Assembly, Deputy. **[Laughter]** But I will let it pass on this occasion.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you, Sir. When we look at the breakdown of that 51 per cent what we see is that the average of course being used here and the Minister, as a scientist, likes to talk about averages. I know we are talking about the mean specifically, so it is not the mode or the median, it is the mean, which is the collective. It is not a very useful statistic because it does not give us the breakdown per school. What we see in that is that the results for J.C.G. and Hautlieu where 91 per cent of their students at J.C.G. obviously do a modern language to 16 and Hautlieu where 86 per cent do a language to 16; that of course brings the mean up significantly. If we take out that average and also take out Victoria College, which is a selective school, and we can do both figures, the figure falls down to 36 per cent.

[14:45]

Again, it is the majority of students in the States non-fee-paying schools, 36 per cent of them do one language. That means the majority, 65 per cent, leave school again without even a modern language, let alone French. I think, again, that is a worrying statistic because we know that languages are really important, not just for the community but also, I think, for the economy. If we turn to the second extract that I put on that circular, 2013, so we are going back a few years now. We are going back 11, 12 years almost. Which Minister was it? How many have we got through since 2013? I think this was probably Deputy Patrick Ryan, if I remember rightly: "Will the Minister state which foreign languages are the most important for Jersey, both currently and in the medium term and what plans there are for the co-ordination with the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to make sure that there is a sufficient number of local school leavers who are sufficiently competent to use these languages to meet current and future demands for these language skills?" Probably that question is going to the Minister for Economic Development, how are you going to liaise with the Minister for Education? The answer came back that: "Individuals who study languages at a higher level in Jersey have remained relatively and consistently low over the last 5 years, with a slight dip in 2013 and 2014. Enhanced language skills are likely to become a key employability asset in terms of the future for the Jersey workforce and the States which is seeking to promote languages alongside a higher level of professional skills." I am going to draw this part to a close because I think I could certainly baffle myself, if not others, with statistics. I have seen the trends that by analysing the statistics from the department, and I do thank the Minister and his staff because I know that he has been giving me a lot of statistical information. He is not the only one and I have pointed that out before. I have asked all Ministers for Education in the past these kind of questions. I want to set out the vision that I have for where Jersey needs to be. Because what we do is that we reap the things that we sow, not immediately but sometimes it is a question 10, 15, 20 years into the future. I was asked in a different context this week for what my thoughts were from a Scrutiny Panel perspective about the low birth rates. Of course you have to think that the consequences of that are going to be of course some things are short term and there is going to be an impact on the education system. But the real impact is going to be in 20, 30, 40 years' time when those people who are not being born now, if we like, are not going to be able to take part in the Jersey community or the Jersey economy and contribute to that. We have to think the same about the changes that are taking place in our education system. I would make the point that those changes that were made in another place in the U.K., the policy changes that have then filtered down into the Jersey education system, are starting to have that effect now. We are starting to see fewer linguists or not even linguists but people leaving school with the basic components that they have, the basic skills that languages give, not just the languages themselves, finding themselves in this brave new world today. I also take into account that the U.K. may have wished to vote for Brexit if it wanted to. Jersey never had that desire or that ability to vote for Brexit. In fact I think Jersey positions itself best when it is an outward-looking Island, when it recognises the fact that we are part of the European as well as the British family and British community. We are also part of that European community. But when we look across Gorey over to the east, it is not Dorset or Hampshire that we see, it is the Cotentin Peninsula, it is where our French cousins live, our Norman cousins. If we were to go south we get to Brittany where we have our Breton cousins and our European neighbours that are among us. We are long losing the ability to

speak with them in their own language but also in their own political language I fear. That is why I think it is important that we set out a vision to say that this is a decision for the States. It is right that the States opines in principle on what should be in the Jersey curriculum because we are not talking about an English curriculum here. That certainly when it comes to the States schools there is a reason that they are called States schools, it is because they are States schools and we are the States. It is right that we do have some kind of interaction in terms of what we would like to see in the curriculum. I think it is important to say that we are Jersey and I think that it is important that we have a Jersey curriculum which is holistic, which is fit for the future, which is outward looking and, yes, it does accept the fact that we have multiple cultures here. But it is a specific Jersey identity that we need to be promoting. I would sum up by saying I would like to look behind me and look around in fact and say it is a tough ask this one because we know that the Ministerial whip is going to be out again presumably. I have already had Members telling me: "I would like to support this but collective responsibility and all that." I say I do not think that is the case. I think there are examples where you vote with your conscience on this. I would much prefer for Members not to vote for an amendment which maybe kicks this into the long grass. If you do not like the proposition by all means vote against it but do not be tempted to vote for an amendment which could get us to a position where we end up doing nothing when we could be doing something really positive for the Island into the future. I make the proposition.

The Bailiff:

Is the proposition seconded? [**Seconded**] There are amendments to the proposition and some of those amendments have not been accepted by Deputy Tadier and, therefore, those need to be debated now. I would ask the Greffier to read the outstanding ...

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

Sir, may I raise a point of order, if I may?

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Deputy in advancing this proposition spoke about a Ministerial whip and I am genuinely asking that we have been through a Budget and I offer no criticism, it is a genuine question for you maybe not to opine on now but are we entitled, as Members, to know whether there is a Ministerial whip or not because otherwise there is no point in having the debate? I just think that this Assembly does not know what it is ... we are having a debate but if there is a Ministerial whip there is a majority and we lose it.

The Bailiff:

I have to say I have not given that the slightest thought and I would need to think very carefully ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I ask you to do, Sir?

The Bailiff:

... as to whether or not there was any obligation. But my first instinctive reaction is that how the Council of Ministers organise themselves is a matter for the Council of Ministers. If Ministers wish to say that there is some kind of discipline that has been opposed for a particular proposition that is a matter for them. But I do not think I can insist or require, that would be my first reaction, that I could not do so.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I am happy to give it more thought if you wish.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It is just that I do not want to waste this Assembly's time because otherwise we are really literally wasting our time.

The Bailiff:

On that extremely narrow point if you wish to say something, Chief Minister. No, very well. I would ask the Greffier ...

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

I am not quite sure I understand the Deputy's objection. It is called democracy, what we exercise in this Chamber. The Council of Ministers discuss and make decisions by consensus. We do not have collective responsibility enshrined and so quite often we discuss it and Ministers and Assistant Ministers, if they are not going to support a Minister, they say so and make their case for it. It is called democracy and that is what we abide to in the Council of Ministers. I think in this Assembly arguments are won or lost on their merits.

10.2 Modern Languages in Schools (P.74/2024): amendment (P.74/2024 Amd.)

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Chief Minister. I have allowed that exchange to take place because clearly it was a matter exercising the Deputy. But I think now we move on within accordance of the strict rules of debate within the Assembly and I ask the Greffier to read the amendments to the proposition.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Page 2, paragraph (d) - after the word "that" insert the words "a review and consultation is undertaken by the Jersey Curriculum Council for". For the words "from September 2026" substitute the words "and to report back to the Minister before the end of December 2025". Page 2, paragraph (d) - after paragraph (d) insert the following new paragraph (e) - "that the reviews and consultations undertaken by the Jersey Curriculum Council include assessment and costings of any staff and non-staff resource requirements and any effects on option choices in schools."

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

It is nice to get to the debate at last. This amendment places the Deputy's proposition on to a platform whereby his interest in promoting modern languages is supported in a positive and realistic way. I want the Assembly to understand the range of need and the changing environment of modern education and why the changes proposed in the initial proposition need to be addressed in a more detailed and relevant way. I do have concerns about the Assembly making direct decisions on the curriculum content ...

Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:

I am sorry to interrupt the Minister but would he mind speaking up, please?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. I have never been asked that before in my life. [Laughter]

The Bailiff:

Nonetheless, if you are able to speak up, Minister, I am sure that would be most welcome.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am certainly able to speak up, Sir. Ironically, I was told before I speak too loudly but I say thank you to the Deputy for that. I have obviously softened in my old age. I will start again, if that is okay, that is a very teacher thing to do. This amendment places the Deputy's proposition on to a platform whereby his interest in promoting modern languages is supported in a positive and realistic way. I want the Assembly to understand the range of need and the changing environment of modern education and why the changes proposed in the initial proposition need to be addressed in a more detailed and relevant way. I do have concerns about the Assembly making direct decisions on the curriculum content and in doing so circumventing the dedicated professionals who know our schools and the challenges faced every day. I want to allow the forum that exists, the Curriculum Council, to be enabled to consider this proposed change in consultation with those directly involved. This is an opportunity to look at the current context of language-teaching, to look at the historic changes that have occurred and to develop a best opportunity to develop this one area of the curriculum. This is what the Curriculum Council does across our curriculum and indeed it is what those who deliver subjects would wish to do in sharing good practice. Furthermore, the Jersey Curriculum Council is a statutory body within the Education Law of 1999, defined under Article 19. Subsequently, to make a major change to the curriculum across our schools I am duty bound to consult. I know that the proposer has an issue as to why this did not happen when the previous changes occurred. Languages have never been compulsory in the way the Deputy is suggesting. It was the choice of the school. As the curriculum, children's needs and needs of our society and economy have changed, so has the choice as to whether languages courses will be universal in school to 16. Schools have adapted to change and offer a huge range of choice to best meet the needs of the children they teach within a very selective education system. The proposition unamended would make a blanket change to provision, that means the Curriculum Council must be consulted. All I can say is I am not responsible for approaches from the previous Ministers mentioned from many years ago but I will ensure decisions will be made correctly under my leadership. How does this amendment do this? I will go through each paragraph carefully. I will do so as quickly as possible for Members to give you a bit of relief now. Part (a) is not an issue in terms of accepting the wording. It will raise the context of the challenge our schools faced where 84 languages are spoken. The ongoing work to give and develop the support needed is happening. Is it perfect? The answer is no but the work continues. Part (b) now accepted by the Deputy, and this corrects a serious error in the original proposition; it makes a very simple but important change to part (b). We must identify that this applies to mainstream schools. Our schools that provide incredible support to children who need the most cannot be told to deliver something that is simply unrealistic. I also highlight the role of the additional resource centres in schools that address specific needs of students who cannot access the full curriculum. They are based in our 11 to 16 schools. This is an important, vital, cohort of children that we cannot fail.

[15:00]

This is an example of the challenges the whole of the education system face. One size does not fit all. Mainstream schools do currently offer a choice of languages and they do so in a difficult environment for recruitment and retention and with many challenges for what provision needs to be to satisfy the demands of parents and children. We must remember that not all children will cope with a diet of 8 or 9 G.C.S.E. courses. Their needs must be met. Part (c) is now removed but I would like to highlight at this point the excellent support given to our schools by the Portuguese Government via the Camões Agreement; not too bad. The investment that has happened there is superb. I agreed with the Deputy's initial call for review; this amendment positioned in the correct place and with the realistic timetable. It is a shame that we have not retained this part, it was just accepted. Because the Deputy wanted to review and now does not seem to want to review in that area; but that is okay, we can move forwards. Part (d) is the really important part of this amendment. The original proposition simply imposes the compulsory teaching of modern languages to G.C.S.E. to all students from September and I repeat, all students. It does so without any consideration of the views of students, schools or the wider community. I refer Members back to the reference to the additional

resource centres in our 11 to 16 schools which cater for children who cannot cope with a full G.C.S.E. load. It would include those children in their compulsory provision of French or a modern language. It does so with no consideration of the staffing and financial requirement to make this imposition. I remind Members that language at G.C.S.E. are an option and there is a significant uptake. In 2024 and a cohort of 877 year 11 students, not including De La Salle and Hautlieu because we do not have their figures, they are slightly different; 451 took one or more languages, a percentage of 51 per cent. That 51 per cent is important and valid because it is the whole cohort and that is what we are talking about here. Of course our 11 to 16 schools' rates would be lower; they are a selective set of schools. The cohort in our 11 to 16 schools need to be supported in a slightly different way for G.C.S.E. A Member of the Assembly did suggest to me that students are not able to follow a language anymore; that is simply not the case. The options are available for all students should they wish to take that option. Further, and most importantly from an education perspective, it takes no consideration of the impact of removing an option from schools and from children. To suggest that we can simply add another compulsory subject to the curriculum with no impact is wrong. It is fundamentally incorrect. What about extending the school day or doing something radically different, which is going to be almost impossible and make it more challenging for children? I offer to all Members a meeting with any headteacher or member of staff producing timetables to see the reality of the demand this will make. Before you make those decisions think that through. We must understand the impact of teaching of other subjects which now may be unviable as a group due to small numbers after an option is removed. There are options that happen in schools with just about the right number to maintain a class. If one of the option blocks is removed by adding a compulsory subject, those subjects are at risk; that is the reality of schools. This is what we must consider, if we are not about to do more damage to our provision than good. The amendment promotes this work via the Curriculum Council in order that the genuine impact of change is understood. This then enables me to make a meaningful and successful change where necessary. If the change is as easy as the Deputy suggests, then the recommendations should be actionable but in a way that is sustainable and educationally valid. Making a change that is not sustainable over the long term is damaging for children. Part (e) is equally as important. The additional paragraph is vital and it says that: "Consultations undertaken by the J.C.C. (Jersey Curriculum Council)", if I may call it the J.C.C.: "Include assessment and costings of any staff and non-staff resource requirements and any effects on option choices." Removing an option block will mean some subjects may become untenable in terms of numbers. The knock-on may be to lose staff who no longer teach a subject of G.C.S.E. This impact must be understood, planned for and addressed before a change is made. The original proposition makes absolutely no reference to this possibility. Some concluding points, and there is a point I would like to raise, in previous debates we have had Members of this Assembly openly criticise the delivery of languages in schools. I want to say that I see this as unfair. I offer an open invite to any Member who has concerns and meet with teachers, language teachers, go into schools to look at what is happening in classrooms across our Island, across all of our schools, selective and non-selective schools. The reality of the commitment made to deliver a subject of its foreign language and the challenges faced will be real to you then. Many students follow one or indeed more languages at G.C.S.E.; it is their choice to do so. This choice remains. The choices created by schools to engage students, increase opportunity and provide experience for a modern world must be recognised. In the report there are links to all the options choices offered in our schools. Please click on those links, look at the range of choice that is being provided for schools to meet the needs of a modern society for children now. The data from 15 years ago or 13 years ago needs to be taken with the context of the change over the last 12 and 13 years for the needs of our society and the needs of our children. Schools are trying to do that with some remarkably unique ways to address that. Schools also include all abilities in this provision. Some students may have one option at G.C.S.E. to support them, to enable them to genuinely access the curriculum and support real success, i.e., their option is not a G.C.S.E. but a support option. That is very real in our non-selective schools, we must remember that. Forcing these students into a different and relatively academic subject must be considered very carefully. One concern raised with me over the possible change from an educational

professional is this: if you have low literacy and cannot access English G.C.S.E. then it is highly unlikely you will be able to access a language. It is also not inclusive practice - and I know Minister after Minister have talked about the importance of inclusion - when assessing curriculum choices at G.C.S.E. I finish on a positive note, this amendment starts a dialogue with the body set up in law to look at our curriculum with those who deliver the curriculum, with headteachers, parents, the wider community and, most importantly, the young people who will follow the curriculum we are looking to impose. Any outcomes can then be acted on in a meaningful timescale and for those right reasons and very crucially in a sustainable way. Education is a balance, a balance between the many demanding voices who have views on what our system should contain, a balance between the demands of a modern society and the young people for who we want to provide the best experience, the most relevant experience and the most suitable qualifications, and the balance between the reality of what we deliver for our children and how it is delivered. I want to thank the Education staff for the work they do and I ask the Assembly to respect their professionalism, respect the statutory functions of the Jersey Curriculum Council and support this amendment. I move the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]**

10.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I thought I would speak early on this just to set out the stall as to why I think the original unamended version is better than the amended version - and ultimately that is of course what we are talking about here - before we move on to the main debate on the merits of the underlying proposition, I hope. In order to do that I refer us back to what the unamended paragraph would look like if the amendment is not adopted, which I hope it is not. What I am asking very simply in paragraph (d) is that the requirement for students to study at least one modern language other than English should be extended from key stage 3, i.e., 11 to 13, to key stage 4, which is 14 to 16 year-olds, from September 2026. It does not mention anything about a G.C.S.E., it does not mention anything about all students. What it simply says is it acknowledges the fact that it is already a pre-existing requirement in law for students right from primary school - I think it is age 7 to 13 - to study a modern language and that modern language has to be French. The U.K. has a slightly different position, England has a position where students also have to study a language from 11 to 13, but it can be a choice of languages. That is the only difference that we have here; it is entirely possible, therefore. That is basically the position what I am asking for, is to go back to what used to be commonplace in schools before the changes happened. I will address some of the points that the Minister made to suggest why schools should be best placed to make that choice. Now what the Minister is asking for if we adopt his amendment would read that a review and consultation is undertaken by the Jersey Curriculum Council for the requirement for students to study at least one modern language, as I have outlined, and then to report back to the Minister before the end of December 2025. Now I think there are a few issues here. The first is that I am asking for an opinion, an in-principle decision, from my colleagues in the Assembly on this issue. What the Minister is asking for is a review and a consultation to be undertaken. Who is it going to be undertaken by? The Jersey Curriculum Council. Now the first thing is that how often have we heard Governments being criticised, either now or in the past, for not wanting to take action but just to engage in reviews and consultations? The second point is that we already know what the outcome of the review of the Jersey Curriculum Council will be because the Minister has basically outlined the multitude of hurdles that there are to making this a reality. Ultimately it cannot be delivered because the starting point is ... and I respect this. It is a difference of opinion between the Minister and myself and myself and the department, so I did make sure that I went to speak to the department months ago - in fact, it was at the same time when Deputy Bailhache was moving his proposal - and it was quite clear that the department do not want to do this. They have got their policy, which is quite clear that they value students' choice and that schools should choose whether or not languages are taken, either whether they are offered as a compulsory subject or an option, and then students decide whether that option is implemented. That is fine, that is just a political difference

of opinion, but when we start getting into the language that this would be damaging for our children in the schools, my mind moves to Europe and thinks of all those poor damaged children that are coming out of the education system, not just at the age of 16, but at the age of 18, because they are being forced to study, not just one foreign language, but 2 foreign languages. They have got irreparable damage that they have to have years of counselling for. It is just complete shroud-waving, it is alarmism, and it does not bear the reality. The point here is that we have a highly divisive and selective education system, which is what the Minister and I agree on, and the consequences are that the students who end up in the 11 to 16 - I say "end up there" it is a perfectly good place to be - but if you are in the 11 to 16 non-fee-paying school system, there is a presumption that you will leave school without a G.C.S.E. in a foreign language and so what do you do if you are a parent who cares about languages and wants your child to have a holistic education because personally I think a lot of parents think it should be obligatory, not just to 16 but to 18. It used to be the case in Jersey that you would want to at least keep your options open and so you went to university or you went on to a vocational profession, whatever it was. Of course a language can be useful for a lawyer, a doctor and an electrician because there are opportunities both here and abroad, and there is studying that can be done in any particular area. First of all, I think do not be tempted to vote for this as a middle route to say that: "I support languages but let us refer it to the Curriculum Council because they know best."

[15:15]

Because, first of all, who are the Curriculum Council? I am trying to find that out but it is set out in law. There is a chair who I think is the chief executive of the Education Department and there is a vice-chair who is appointed by the Minister, I think, and there are 13 other professional teachers, none of whom, to my knowledge, are language teachers. They will simply come back and say: "Do not do this because we do not think it is a good idea." Do not go down that rabbit hole. It would be, I think, unproductive to do that. Simply vote against it if you do not want it to happen, but if you do want it to happen, I think then let us go back to the point that this is an in-principle debate. If the States turn around, if we turn around and say: "Look, we agree that it should be a requirement for this to be studied up until the age of 16" then the Minister will go back to the law, Article 16 of the Education (Jersey) Law 1999, which says: "The Minister shall, after consultation with the Jersey Curriculum Council (b) revise that curriculum whenever the Minister considers it necessary or expedient to do so." The Minister has got the power - this Minister or any Minister - to make changes to the curriculum when he wants to. You would presume that the Minister wants to know what the States Assembly thinks because the States Assembly also is a consultative body. If the States Assembly says to the Minister: "We think that this should be put back into the curriculum" and we are going to hear those arguments hopefully in the main debate which will say: "Yes/no. This is what I think. This is what it was like when I was at school. These are the considerations for me in whichever Parish. These are my business considerations for the business community, for the wider community, as to why it might be a good thing." The Minister will then take that decision back to the Curriculum Council and he will simply say: "The States has made this decision that they want to see languages back in the curriculum at key stage 4, how are we going to deliver that, guys?" That will be the consultation that he is required to do under the law. He will consult with the Curriculum Council and then he will revise that curriculum whenever the Minister considers it necessary or expedient to do so. He can do that in any way he wants. He can do it by coming back to the Assembly and saying: "Look, we are going to need to deliver it in this way. We are going to need potentially some more resources" but it is within both the gift of the Minister to do that and it is within the realms of reality to do that. It is something which we have done in the past anyway, it is something which schools are equipped to do because in those schools where languages are optional, all students could turn around in any one year and say: "We want to do languages." You could have 100 per cent of a year group saying: "We want to study French" how does the school then cope with that? They do not cope with it because they have got into a routine where there are options put out there and there is a presumption that fewer and fewer students are doing languages in the first place. I think let us

keep this simple, let us not ask for another review or a consultation, let us not refer a review and a consultation to a body that we know they are going to give an answer ... I say this slightly tongue in cheek, but it is a little bit like if we wanted to make a decision, with due respect, about the future role of the President of this Assembly but we do not want to make a decision about it, so let us refer it to a body. Let us refer it to the Comité des Connétables to see what they think about it and ask the Comité: "What do you think about that?" or to refer electoral reform to them. The question is: should we get rid of the Constables? Should they no longer sit in the Assembly? Let us ask the Comité des Connétables what they think. The answer would come back: "Not sure about that." It is not the best example and I probably should not mix my metaphors but how many members of the Curriculum Council does it take to change a light bulb? None, because there is nothing wrong with the light bulb, is the answer. Essentially, let us not move away from the main argument that we are looking at here. We have schools which are already set up to teach a multitude of languages up to the age of 16. That is currently not happening in certain schools. We do not need a review to determine whether or not this is right thing to do. We need this Assembly to give a steer to the Minister about the direction we wish this to travel in and that needs to be a clear steer which is unamended and not going down the route of a review which is both unnecessary and which will be a *fait accompli*. I do ask Members to vote against the amendment.

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

I will rise to speak now. I am only going to speak once, and I am speaking on the main proposition, but I take it that if the amendment goes through then the proposition would fall away, would it? Or ...

The Bailiff:

No, the proposition would stand as amended.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Oh, yes, of course it would. Sorry, I am having a senior moment.

The Bailiff:

So do you still want to speak?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Yes, I will carry on speaking anyway. Sorry. Unfortunately, I am not a natural linguist; however, I am extremely grateful that I studied French up to G.C.S.E., or O-level, as it was known that long ago, and even now, when I can, I go off and take French lessons. Both my children took French to G.C.S.E. and both have been fortunate to study abroad: my daughter in Montreal and my son in Amsterdam. Montreal is a wonderful official bilingual city and Amsterdam, as we all know, is a fantastic European city with a multitude of languages. So many of their friends are not only bilingual but are trilingual or multilingual and think nothing of it. Speaking another language is really enriching. France, for example, takes language-speaking seriously. Children around the world who have access to languages from an early age and carry on until they leave school take it as a natural part of life. They are not brighter or universally-gifted at language but it is a mindset of their country which is so different to the U.K. and Jersey. Why can we not follow suit here? It should be natural to learn another language because Jersey's history and culture is fundamentally multilingual and our outlook has been international for centuries. One of the greatest successes of the last Assemblies has been the increased support and recognition of the Island's linguistic diversity and culture. It is vital that we continue down this path by supporting this proposition, and I mean the whole proposition. As Deputy Tadier mentions in his report, language education in the U.K. faces a continued decline. It is our duty as the elected representatives of this Island to ensure that it is not mirrored in Jersey and that young Islanders have the skills and advantages they need to succeed in life. It is only right that this includes multilingualism because speaking another language is something that the whole Island benefits from, not just the individual. I would ask Members to vote against the amendment and

veuillez voter pour la proposition du Deputy Tadier. Merci. Please vote for Deputy Tadier's proposition. Thank you.

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

I am speaking on the amendment. As Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning I fully support the amendment lodged by the Minister. I have no doubt of the passion for languages and well-meaning intentions of the proposer; however, I cannot help but see some issues it may cause if passed unamended. The Deputy had proposed a review into the delivery of the Portuguese language tuition in schools before he removed that from this debate. However, at the same time he thinks we do not need any review or research or evidence or identification of additional resources before we commit to mandatory language study in key stage 4 from September next year. My concern is with the word "mandatory". There are some children and young people who are not linguists and making something mandatory is not particularly good for them. I see the Minister's amendment as a positive one that supports paragraph (a) and makes one small but important change to paragraph (b) which Deputy Tadier has accepted. Part (c) has been removed. Part (d) is left unamended which means taking a blind leap of faith to implement mandatory language study for all key stage 4 students from September 2026. No speaking to students and teachers beforehand, no gathering of views from any parents, no assessment whatsoever into any additional resources that might be required, and no assessment of how this could impact on subject choices for students. I am not willing to take that blind leap of faith in this way and I would urge other Members to show similar restraint and support the amendment.

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

First of all, I am grateful for Deputy Tadier to bring this proposition forward. In speaking to the amendment at this point, I tend to agree with him that the direction of the Jersey Curriculum Council needs to have some alteration. He is quite right in saying that they do not seem to have the understanding of what is required in this day and age and have become totally anglicised in their approach. I would urge them to turn direction a bit to accommodate languages in a better way. I appreciate, and it has been demonstrated by the performance given out in the answer to Written Question 26 by the department, that the achievement performance by schools has been rather poor. I am grateful that Les Quennevais School in my own Parish seems to be way ahead at 20 per cent than the others. Congratulations to them and their teaching staff for doing that. I think that the department needs to move on this. We cannot stay in the languish in the past performance of the last 5 years, we have to move ahead and do better and by following Deputy Tadier's example and rejecting this proposition is the way to go forward.

10.2.6 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

The Minister's amendments are a fairly blatant attempt to kick Deputy Tadier's proposition into the long grass. The Curriculum Council, according to a written answer from his predecessor a few years ago, meets only 3 times a year, once every term. I am sure it is a very useful body but to suggest that these important issues around languages and multilingualism in our Island should be referred to a council which works at a relatively leisurely pace so that they report to the Minister, not even to the States, just before the Assembly goes into purdah is a polite way of telling Deputy Tadier to get lost. **[Approbation] [Laughter]** I do not think that that is the message that the Deputy should receive. He has fastened on to 2 really important points, one of which has been withdrawn, to my regret, from the Assembly insofar as it concerns the teaching of Portuguese, but I just want to say a few words about that. I think it is relevant because paragraph (d) refers to the requirement to study at least one modern language. The teaching of Portuguese in our secondary schools so that those of a Portuguese heritage can take advantage of their inherited ability to speak the language to get an A* in their G.C.S.E.s, or whatever is the highest mark now achievable, is a really important matter. I do not need to persuade Members of the importance of this community. In 1998, more than a quarter of a century ago, I had the privilege of signing a Jersey-Madeira Friendship Agreement with President Alberto João Jardim. The headline in the paper at the time was "*Amizade*", friendship or partnership.

The *J.E.P.* gave its Saturday interview to the President during which he spoke warmly of Jersey, of integrating Portuguese people into our community, and of the importance of education in that process. Today we do have an opportunity, I think, of honouring our obligation under that agreement by taking a small but positive step forward. *Amizade*. That is what friendship means.

[15:30]

The second important point made by Deputy Tadier relates to the taking of French or indeed another modern language at G.C.S.E. He wants to turn the clock back 10 years when the U.K. took a retrograde step and Jersey foolishly followed suit. The Minister is halfway towards accepting this proposal because he agrees, it seems, that all mainstream secondary schools should teach French. He wants to have a consultation as to the requirement to extend the requirement to take a foreign language to key stage 4 or to G.C.S.E. and a report back which will, as I have suggested, in effect mean that nothing happens by September 2026. What is the purpose of consulting the Curriculum Council on this issue? A few headteachers may be in favour, many may be against, but the important issue is: is it a question for headteachers or the Curriculum Council to determine? If one wants a change in the law of assisted dying, does the medical profession have a veto on that? It is a policy matter for the Assembly to decide. One does not always ask lawyers as to whether a change in the law is desirable. Policy matters such as the level of importance to attach to the teaching of French in our schools are matters for elected representatives. The Minister said that adding another compulsory subject to the curriculum is wrong and the Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning says much the same thing. He said it was wrong to make it mandatory for students to study a language but some subjects are already mandatory, we compel students to study those subjects. It is a question of how important to the Assembly is the teaching of French in our schools. I can understand that some Members may think that a knowledge of French is unimportant and that anyway most foreigners speak English and probably should do anyway, English is the only important language to master, after all. I believe that most Members, indeed all those, whether born here or not, who have Jersey in their hearts understand that the French language is part of Jersey's history and culture. The letters on the voting buttons in front of us stand for French words. We vote on *projet de loi*, draft laws, prayers are in French, some laws are in French. Gradually, but sadly inexorably, we are losing this part of our culture and if we do not insist that our children learn French, it will soon all be gone. Some Members may not care but the majority of Members that I have spoken to do care. They subscribe to the view that our linguistic heritage is in danger, so why does the Minister, who is one of that majority as a matter of fact, insist on procrastinating and making it more likely that our rich, multilingual history is obliterated? It is too easy to be swamped by problems, to be cowed by naysayers, and to find reasons for delaying and not grasping nettles that need to be grasped. We have already rejected the proposal for bilingual primary schools, are we going to kick this proposition of Deputy Tadier also into the long grass? We should have the courage as a matter of policy to declare that teaching of foreign languages in Jersey is important and that our identity is too special to ignore. I do hope that Members will reject the Minister's amendment.

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

Deputy Bailhache asks several times in his remarks just now what the purpose of the Minister's amendment is and I can tell him very succinctly what the purpose is. The purpose is to make sure that if we are going in this direction we do it properly, that we understand that the provision of an education curriculum to our young people is not something you pluck out of thin air, it is not something you presume you make one decision and everything magically works beyond there. It is something that has to be carefully and considerately crafted to make sure that it is of the quality and the breadth that our young people need so that every one of those young people in our schools, with no young person being left behind, is given a quality of service that enables them to thrive. You do not achieve that by voting for one proposition and assuming everything magically falls into place after. You need to work with schools, you need to work with teachers, you need to work with those who will deliver this curriculum to say: "Right. How do we achieve this properly? How do we make

sure that the breadth of options are there for young people? Do they need to be carved out and what may those look like if they have to be applied?" This may be a parliamentary debating Chamber where we will debate matters of ideology and will do so democratically and often ferociously, but I think that how education is delivered to our children should be a no-go area for ideological debates. It should be about: how do we practically deliver the best quality education to our young people? I have to say, I have heard some disparagement or some cynicism, at the very least, of the Jersey Curriculum Council that seems to have come out of absolute nowhere to me. I do not have any reasons whatsoever to regard the Curriculum Council in the way that some Members have hinted we ought to do. I do not have any cynicism about their approach to this and I cannot see a reason why if it is not said to them that, having had a constructive debate in this Chamber, the Assembly is interested in expanding language provision in schools to make sure young people get the best options available to them there, why they would not give that a good go and seriously look at it and then come back to the Minister and say: "If you want to go in this direction, these are the things you will have to consider in order to do that." What the Minister said about the time in the school day is a serious point here because if you are, all of a sudden, saying to students: "Now this subject is compulsory" that will necessarily mean that for some children they will not be doing something that they otherwise would have been doing. What might that be? What subjects might there be less provision for in future if language is promoted? These are all completely legitimate non-ideological questions. The way we want to go about answering that question is to say: "Right. What is most practical? How do we do it? What is in the best interests of those children to make sure that they have got those options before them?" There was some talk about the history of language provision in schools in Jersey. It was compulsory for me to do a G.C.S.E. in a modern language when I was at Hautlieu because Hautlieu was a school where that was a requirement at the time. In the run-up to it, we were offered several weeks of tuition in a foreign language that we had not studied at that point in order to inform us what language we would want to choose. I had studied French up until that point but I was offered 2 weeks of Spanish and 2 weeks of Italian. I remember at the time thinking that Spanish, I was not as keen on it as French, but I picked up what we were taught with not too much difficulty, and I found my experience of Italian to be the complete opposite. I did not understand it, I was not able to put things together in my head and then verbalise them. The progress I had made in that 2 weeks was absolutely nothing compared to what I had had in my 2 weeks of Spanish. That shows that not every person or every child has the same aptitude at each subject as any other subjects, which is why options are so important, and making sure that you do not inadvertently provide options in a school that deprive a child of an opportunity to study something which they would thrive at because you have made a decision on the back of not adequate research and consultation to get there. In those discussions about the history of language provision in schools in Jersey I thought of the old saying: "Those who do not learn the lessons of history are damned to repeat it" which of course that is an argument for making history G.C.S.E.-compulsory, is it not? There are some children who would thrive at that and every child is unique. Some are more arty and creative, some are better at practical things, some are better at academic things. What do we do if we find situations where there is a child or children in a school who it is so obvious that it is not a subject they are going to thrive at, that you will be wasting hours of their week and not allowing them to do another subject that they could thrive at, could get a good grade that would look better on their C.V. (curriculum vitae) and that would enable them to do the things that they want to do afterwards. There was some debate in the last couple of years in the U.K. when the former Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, had talked about making maths teaching compulsory to the age of 18. When that as a proposal was made ... because you could argue maths is such an important core subject, why should it not be compulsory up to the age of 18? I remember a very powerful argument being made by the famous actor Simon Pegg. I am very fond of the actor Simon Pegg because he has a very close likeness to my good friend Deputy Coles; they look very similar. **[Laughter]** Sorry, but it is just true, they do. He is an extremely successful actor and has done a brilliant job in his career, arguing passionately, saying that if he had been forced to have done maths up until the age of 18 he would have absolutely hated it because it just was not something he enjoyed and had aptitude at and it would have deprived

him of time that he was spending working on the things that would get him further on in life. That is not to say that we should not have greater language provision in schools. We live in an interconnected world and it has never been so easy to converse with people on the other side of the planet now. It is really important that we have as many skills of communication as we have in whatever language, including English, and our ability to communicate there in that language, and making sure that the right level of provision is available, that it is dealt with properly, that there is a breadth of options across schools. What if you had one school that simply did not have the staffing power to deliver one particular language but the school down the road has the ability to deliver a different language on offer as well? Your postcode would be determining what language you would get to do. If you were a child that has an aptitude of one language but not another, then it is your postcode that determines what your C.V. looks like with the G.C.S.E. that you get after it. That is, I think, the real simple reason why the amendment made by the Minister is sensible because it helps us determine how to do this properly. As a Back-Bencher, and even as a Minister, I have been subjected many times to wrecking amendments from others seeking to prevent me from doing what I wanted to do. I would recognise them from a mile off and this is not one. I think the cynicism that has been subjected to it is utterly ridiculous. The fact is that the Minister is absolutely open to looking at this and seeing how we can enhance that but he is not prepared to just agree to it like that with no indication of what follows next, what resources it requires, what jiggling around of timetables in schools or what staffing requirements that may be. All of that are non-ideological, technical questions that the Minister has said: "Great. Let us have that discussion. Let us look at what we can do and then we can move forward with the next steps when it gets to it but we do it properly." Doing it properly I think is the way forward and that is why I would urge Members to support the amendment.

[15:45]

10.2.8 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

I first want to thank Deputy Mézec. If I am Simon Pegg, it must make him Nick Frost, and I will buy you a Cornetto later. I just get this feeling, as I listen to this debate, of square pegs and round holes. We are trying to squeeze education on to children that they might not be adept to learning. When we look through, we talk about our options of G.C.S.E.s and whether we could change the syllabus and change the curriculum about what we would like to study. Personally I had studied English literature at G.C.S.E. We did the *Prologue to The Canterbury Tales* and here we are some 20-odd years after that and I still have no idea why the Wife of Bath was on that journey because I do not get subtext. Literature is not my strong point. I could have told my teachers that when I was in Year 9. It was quite clear at the same time that French was not my strong suit when I was doing that. But of course I was at the point where I was forced - I say "forced" it was not necessarily - it was a requirement for me to take French G.C.S.E., which I did, and I came out with an okay grade, I passed, it is okay. Like I say, this was some 20-odd years ago, and I am now looking at the options booklet that came out from the great school of Grainville this year, because that was the school I went to do my G.C.S.E.s, and I am staggered at how these options have changed over those some 20 years. This discussion over whether the Curriculum Council is doing its job, clearly education is evolving. We are also evolving as a society and we are understanding the differences that we have in our developmental stages and how people will learn things better. There are options here for G.C.S.E.s. There are B.T.E.C.s (Business and Technology Education Council), there are other options to go to Highlands to do things which are a bit more practical, because education is received very differently by children of their varying ages and varying stages of their development. To try and then say that we have to shoehorn in a modern foreign language on to every single student at G.C.S.E. I think is not the right thing to do. I am not going to support the proposition as a whole but I will urge people to support the amendment because if the amended proposition is adopted, it has to be done properly, as Deputy Mézec has very well alluded to. I struggle because, as I am hearing through this debate, we are forgetting it is children which are the subject of this debate. How they respond to their education has a really, really significant footprint on how they are going to develop

into adults and, yes, maybe learning a language would help them develop in some ways. If they do not feel confident or capable of learning a language, surely give them the option to take something else so that they can develop in something that they are interested in. Cookery, it is called something other than cookery these days, but I should have taken cookery, but I made the wrong choice in my G.C.S.E.s. I think that sometimes maybe children need better support to ensure that they are making the right choices for them rather than being told that: "We know best, this is the subject for you." I feel that this is what this debate is coming into where we are telling children, regardless that they have had no exposure to speaking a foreign language anywhere else, that they have to speak a foreign language. My wife did G.C.S.E. and A-level French because she grew up in France for a significant portion of her early days, so it was the right subject for her to take. Given the choice for me, I would not have taken G.C.S.E. French because French is not my strong point. I am slugging my way through learning French at the moment with Alliance Française. My group is going to be merged with a couple of other States Members and they are going to hear how equally bad my French-speaking is, but I am still trying because now it is a choice, and now I realise that I want to try and learn it. I have made this choice now because I am able to make that choice. If this debate was around removing French or a foreign language as an option entirely I would not support it because I think languages are important but what I do think is important is that young people are encouraged to take the right subjects that are right for them and not having more lessons forced upon them. I would urge Members to support the amendment but I am not going to support the whole proposition in the second round.

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

I rise to stand partly in response to Deputy Mézec's assertion that there seems to be a lot of disquiet - I cannot remember Deputy Mézec's exact words - but effectively a lot of disquiet about the Jersey Curriculum Council because I kind of agree there does. It got me thinking a bit more about the Curriculum Council, and this is in regard to the proposed amendment. We have already mentioned it is only educationists that sits on the Curriculum Council, there are no employees' representatives, there are no parents' representatives, there are no States Members or Scrutiny representatives. There are only teachers and members of the department on the Curriculum Council which, to me, sounds a little shortsighted or feels a little shortsighted. On top of that, it made me think: "Hold on, surely the minutes of the Curriculum Council are available. I must be able to see the minutes of the Curriculum Council" because we like to be transparent and understand the workings of the way decisions are made. I cannot find the minutes of the Curriculum Council anywhere. All I can find with regard to the Curriculum Council are that its minutes will be shared on the Education Department's SharePoint site. Any members of the public who would like to access the minutes can ask the Education Department to access those minutes, which to me again felt like, well no wonder we are feeling a bit as an Assembly - according to Deputy Mézec, and I am in agreement with him here - mistrusting of the work, the output of the Curriculum Council, because none of us can see it. None of us really know who are on it, none of us can see the output of it and yet we are bound by law - and this comes to the amendment in particular - well the Minister is bound by law to consult with the Curriculum Council before making any changes. This is the bit where I almost feel like, in a sense, we have to go with the amendment being proposed because by law the Minister cannot unilaterally change the curriculum without first consulting the Jersey Curriculum Council. He does not have to get their permission but he does have to consult with them which ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister give way; the Member?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Of course.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Does he accept that there is nothing in part (d) unamended that stops the Minister from consulting with the Curriculum Council if the States give it a steer?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I cannot clarify that at the moment because I do not have part (d) in front of me. I was too busy researching the Curriculum Council; I lost track of that bit. I will accept that it does not if that is as the Deputy says. In that sense, what we do know is, regardless of any decision we make here today with regard to modern languages, the Minister does have to consult the Curriculum Council; that is certainly true. There is also I thought, interestingly, on the most recent document about the Jersey Curriculum Council I can find, it was published in March 2023 under the previous Minister, was a flow chart of how the Curriculum Council shall act in the case of changes being suggested. It has this flow chart in appendix 2: "Is the review or research part of the J.C.C.'s 'business as usual'? If yes, go to section A. If no, go to section B." Then it says basically: "Is the matter raised relevant to the context of the work of the Curriculum Council?" The answer is yes: "Sufficient evidence should be presented to the Minister and to the Curriculum Council to state a clear case for review or for changing the Jersey curriculum. This may include Government strategic plans, data analysis, preliminary consultation and evidence, policy/documentation review, research review to gain international perspective, status versus future benefits, statement of change." Nothing about whether the States Assembly has a view on it: "The Minister and the Curriculum Council have the opportunity to challenge and clarify the case for change or review" which then makes me think that regardless of what we say or decide in this Assembly today, the Curriculum Council have the ability to challenge and clarify that: "The Minister and the Curriculum Council will vote as to whether to adopt the case for changing the Jersey curriculum or to support further review." Regardless, again, of what we decide here I believe that the Minister and the Curriculum Council, even if we said: "Yes, we want more modern languages or we want more French" will then be voting on whether they agree with us: "Regular updates based on the agreed timelines will be presented to the Curriculum Council through the officer for the J.C.C. The Jersey curriculum is statutory by law. The process for change to both statutory and non-statutory elements should be the same to preserve the rigour of the documentation and appropriate stakeholder engagement and therefore you must determine a need for change through consultation, present the case to the J.C.C., gain agreement to proceed, commission a working party or other statutory group with suitable levels of expertise regarding the subject being changed, share completed draft for comment, share draft with S.L.T. (Senior Leadership Team) and Minister for comments and redraft if required, present draft to the Minister and the J.C.C. for final ratification comments, minute the agreement", but we cannot see those minutes, "communicate with headteachers and/or subject leaders, amend all paper copies. If the changes are significant, develop a notice or booklet for parents and young people." It feels to me that regardless of what we decide in this Assembly, there is a whole world of bureaucracy that we have got to go through with the Jersey Curriculum Council before any change is brought to bear on this. I do have further to say which I will probably keep for the main debate, which is about the fact that employees increasingly are unable to find people with the necessary language skills to do the job, the fact that the number of modern language learners in England has plummeted since the change to the English curriculum which we have adopted. Because, as the Curriculum Council document says after their own research, it is best that Jersey sticks to the National Curriculum for England with some changes for Jersey. We are tied to the National Curriculum for England but we do know that language learning in England has plummeted, that we can see from the documents that Deputy Tadier has kindly presented to us that the language learning, French language learning, in Jersey States schools has plummeted. Well the document does not say it has plummeted but I am assuming it used to be higher than 14.8 per cent and we are tied to that. We are tied to the English curriculum, we are tied to the Curriculum Council. I think if anybody is looking for a States proposition, maybe we should be shining a bit more light on the work of the Curriculum Council. Maybe we should be seeking to present a bit more of a rounded influence on the Curriculum Council such as employees' representatives or parents' representatives. Maybe these are things because it seems to me that back in the 1990s when

the Education Law was established the States Assembly gave away a lot of its own influence on that curriculum. Now I do agree with Deputy Mézec when he was saying ideology should not form part of choices in the curriculum; I do accept that. Interestingly, there is a lot of ideology in pedagogy basically and so a lot of the methods being used very much today in schools are ideologically-driven by discussions within the education establishment itself. Therefore, that is one of the reasons why I think it should not just be teachers and educationists in charge of the curriculum, it should also include parents' and employees' representatives to make sure that those ideologies are not being thrust in the Jersey curriculum as well. I just ask Members to bear that all in mind when voting because I think there is a lot for us to think about with regards to the Jersey Curriculum Council.

10.2.10 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Quite a few of my points have been already made but there are a couple that remain. This is ultimately I think about our identity as an Island and it is also about a vision of Jersey's future. I think of that quite often because the Island Identity Project was something with which I was engaged a little bit when Deputy Labey was doing it, even before I became an Assembly Member. I looked back at some of the comments that were made in there and there were 4 key conclusions mentioned right at the beginning. First, that there is a profound and almost universally-shared sense that what we have in Jersey is special. Second, that there is a widely-felt sense that something was being lost. Third, we believe that we should be making more of our autonomy to innovate. Fourth, that there is also a particular moment, the reason why this is important at the moment, because of the changing global situation, Brexit and so on. If you perhaps put all of that together, then what it says is that our Island identity is founded on our ability to do something different. It is founded on cultural and heritage differences and the ability that we have to maintain and improve them. It says, I think, crucially that in a changing world we need points of difference. One of our points of difference I think is that we are a very, very connected Island.

[16:00]

We have an exceptionally international population; we have always been a connected Island. We have been connected in terms of all the things we have chosen that the Island is famous for and that is trade, hospitality and finance. These are all things which rely on connectivity. A lot of other great trading nations recognise this in their linguistic policies. The Dutch is an obvious example, highly multilingual and always a very strongly trading nation. I think I see this in terms of those sorts of ideas about the Island's future and a vision really for where the Island could be. That is why I think this idea of foreign languages to G.C.S.E. has a bigger resonance than just being about a bunch of people in the Assembly telling a bunch of students what they should and should not study. It is about deciding what we as an Island want ourselves to be known for, want ourselves to be good at in the future. It seems to me that building our future, committing to that kind of cultural change, that languages are a thing we really believe in, would be a really powerful part of that bigger vision that we need to articulate about where Jersey is going. I also see it as kind of an update, if you like, of the fact that we have French and Jèrriais as part of our tradition. Where might it go next? Where it goes next is into those other languages with nations and cultures that we already have connections with, and Deputy Bailhache mentioned Portugal, but we also have of course East European and now African countries as well. We can build on those connections, not just as in a transactional way, but in a cultural way as well. For those reasons I do think the intent behind this is really quite powerful. The question with the amendment is: what will the amendment do in practice? In poker there is the reference of a "tell"; there is a tell. A tell is a moment when you give an inadvertent clue as to the strength or otherwise of your hand. I think there is a tell in the report that accompanies this amendment and it came in the final sentence which says: "It will be important to assess that any changes are not to the detriment of any cohort of students." I submit to the Assembly that that is a bar that is impossible to meet. Any student who does not want to do a foreign language will consider this is to their detriment. If student choice is the ultimate arbiter, then we will not have a foreign language as being compulsory obviously. We do not take that view as a society, we take the view

that, for example, maths, English language and English literature should be compulsory, and that is tough on students who struggle on those subjects. We say: “Yes, it may be tough but it says something about what we think are the basics of being a part of this society and therefore we think you should do that even if it is tough” and indeed obviously also reduces the options to do other subjects which students might find easier or they might be more adept at. Listening to the Minister’s speech and indeed some of the Members who have spoken in support, it does seem clear to me that whatever happens, this review will not lead to compulsory study of foreign languages. The Minister is against it, at least that is the tell as far as I can see it in the way he has spoken and in the report. The amendment says that we need to consult but there was no consultation with students over compulsory maths, English language or literature - or with teachers for that matter - and no consultation when schools started to drop compulsory languages. That was not something that I was consulted about, and it does affect my children. Deputy Mézec says it could lead to a postcode lottery depending on which foreign languages were available in different schools, and there may indeed be an element of that, but I say it is at the moment. My son at Hautlieu has to do a compulsory foreign language; my son at Les Quennevais does not. My son at Les Quennevais would have liked to do German but it is not an option, so there are already elements of that. The portent thing about the proposition that Deputy Tadier has brought is that it would set a flaw, it would set the minimum requirement, and that would be standard across the Island. That, it seems to me, would be useful and would remove at least one element of the postcode lottery. There is a difference between a review about whether something is going to happen or whether it is a review about how it happens, and this review has been set up as to be whether it should happen at all. I think the Minister’s review is set up to deliver just one result and I think therefore that supporting this amendment would mean that we would essentially be conducting something that was a waste of time. The Assembly can square the circle, if you like, of consultation and supporting the principle of this amendment by defeating the amendment and simply voting for the main proposition because, as several Members have said, the main proposition directs the Minister to go away and do what is necessary. That includes the consultation as mandated by the law; it has to happen. I have no doubt that if the Minister were to come back with very strong reasons as to why, say, a particular group should be excluded or have some special arrangements, I am absolutely sure that this Assembly would look very favourably on that, but it would come because there had been agreement in principle about something and these were about the details of how it is implemented, not about whether it is implemented at all. I think that Deputy Mézec said we should do it properly, I say: “Fine. Yes, let us do it properly” but that is a question of execution, not a question about the principle. I think it is potentially an exciting idea for the Island to start building on this idea of connectiveness, of an Island that is multilingual because it has a multinational population, and that that is a positive point of difference that we could build upon. Other Members may disagree, and that is absolutely fine, but that is a debate about the main proposition, not about the amendment. I think we should have a debate about the main proposition, not about the amendment, not about the review and we should, therefore, vote against the amendment.

10.2.11 Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Perhaps I should begin by saying that, if nothing else, the speech by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development shows that there is no 3-line whip, which might be of comfort to some. I have some sympathy with the Minister and the comments of Deputy Mézec in the sense that we have a Curriculum Council and what is their point if they are going to be mandated to carry out something. In that connection, I pay heed both to Deputy Tadier’s comments that if there was something that was fundamentally flawed and they did not like it they could ignore that. Certainly Deputy Morel went further by saying, in effect, that any decision by the States today was simply a steer and could be ignored. If one takes that view then I question what harm is there by approving the main proposition. I would expect that if it was so approved that the Council would immediately get to work on their process in deciding what was wrong with it, and producing some sort of paper saying that. The one aspect I do not like about the amendment is that the report only goes to the Minister, there is no follow up as to where it goes from there and it is almost as if the States have started this

debate but we are left out in the cold beyond that. I am not saying for a moment that was the intention but it does stop there. I take heed of the views of Deputy Bailhache; the timing is such that whatever the results were it would be hard to put into fruition during the course of that Assembly. So I am minded to support the proposition as is on the basis, as I say, that effectively it would change the burden of proof - if I can put it that way - the believe is given to the Council, that is what the States are of a mind to approve: "Please go away and think about it." There is time, not before December this year but well before that; are the Council surely to come back with reasons as to why it should not be done, and certainly with caveats as to areas or groups of people who should not take it? Certainly I would be appalled if people who were not capable or equipped to deal with taking a foreign language were forced to do it, but my understanding from what Deputy Morel said and what Deputy Tadier said is that is within the gift of the Council to make exceptions. I would be interested to hear what the Minister says in his summing up as to what are the powers of the Council and who do they need to pay attention to. My current intention is to go along with the main proposition on the basis that it is within the ambit of the Council's responsibilities to neutralise or come back with arguments as to why that should not be done and, as Deputy Renouf said, come back to the Assembly. I am sure we would all be very pleased to hear good reason as to why there should be certain exceptions. With that I say I shall be interested to hear what the Minister says in response.

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

This is a terrific debate and there are all sorts of different angles on it so I am going to give my take on this because I think this is about ambition. First of all, I would like to congratulate the bringer of the proposition on his excellent report and the significant amount of thoughtful research he has provided for this debate. It does beg the question how do we measure the impact of learning a second language, because I do not believe I have ever seen any clear metrics other than: "It is a good idea and we should." At a personal level I have had many experiences with learning languages. Many of you will know that I was born in southern Ireland and in those days Gaelic was a compulsory language with French only an option in secondary school. But it mattered to the Irish. They had experienced appalling brutality under the British rule and now independent they were going to make sure they re-established their cultural identity, and they did it through language and regaling the stories of the ancestors all written in Gaelic. Language is so much more than just language. Last weekend I visited my brother in Paris for a family get together. Between them they speak 4 languages. My brother married a Belgian so learning her language was obviously helpful, and has resulted in him now living and working in Paris. His children, brought up in the French schooling system, have French as their first language, but to ensure they kept their cultural links with my brother's background he read to them Harry Potter books in English. On his wife's side her mother is Spanish and in order for her grandchildren to communicate with her she has made a huge effort to ensure at least one grandchild is fluent in Spanish to ensure that that cultural link is not broken. I speak - probably like a lot of Members in this Assembly - with one and a quarter languages; enough French to be understood but insufficient to hold a conversation. Having just had a French experience I really regret that, knowing my big chance of learning another language was lost to me by not being diligent enough at school. Politicians are really good at putting things off. As you have heard me say on many occasions to this Assembly, jam tomorrow. The window to really learn language is a small one when placed into a lifetime, thus when I read the word "review" my heart sinks. In reality that is another opportunity lost to our young generation, our young people who do not have the luxury of time. I just want to put where we are today into context, and it was good to hear the proposer make a similar observation. So much of our language is derived from Latin and Greek languages, once taught at school and now deemed irrelevant and cast aside. I am not advocating bringing back these languages, however. I had a really interesting conversation with my 22 year-old niece who is currently studying medicine. When she was in her teens she chose to study Latin and Greek as an extracurricular lesson, as you would; something you can do in France. She tells me she is so pleased she made the effort and gave an interesting example as to why. Here is her example: she referenced - you need to bear with me everybody - the 3 anatomical planes, one of which is the sagittal plane.

The word *sagitta*, she explained, is a Latin word for arrow. Arrows when fired pass through the body from front to back, hence the term *sagittal plane*. The plane goes from the front to the back of the body.

[16:15]

Once you understand the etymology how much easier is it to learn? A knowledge far greater than the language itself. It reflects that language can be a window to so much more. I conclude my speech with a totally contrasting experience I had over the weekend. I went into an internationally-renowned coffee shop in Paris and was staggered that the menu was mostly written in English; the ultimate in cultural imperialism. The title read: "When chocolate meets caramel." You can guess the kind of place I was in. Below it deigned to use one French word "*édition limitée*"; sorry, that is 2 but *édition* is spelt in English. Then followed this up with: "Golden caramel white hot chocolate." Just in case you happened to be a French person living in France, whose first language was not English, there was a small note in the bottom left-hand corner of the sign which read: "When chocolate meets caramel equals *quand le chocolat rencontre le caramel*." This is about enrichment. This is about broadening cultural knowledge. I do not understand why our European neighbours are able to find the time; the time our Minister does not believe is available to our young people. Where is our ambition for our young people? My nephew and niece are now citizens of the world. Their ambitions, their opportunities are in no small part because of their multilingualism. Is that not what we should demand for our young people? I urge people to vote against the amendment.

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

My apologies for not being in the States Assembly while I am still getting over a health issue. So far this proposition seems to be based on an off-the-cuff societal needs analysis. It is basically saying we need this because of our cultural tradition or for other reasons. It does not seem to really be focusing on the needs of the children. I do understand the cynicism that can come from saying: "This is kicking something in the long grass by getting people to look at it." When the Minister is proposing that educational experts look at this, you have a knowledge about the independent and individual needs of children, I think that what I am hearing alarms me a little because suddenly what I am hearing is not a debate about putting children first or the needs of children, it is about imposing a political will on children to make some sort of point. I am a linguist and I have a real love of languages but I will be the first to say for some it is a positive and some that it can really help develop them; but then there are others who just do not have the aptitude or do not have it at the time that they are in school, and indeed whose whole mental wiring may be more geared towards another type of language like maths - which is a language as far as I am concerned - is more comfortable with the rational rather than the irrational, which is the language. To be saying to those children: "Well, do not worry about thinking that you are at school, that we can make you the best that you can be and allow yourself to develop and evolve as you go on; you will do this even if you do not enjoy that." I find that absolutely horrific. I might remind the bringer of the proposition how not so long ago he and I were at a school, and in fact he raised the matter that he was bringing this proposition and I happened to ask the students if they would support it, and indeed none of them suggested that they would. Again, somehow the teacher quickly moved away from the subject but I was thinking I would like to learn a bit more about why they feel this way, but I instinctively think I know why they feel that way. It is up to them; they know whether they enjoy a subject or not. Surely when it comes to operating fairly in terms of what has been discussed about having people who really are extraordinarily fluent - whether it is French or whatever language - it is going to be better value to be putting resources into supporting them more. One thing that I mentioned to Deputy Tadier was that we have all these links with Normandy, those children who really do love French, why are we not doing more for them by using these links, having more in the way of school exchanges. Instead we are saying: "No, we are just going to force all children to learn a language, no matter what their own desire and aptitude is." I just cannot believe that I am hearing this. Then let us come back to our neighbours in France themselves. Do they force this sort of thing on their school children? So far I

cannot find that they can. What I will point out is that they have got a well-known phrase “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*”. That liberty really comes down to a right of access. We would be wrong to deprive children of the ability to learn a language and I do believe that the main proposition amendment recognises that. But we also have to recognise that to some extent this whole idea about *égalité* is not particularly suitable and people do have different competencies. There is a distinction to be made between a language and, say, the 3 Rs. If I had a child and I had them going around in this Island they will need to do maths, it is a basic survival thing, but to speak another language I would say no. I would urge Members to be a little bit more generous about this amendment, to be a bit more respectful about the Curriculum Council. No, they do not publish minutes but then neither do the Employment Forum, and if it comes to transparency then I think many Ministers might be opening themselves to criticism in that respect. I have seen some of the F.O.I. requests recently and there is much that is not being shared. I will, therefore - notwithstanding the position that has been discussed - be supporting the amendment and I would ask Members to bear that in mind, particularly because one of the things that the Curriculum Council is being asked to do is to look at the cost of this. When I looked at the report to the main proposition and I saw the section that was to do with financial implications, I would say that in fact it was a fudge. For those who are interested in what the French for fudge is, it happens to be caramel, and those who are interested in the French for caramel, that is caramel too. It just sort of struck me as one of those things that, much as I love French, it does have its limitations. I rest it there, thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, could I ask a point of clarification from the speaker if she would give way?

The Bailiff:

Do you give way for a point of clarification, Deputy Scott?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, of course.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Was the Member suggesting that in France they do not require - or “force” I think was her words - students to study a second language until the age of 16?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

In the brief research that I have done I have not found conclusive evidence that they do, but if I am wrong then ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Would she review that because it is compulsory at least until the age of 16 in France.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Again, I would rather hear that from the Curriculum Council than from an individual Member, with perfect respect, but thank you, I note the Deputy’s position.

10.2.14 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

I was only going to speak once, and that was going to be in the main proposition, but I am going to combine my comments and talk about the amendment as well. We seem to have heard many drawbacks of this proposition throughout the debate on the amendment, but to me this really does seem to have been put in the too difficult tray by the Minister, and I echo the comments that were made by Deputy Bailhache about the Curriculum Council. I do not know what has happened in the last 50 years or so but I had an excellent French education. I started learning French at the age of 5 or 6 at St. Lawrence Primary School. Many of the teachers were French speakers themselves. I continued in secondary school with specialist teachers, one of whom is sitting in front of me, through

6th form and I went to University in Brittany to study French. I had no family background in French; my parents are both northerners and never ever studied an additional language, although my father did try his best in French. I have gone on to use my languages, particularly French but also Spanish throughout my career, and indeed I was able to successfully apply for certain roles because I spoke good French. In my role as the previous Minister for Justice and Home Affairs the ability to speak French was incredibly useful. I did not require an interpreter to develop good relationships, I could discuss matters of mutual interest in depth with my French counterparts, which resulted in positive outcomes, particularly in regard to negotiations around the *carte d'identité*. As a French speaker I was able to join the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie as an executive member, and in July last year, together with Deputy Kovacs, we travelled to Montreal for the annual conference. I heard presentations from academics about current research about how good language teaching and learning is proven to be a catalyst for a much more rounded education, including for children with additional needs surprisingly, and that was an area that interested me particularly. Some Members have said during this debate that there is no evidence to suggest that language learning is beneficial, but at that conference plenty of evidence was presented to suggest that achieving proficiency in one or more foreign languages offers a variety of benefits. There are many reasons to grasp the nettle here, including the cognitive advantages; learning multiple languages enhances cognitive skills such as problem solving, creativity, critical thinking. Bilingual students often perform better on standardised tests. Research consistently shows that multilingual individuals have better problem-solving skills, enhanced memory, and increased mental flexibility. Learning a new language stimulates the brain, it keeps it active and engaged. Cultural awareness, academic performance, career opportunities, social skills; bilingual students develop stronger social skills, they learn to navigate different cultural contexts and communicate with a wider range of their peers. Lifelong learning; language learning encourages a love for learning, fostering lifelong curiosity and engagement with new languages and cultures. The main proposition requires the Assembly to buy into a vision, an ambition, and an aspiration; one that was put on the shelf when the compulsory language learning ceased in 2014. I am very concerned, and I have said before in this Assembly, that we have already let the International Baccalaureate at Hautlieu fall away, further depleting our breadth of language teaching. That course required all students to study a modern foreign language at either standard or higher level. I wonder whether the Curriculum Council were consulted on that and whether parents, students and staff were consulted. As a parent whose children studied that qualification I would have had very firm views that it should not have been discontinued. I concur with Deputy Tadier; the bar needs to be higher. We should not be slavish following the U.K. Again, picking up on comments from other Members during the discussion of this amendment, why are we saying that children should only study the things that they like? Should we only give children the choice to eat Monster Munch if they do not like broccoli and cabbage. They maybe enjoy eating Monster Munch but it does not bring them optimal nutritional value. If we look at the actual Jersey statistics we can see what happened when students were given the choice to stop doing something where there was evidence to suggest that it improves the quality of their education. There has been a significant drop at Haute Vallée; statistics in 2008 to 2009 show there were 101 full G.C.S.E. students of French. In 2024 this is just 14. Regardless of the fact that I was compelled to take maths at G.C.S.E. I cannot work out what that percentage drop is, but I can tell you it is a big one.

[16:30]

If our forebears in this Assembly had not focused on the future our here and now would be their there and then: static and rooted in the past as the result of a lack of ambition and the aspiration to be different. Jersey is different. We are a special place. Learning modern foreign languages is not about just acquiring new words and grammar, knowing how to order a beer in 6 different languages; it is about equipping ourselves and our future generations with the tools to thrive in a global society. Reinstating compulsory language learning in the curriculum at key stage 4 is about an investment in cultural understanding, cognitive development and professional success. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development talked about professional success. It is an opportunity to explore

the possibilities of providing a rich, multifaceted educational experience that reflects our unique Island identity, and one that will prepare our children to operate effectively in a diverse and interconnected world. The ability to cross linguistic barriers is not just an asset, it is a necessity. Learning a foreign language broadens our horizons, it opens the door to understanding different cultures, perspectives and ways of life, and this cultural awareness fosters empathy and tolerance; all of which are essential qualities in our world that changes at a rapid pace. It is for that reason that I will be supporting the main proposition unamended and I, therefore, encourage other Members to do the same, and to reject this amendment which - in the words of Deputy Bailhache - merely kicks it into the long grass.

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

I thank Deputy Tadier for bringing this proposition. I believe the teaching of modern languages is really important. I too am keen on encouraging modern languages. I would, however, prefer to have a conversation with the headteachers, the staff, students, and parents. It would be good to have their understanding and thinking. I would rather work collaboratively with them and their language staff than force them to do something they do not consider the most appropriate for their students. I am very much in favour of encouraging foreign language learning but not necessarily making things mandatory. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has not said no; the Jersey Curriculum Council has not said no. I ask you to support this amendment and please vote pour.

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

[Monsieur le Président. Je me lève pour m'opposer de l'amendement du Ministre de l'Education. Ce débat ne porte pas seulement sur les choix des matières conseillées, il s'agit de notre identité, de notre héritage et de notre place dans le monde. Nos langues officielles sont le français et l'anglais. Jersey reste encore une territoire bilingue.]

Sir, I stand to oppose the amendment of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. This debate is not only about the choice of recommended subjects, but about our identity, our heritage, our place in the world. Our official languages are French and English. Jersey remains a bilingual territory.

I am not going to continue in French because I know and I hear the words of Nelson Mandela who said: "If you talk to an individual in a language they understand it goes to their head; if you talk to them in their language it goes to their heart." Whether or not Members are French enabled or not I know that I am going to be speaking - maybe it is a done deal, I do not know - but I am going to have my say on languages because like Deputy Tadier, like Deputy Bailhache, like Deputy Moore, like other Members whose lives I think have been changed in ways that one could never imagine by the teaching of language, and particularly French; mine has. This is not a debate about curriculum choices, and following the wise remarks of Deputy Bailhache and Deputy Tadier, Deputy Renouf and Deputy Miles, this is a debate about really Jersey's identity. It is a debate about our heritage, it is a debate about our place in the world. Jersey is still a bilingual jurisdiction. French and English are our 2 official languages. I realise that Jèrriais was added a few years ago, but it has been historically the case that French and English are our 2 national languages. I ask Members, is there another jurisdiction, another country in the world that does not mandate the teaching of their national language in their schools? I cannot find one, and Jersey should not be one either. Sir, you will be well aware, and your Deputy, when I have addressed this Assembly in French you both have the ability to preside over this Assembly in the French language or English. You have been lawyers that are familiar with the French and English languages. Our Constables, *le Connétables*, have our roads in French - we will forget the definite article, I will not go on about that today - but our history, we see it everywhere, we walk into this Assembly as we take our privileged positions as Members of this Assembly and we see a board with all of your predecessors since 1277, and it is inscribed in French. We see Walter Raleigh, *Gouverneur de Jersey* [Ile reconnaissante] Grateful Island; we are that Island; we are not England. But in recent years there has been a systematic erosion of language teaching in our schools. I would say - and I congratulate Deputy Tadier on his research - I have asked

and wondered how it could be that this decision was made to drop the requirement of language or particularly French language. How was it, I wondered? I have never been in this Assembly and had a debate about the changing of the historic situation of French being mandatory - because it is one of our national languages - in education. I do not think there has ever been a debate. I have had debates in the Budget about French language teaching and I have rebelled against the Ministerial or Council of Minister collective whip, even as the Minister for Treasury and Resources I did it because I wanted to keep real French speaking language assistants, and I think that there are some Members that will remember the **frowns** [Aside] that were done on that. I did not hear what Deputy Southern said. The proposition before us seeks to reverse that decline by ensuring that modern language study is extended to key stage 4, ages 14 to 16. The Minister's amendment - and he is the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning - seeks to water this down. Instead of committing to action, it proposes endless reviews, consulting this non-democratic body called the Curriculum Council, which I never knew had made a decision to abolish our heritage and change the course of Jersey's history. It is wrong and I would say that this debate is about putting back what was the proper arrangements of education. I never understood why the French language and language tuition was quietly dropped bit by bit. We do not need a review. We do not need to consult this Curriculum Council. We need to be clear about why languages in Jersey and the teaching of it has collapsed. We know why it happened. Over a decade ago Jersey, by stealth, without a democratic decision of this Assembly, followed the United Kingdom's flawed decision of making languages optional beyond the age of 14. I would say that it was an undemocratic position. I remember asking the Minister for Education, the Constable of St. Clement, and various Ministers for Education what was going on. What was it? I do not have children, so I did not know, but now I know, and I thank Deputy Tadier for bringing this to our attention because effectively what we now realise is it has happened by stealth. The results were entirely predictable: fewer students/learners studying languages, fewer qualified language teachers, a diminished cultural and economic output for Jersey. If we look around ourselves, the example of Finland was used and Luxembourg, Latvia; students easily, effortlessly, learning 2 or 3 languages as a part of their standard education. In Jersey, many now leave school barely able to order a meal if they go to France. We should not be following the flawed United Kingdom system, where language learning has plummeted. We should be following the footsteps of our forefathers and foremothers, being an outward-looking Island, a trading *entrepôt*, a rich tapestry where different people speak different languages - Jèrriais, French, English - converse effortlessly, and that is why we welcome communities, our Portuguese, Spanish, our valued Romanian community, Polish. We are an international Island, always have been and always will be. Bilingualism, multilingualism should be seen as an essential part of our Island. It is an essential skill for our Island's youngsters. It is not just about in fact cultural heritage. As the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development - and I can use that word without a wry smile - is it about an economic opportunity? We are an outward-facing Island. We trade internationally. We heard this morning in questions about our international footprint and our valued services sector. Whether it is in finance, hospitality, law, agriculture and the industries of the future, the green energy opportunities of hydrogen, a French wind farm, a French hydrogen thing, it is about multinationalism, not Anglicism. The ability to make those early journeys, those early efforts to learn a second language should be, in my world and in the world that I have lived in, an essential skill. We did not have a say in Brexit. Our links are with the world and, yes, the European Union is having a bit of rethink in the United Kingdom, but we are different. We always were. I believe that for the future of our Island, we need the next generation to be able to communicate, not with A.I. bots, but with their hearts and with their souls. They need to be able to communicate. As Deputy Renouf spoke about the importance economically, I do not think we would have got the agreement with the French in fishing if it was not for the fact that we spoke to them in French, respected them and spoke to their hearts. We have seen so many times and we hear so much of it: "Oh, we are going to have a review. Oh, we need to consult this or that", a delayed decision. Deputy Bailhache was right. It is this issue to be quietly forgotten. I do not want to make that happen and I ask Members, I ask the benches of the Connétable, if they want to be called Connétable, let the youngsters of Jersey learn what the etymology of Connétable is, otherwise I am

going to call them the Anglicised Constables. To my colleague Deputies, *le Député*, whether they be in Government or not, look into your hearts and souls, I say to them look into them and think about what the future is. There are many arguments about making languages compulsory teaching I have heard about, but it just simply does not add up to scrutiny. We do not allow students to drop maths at 14; we do not allow them to stop studying science. Why should the language of a culture, languages of our Island, be any different? I have never, ever in all of my life met anybody who regrets learning a language, never. What I have done is I have met lots and lots and lots of people who regret dropping a language. [Approbation] So before the Ministerial whip is administered - if it is that; I am not sure - but before it is, I ask Members, think about our culture, think about our heritage, think about where we have come from and where we are going.

[16:45]

[Nous devrions être ambitieux pour nos jeunes, Monsieur le Bailli. Nous devrions rétablir le français et les autres langues modernes]

We should be ambitious for our young people, Sir. We should re-establish French and the other modern languages.

We should be ambitious for our future, we should be ambitious for our restoration of languages and other languages at the heart of our curriculum. We should be rejecting this amendment. We should be decisive; we should not be delaying. We should put it back and we should stand up for Jersey's culture, its identity and our future. Let us not be the generation that allowed languages and French to fade from our classrooms and fade and get erased like a piece of Anglican history. I want *liberté* for our children, I want liberty, I want *égalité*, I want equality and I want *fraternité* with our multilingual counterparts, whether they be French or any other. [Vive notre île bilingue Monsieur le Bailli] Long live our bilingual Island, Sir. I ask Members to reject the amendment.

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

I am just going to talk on the amendment because I think we will get on to the main proposition eventually, but I think our focus needs to really be on the amendment and what that does. There is nothing ... and many Members have decided to speak about the main proposition, but I think the meaning behind this amendment needs to be fully understood. There is nothing in this amendment that is stopping a language from being ... or the possibility of a language being taught into key stage 4. That is a fact. This amendment solely tries to ensure that if we are going to do that, that we do that in an informed manner. It would be completely irresponsible of us to do something without knowing the full extent and the impact that this would have not only on students, not only on professionals, but also on the cost as well to the department. Just talking about the costs and the professionals, modern foreign language teachers are in short supply. I am pretty sure that nobody here would want to implement something that we then cannot staff effectively. We have seen the issues that have happened in the past when we have had non-specialist teachers teaching subjects and how difficult it is at the moment to recruit, let alone if we are to change the curriculum in any way. This amendment just seeks to ensure that whatever we do, we do it in an informed manner. It also writes into this the commitment for the Minister to come back to the Assembly and to present this at the end of this year, so there will be another opportunity for Members to be able to make an informed decision on whether this is the correct way to go. Now, I am concerned by some people's comments about the Curriculum Council, especially those from Deputy Bailhache, who himself on 2 previous occasions has lodged amendments to ensure that another body is involved before a decision is made. Examples of these are, for example, when Deputy Bailhache lodged P.6/2023, the bilateral treaty with the U.A.E. (United Arab Emirates), where it was to ensure that the Legislative Advisory Panel was involved, and I quote: "As it has a general responsibility for what is sometimes termed as lawyer's law and seems the appropriate body to prepare legislation for the consideration of the Council of Ministers." In addition, I take on board the comments that the Minister for Sustainable

Economic Development made regarding the composition of the Jersey Curriculum Council. However, under schedule 5 there is the opportunity for the Curriculum Council to co-opt members, as considered necessary. Now, this does mean that if we go ahead with a review and a consultation that, as part of that, the Jersey Curriculum Council may well decide that they do want parents involved in that, they do want representation from students, from parents, from businesses. So like I said at the beginning, I am not talking on the main proposition, I am solely talking here on the amendment. This amendment is a safeguard. This is a safeguard to ensure that we are doing the right thing for our students, that we have the money and that we know the costings behind this, because there will be a cost, and that we are well-resourced to do this. I think that it would be irresponsible of Members to vote against this. I would urge Members to please vote in favour of the amendment, regardless of how you may feel about the main proposition.

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

Please excuse me if my voice goes a bit. I have got a bit of an echo all today. Having said that, it is a very obvious contrast between the last 2 speakers, where one spoke deeply from the heart and the next speaker gave the information, I believe, and spoke from the head. This is an issue where we cannot get swept away with the heart. We must look at the information involved and the limits of what we can and cannot do. Now, I have been around for so long I have been a member of the Curriculum Council at one stage - 40 years ago - and very dignified and proper meetings they were. It seems to me that we did not have very many minutes because what we used to do was have a cup of tea at 4.30 - we were a bit late in the day - and we would be in there to meet the Education Committee. This was this time when we had presidents of committees. I believe at the time I was there, Senator Jeune was the Minister ... not the Minister, sorry, the president of the Education Committee, and Deputy Mourant, I believe, was his assistant, his vice-president, and I remember also seeing at one stage Constable Le Feuvre there. It was seen as a very heavyweight committee to preside over. I think in terms of what we are talking about today, I have perhaps 3 quotes that stick in my memory from those times, when we had the proper china out and we would circulate around, just meeting and chatting, as we were prone to do. Hard decisions were not made. They were for another body. I will talk about those in a minute. I am reminded of 3 things. One was about having a chat about golf and the merits of it and the Director of Education - I remember it well, John Rodhouse at the time - said to me: "You know, Geoff, some people like you practice being a Union representative, others choose to play golf. I heartily recommend, Geoff, that you learn to play golf." That stuck with me and I have played golf since, but very badly. I was far better, I think, as a Union rep. The other quote that gets me - and I will not say who it was, for obvious reasons when I have finished saying it - is a quote that came from a member of the committee, who said very proudly: "Oh, books. I read a book once. It had a green cover" and that was the only description I could get out of it, it had a green cover. That was the level of debate I think that we had at the time. As a practical way of illustrating what we are talking about today, I remember one of my students, when I taught at Les Quennevais, when I was a language teacher, and he came bouncing in one Monday morning full of the joys of spring and said: "Thank you, Sir. Thank you, Sir. Thank you, Sir." I said: "What happened?" and he said: "I got a job in the market this weekend and do you know what it was about, why he gave me the job? I knew what the French for *pamplemousse* was and I could identify the grapefruit, *pamplemousse*, and that got me a job, so thank you, Sir"; so a practical level of a second language. I have been involved in this debating Chamber for possibly, some would argue, too long. I can remember back in the days, and Deputy Ozouf has just mentioned it, where one of the things we were proud of was our language assistants. We had a couple of French assistants, a German assistant and a Spanish assistant. The committee that was on with me were very proud of the French assistants and that system and were extremely pleased with the way in which that got our students and gave them an advantage over others. I have been involved in 2 campaigns now to restore or preserve the language assistants in my time, and when I compare what was then with the argument that has been put today by the Minister, it says: "Education has changed." That, for me, says including the assistants. They have all gone, the assistants. We do not rely on them anymore, even

to enhance the training of our students. The logical case, not led by the heart, but by the mind, is one which requires to change as circumstances change. In the last 10 to 14 years, we have remarkably changed what constitutes a curriculum and what we have or have not borrowed from the U.K., so I would support this amendment as part of the whole.

10.2.19 Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

I suppose I should start by declaring an interest insofar as my daughter teaches languages, French and Spanish, at Les Quennevais. She works at a thriving school in a thriving language department, where she describes business as being very good in the interest in languages. I always get slightly concerned. While I like debates from the heart ... I have seen some real passion here, and quite right, it is right. Deputy Tadier has been passionate about this. Many of us are passionate about our French heritage and our culture and our history, but I do get slightly nervous when this Assembly tries to implement things, tries to enforce things - in this case, with the curriculum - without really respecting or observing the process. Now, I know we all often complain about process, but in this instance we are not qualified to be deciding on what the curriculum should be. How many of us are in touch with modern education, with the makeup of our schools? I have been visiting schools since I have been privileged to do this job, as elected by this Assembly, with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and I have been astounded at what is going on in our schools; positively, positively astounded. This Island is made up now of many more nationalities than it was and I am absolutely bowled over by the way our education system is dealing with this, a hugely difficult and challenging job, with I do not know how many languages are being spoken. We must not lose sight of our history, culture and heritage, but I believe it is also important that we show respect for our processes.

[17:00]

In this case it would be in supporting the amendments that Deputy Ward has brought to find that balance that will hopefully get us all to the same place or to the right place at the end of the debate. Because this is a debate that is of cultural importance, some may say to us. There have been some speeches from the heart and some people against Deputy Ward's amendment will focus on one aspect of it while others will focus on the other, so I just want to try to present a little bit of balance. There is no doubt that the question of whether French and other languages should be mandatory in Jersey's schools involves many considerations, not the ones we like to cherry-pick. There are many considerations we should consider. Of course the cultural relevance: Jersey has strong historical ties to France that we are all proud of and an understanding of the French language, if we just choose French, could act to not only maintain but strengthen those ties in the future. It might be quite handy after the ferry process. There are economic opportunities. Proficiency in French and other European languages may enhance - or will enhance, probably - job prospects for some Islanders, especially in tourism and hospitality and international business sectors, international relations, external relations and the work we do overseas. There is no doubt that there are cognitive benefits. Learning a second language or 2 or 3 languages has been shown, beyond doubt, to improve cognitive abilities, enhance problem-solving and increase overall academic performance. We are all agreed on that, and I think Deputy Ward might have mentioned it, but somewhere between 30 per cent, 40 per cent, 50 percent - I do not know the percentage - go to G.C.S.E. in a language. It is pretty good. But those that choose it choose it for a reason, but making French and other languages compulsory could also present several disadvantages or challenges, resource allocation, for example, as I think a number of Members have mentioned. Implementing mandatory French, German, Spanish, whatever languages we do, will require additional resources, including hiring additional teachers, which will strain the school budgets. We know how challenging all of our budgets are at the moment, and that is a fact. If we go along this route without proper consideration, we are going to have to build this into our budgets. That could lead ... depending on how we budget and how much money we have available, tax receipts and the other balance of payments, it could mean we are having to divert funds from other essential areas. We are going to have to spread that expenditure. Mandating French and other languages will also limit the flexibility in the curriculum.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sorry, would the Minister give way? A point of correction, please. I think the Minister said to mandate French, but this could be acknowledged as no ... this does not seek to mandate French, but to give a choice of languages for G.C.S.E.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, absolutely. I focus on French, but if I say French ... rather than say “or any other language” I will try to refer to “other languages.” But introducing compulsory languages will limit the flexibility of the curriculum, reducing time available for other subjects, including S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), art or even other languages that might be more relevant, and in the interests of some students, given the broad range of nationalities we now have living here on the Island. I do not know about other Members, but when I was a boy I tended to do well at subjects I was interested in, and if I was not interested in something, no matter how hard I tried I just could not get to grips with it, and compulsory subjects can lead to student disinterest, particularly if they do not see the relevance of learning a particular subject. While it is important to many of us, learning a second language is not going to be relevant to many of our young people as they go through the education system. But I would point out one of the first things the Minister did when he took office was change the name to Education and Lifelong Learning to present opportunities to learn. We all develop at different levels, at different stages academically. Many people do better in lifelong learning. They come out of school not having worked as hard as they might have done, but then they have great opportunities these days to learn subjects and languages and that is why we should welcome that move. I am sure the team there are going to work hard to make sure lifelong learning is enhanced for all Islanders. Of course there is parental opposition. Some parents may oppose mandatory languages, believing that it takes away from time that could be spent on other important skills. These are genuine issues that we need to consider. Students whose primary language is English or another language - do not forget there are children in schools coming through now whose primary language is another language, it is not English or French, it is another language - so we have to take that into account. Those are just some of the considerations I think this Assembly needs to take into account when we make the decision today. I would like to see more French spoken. I wish I could speak better French. I can order a couple of beers and get by if I listen hard and after a few days in France I pick it up. That is one of the great regrets I have had, but perhaps when I leave this job or leave this Assembly I will have the time to maybe do that. I think we must just remember that balance now between the passionate speeches we have heard today and those considerations we should consider when making this decision and not impose something on the Minister for Education and the team that is not properly thought through. He has given us a commitment that he will work with the Curriculum Council and take advice and try to find a way where we can get to a position Deputy Tadier and all of us can feel comfortable with that is practical and the right solution for our young people moving forward. So I would urge in this instance Members to please support the amendments to this proposition which will allow us to move forward as an Assembly in a measured and appropriate way.

10.2.20 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

I will come back in my speech to the process and to the Curriculum Council, I promise. But I would like to start with how we consult with children and, as States Members, we participate in school year 5 debates. On 20th January, Janvrin School, 2 classes from Janvrin School, the theme of the debate, primary schools in Jersey should have a multilingual learning approach in their curriculum. Guess how the vote of both classes has gone? It has been adopted by one class unanimously and another class by main majority of the votes. I wish the States Members would listen to the year 5 students, how important for them to have languages in their curriculum. I had the conversation and asked these children which languages. First of all you need to understand it is a town school. In a town school 70 per cent, sometimes more, sometimes less, children, English is their second language, so they are all bilingual or multilingual. I had children that are multilingual. So for us to study, I think it is not

for us. For English-speaking countries to study a second language, it is an extra pressure and maybe a luxury, but for them they come to school with hardly any English. When asked which language you would like to study, it was ... languages like Portuguese and Polish, I was surprised, half of the class wanted to study Japanese. I was like, wow, we do not have many Japanese people on the Island, but this is what they tell. This is what I am trying to say. Somebody - I think Deputy Mézec - talked about the postcode. I think we do have a postcode because if you are fortunate enough to be in Les Quennevais, you would have more opportunities to study modern languages, but if you would be in different school ... yes, I know that it is all obviously and it is available, but it is about the dedication and it is about how teachers are saying what we are doing. I will go back to my speech, about reactions as well here. Yes, children have a choice to study languages and we do have a Polish school that is preparing children already to G.S.C.E., and what I need to be involved when I was a Minister, I need to try to ask and speak with the headteachers that will arrange to do G.C.S.E. for the children that already prepared by different school, but it was not ability in some of the school to arrange G.S.C.E. for the children that are ready to take them. Now, going back to compulsory, does the Member really think that in the Soviet Union there is no prospective to travel anywhere around the world? English language, which was compulsory, was on the top of my priorities. Probably not. Maths was there, up there. Physics, chemistry, but definitely not English. If I would not have English compulsory, I do not think that I would be standing here today and working in this language. It is about to consider what is compulsory and what is not. Now, I would like to address ... it was another comment from the Minister that the children will not be able to learn to all G.S.C.E., some G.C.S.E.s will need to take, is it 8 G.S.C.E.s, it is 7 G.S.C.E.s, we know that even currently not all children taking all G.S.C.E. and maybe language, one of the languages would work well for them and they will be successful. It is something to consider. Another argument against the amendment; timetable is very busy, absolutely. Timetable is very busy and it is very difficult to incorporate languages. The question how Hautlieu and J.C.G. manage to incorporate languages and they have very good results. It is still the same time that they are studying at school. Teachers; we do not have enough teachers, and it is right, we do not have enough teachers. The less children study languages, the less children will go to the university to study languages, the less teachers we would have. It is the circle that needs to be broken. We spoke today about A.I., and I am not sure how the Hautlieu progressed with this because it was a conversation how we allowed the children to choose more than foreign language to study, like Deputy Renouf said that his son wanted to study German. It was a conversation in school that it is a teacher in the class and at the same time there is an option to go online and to have proper tutors online and they can have different languages according to their choice with the teacher who can guide them through the process. So there are other options how we can teach languages in the 21st century, which might require less resources. I am really, really grateful for my daughter's school that apparently other schools have this resource, but they are not using, it is called Linguascope. That each child, after they are learning French for 30 minutes, they can pick up any language - guess which language my daughter picked up - and they can learn this language for another 30 minutes, whatever language they want, and they can try in different languages. As Deputy Mézec said, maybe Spanish would go and Italian will not go, maybe French would go. I wish it would be that easy. Going to the Curriculum Council, it is important to emphasise that the Curriculum Council is doing very, very important and very thorough work, supporting the Minister with the curriculum decisions.

[17:15]

Who is making decisions? The decision is the Minister's decision. Curriculum Council is advising for the Minister. Exactly, yes, Curriculum Council is advising for the Minister. But it would be very interesting to understand who is chairing our Curriculum Council, because usually it is delegated responsibility to the Director of Education, that currently we do not have somebody in post for Director of Education. I assume it is the Minister chairing the Curriculum Council. For me, if the Minister is clear that the foreign ex-modern language supports children's and students' future, this is the policy, this is the vision. I remember working with the Curriculum Council. It took us a year

and a bit with P.S.H.E. (personal, social, health and economic) curriculum, and I am grateful to the Minister that the Minister published as it is. But I remember we had backwards and forwards with Curriculum Council, which I was very clear; every recommendation from the Youth Parliament included in their report needs to be incorporated in the P.S.H.E. curriculum and we need to work it out how does it work. It did take longer than a year and it has been published. For me, it is about the timeline, the timeline is September 2026 and I assume that it is another year and a half. I assume if the Minister would come back, it is still time ... how a phased approach can be implemented. I will not take it longer. I really connected to what Connétable of St. Martin said. It is about a mindset. Deputy Miles and I connected to this, it is about vision, ambition and aspiration. Bilingual individuals, and the statistics a bit - I cannot do without statistics - have much as 35 per cent greater job prospectives with their ability to bridge cultural divides and facilitate communication in multicultural environment. 35 per cent of rated job prospectives for our students and their wages up to 20 per cent higher. Is it not lifelong skills that we would like to have for our children? It is not about the wins, it is not about us, it is about the future of our children, of my child and other children and students, and we need to think how we are supporting them and the skill that will be more and more required in the future, and I would be rejecting the amendment.

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

I want to start with the quote I ended my speech on the bilingual French schools debate with, from the French politician and the economist Jacques Delors. It sums up exactly what I believe this proposition is about: “*Apprendre une langue, c'est ouvrir une porte sur le monde.*” In English it means to learn a language is to open a door to the world. I just want to make you have an imagination exercise now and with already knowing how useful the math or science are in our day-to-day life, to imagine this is not already compulsory, and that is what we want to introduce now for all the benefits it brings. I am pretty sure that the arguments against it would be the same. Does this not show more resistance to change based on the unknown? But we all agree that math and science are very useful for everyone to have it mandated on, right? I strongly believe that is the same case with languages. Let me tell you again a bit about my own journey. Learning French and English in school gave me the chance to travel, study and work abroad. It is what brought me to Jersey and has led me here today as a politician representing a community I care about deeply. Back in school, French and English were part of the curriculum. If not for that, I probably would not have had the opportunity to learn them, financial constraints or lack of time, would have not made my choice. But knowing English opened doors for me to work in the U.S. and Jersey. Speaking French helped me also part study in France, in Lyon, and now it helps me to connect and collaborate with global leaders in different Parliaments of A.P.F (Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie). Even knowing just a little bit of other languages has helped me get by much easier while travelling. Knowing another language is powerful. It opens doors to travel, to study, to build a career and to network across borders. It is a tool that shapes futures. That is why we need to make sure every young person in Jersey has access to learning a second language up to the point where they reach a meaningful level of fluency. This is not just about education, it is about giving future generations skills that will serve them for life. The benefits of learning a second language are clear. Research shows that bilingual people have better memory, problem-solving skills and flexibility. Studies even link bilingualism to better focus, creativity and a lower risk of dementia in later years. It makes you better at communicating, learning easier, even additional languages, and boosting your career in an increasingly global job market. But there is more. Bilingualism builds cultural awareness, empathy and adaptability. It helps young people understand different perspectives, making them more open minded and engaged in the world. I am glad to see there is agreement on the need to ensure that all students, regardless of their home language, receive the support they need to develop and preserve it. A child's home language is a vital part of their identity and culture, and by nurturing it we help them integrate more fully into their communities. Equally important is the opportunity for their peers to learn about and appreciate different cultures. I am particularly pleased to be able to play a role in supporting children with Romanian as their home language or those wishing to learn it through

funding arrangements provided by the Romanian Government. I know the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has the best intentions at heart for both children and teachers, and I truly believe he is doing a great job in the department. I welcome the parts of the accepted amendments. However, I do not fully agree with parts (d) and (e) of the amendment and I will explain why. The original proposal (d) called for students to learn at least one modern language other than English up to the age of 16 by September 2026. It was a call for action, making sure all students get strong language skills. The amended proposal (d) and (e), which is linked, however, adds a review by the Jersey Curriculum Council, which will report back in December 2025. While this review is well-intended, it does not guarantee action. A review could still be part of the original plan; no need to delay the action needed. Also, the Curriculum Council consists only of teachers. There is no representation by developmental experts, parents or the students themselves. While the teachers want what is best for the children, they could be biased on this, especially when it comes to the additional workload. The review could focus more on the effort involved, rather than how to make it work effectively for long-term benefits for students. Have considerations been given to also be analysed by the existing language adviser? Even if this review would show the benefits of extended language learning, the amendment does not show any commitment or action on it after. Without a clear action plan, with the best intention, there is a risk that this proposal will get shelved as priorities and Governments change in the future. Because of all this, I cannot support the amendment and I ask the Assembly to do the same. It has been mentioned before that mandating a language as a blanket approach, it can affect badly those that find it harder to learn languages, or the neurodiverse students that might struggle. I truly want every child to have their needs catered for in schools and Jersey to be inclusive in its learning module in all aspects. However, the arguments just mentioned do not stand a bit as the same would apply to the other core subjects mandated in the curriculum, as you cannot honestly say that every child with additional needs or not is finding math or science easy for example, but there are needed life skills and the curriculum on those adapts in the needed way for the ones struggling or needing special support. Languages in nowadays society are very much needed life skills too, to not be limited in opportunities by the country's borders, and I am sure that if we are looking for solutions to implement instead of problems, we will find it. We have to remember that the proposition mandates a language, but any can be chosen, and every school at present has the ability to provide at least an additional language. Now I will share a bit more from my own experience, something I am sure others can also relate to. I am confident that if I had not been required to learn languages in school, I would not have pursued them all as my own choice. At that age, most students do not willingly take on extra work. If we gave them the option, they would likely say no, not just to languages, but to other subjects like math, science, English too. Yet we make certain subjects mandatory because we understand their long-term value in shaping a person's future and how ongoing can support them in life. Looking back, the high school version of me probably would have chosen to study another language, but today I am incredibly grateful I was required to. Learning those languages opened doors I never could have imagined. Without them I would not have had the opportunities I have now. So let us ask ourselves what opportunities has knowing another language brought to you? If you do not speak another language, have you ever wished you did? What opportunities might you have missed because of it? Now let us think about the generations to come. Let us give them the ability to communicate, connect, study, work and thrive in a multilingual world. Let us open the doors to a world full of opportunities and let us support the original proposition to enable them to have that and reject the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Could I just ask how many other Members ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like to propose the adjournment please.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would like to sum up.

The Bailiff:

There is at least one other person wishing to speak, Deputy. Could I have an indication from Members of anyone who has not yet spoken, who wishes to speak? Deputy Catherine Curtis, I have your name already. Does anyone else? Deputy Doublet. In which case there are at least 2 Members still to speak, and then the summing up. We are almost at the point where Standing Orders require me to ask if the adjournment is proposed. The adjournment has been proposed. Is it seconded? **[Seconded]** Do Members agree? Very well, the Assembly stands adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:27]