

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 13th MAY 2025

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[9:30]

The Roll was called and the Greffier of the States led the Assembly in Prayer.

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

Can I take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that I have an appointment this morning, so I will be stepping out. But I should be back before the end of Question Time.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS

1. Written Questions

1.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding incidents of assault on Health and Care Jersey staff (WQ.172/2025):

Question

In relation to incidents of assault on Health and Care Jersey staff, will the Minister state, for each of the last five years –

- (a) the number of verbal assaults;
- (b) the number of physical assaults;
- (c) the number of racially-motivated assaults; and
- (d) how many assaults resulted in a prosecution, and, of those, how many led to a conviction?

Answer

	(a)		(b)		(c)	
Year	Total Verbal Incidents	Recorded Assault	Total Physical Incidents	Recorded Assault	Total Racially Motivated Assaults	Recorded
2020	56		162		5	
2021	81		170		6	
2022	99		272		14	
2023	117		310		15	
2024	177		259		29	

The information above has been drawn from our electronic incident recording system, which has undergone a number of changes between 2020 and 2024. As a result, we are aware that the information has some data quality limitations, particularly in relation to reporting of verbal assaults.

The information provided below relates to all Health & Care Jersey services, including inpatient mental health services (which, for example, accounted for 45% of verbal abuse and 72% of physical incidents / assaults in the year 2023)

The data for 2020 and 2021 must be considered in the context of reduced patient numbers, owing to pandemic restrictions and significantly reduced clinical activity.

Increased reporting of incidents may also be attributed to focused efforts within HCJ to increase awareness and increase reporting of such incidents, including an anti –racism campaign in 2024.

(d) how many assaults resulted in a prosecution, and, of those, how many led to a conviction?

HCJ are unable to provide information on the number of assaults that resulted in prosecution and conviction, as we do not hold that data. We are able to report on the number of the reported incidents above that resulted in the police being called (as below). HCJ work closely with the States of Jersey Police with regard to the prevention and management of threatening behaviours, violence and aggression towards our staff.

Year	Police Called
2020	70
2021	65
2022	93
2023	51
2024	72

1.2 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding confiscating and destroying the vehicles of those convicted of speeding offences (WQ.173/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise whether any consideration has been given to confiscating and destroying the vehicles of those convicted of speeding offences and, if so, will she explain how this would be implemented; and if none, will she explain why not?

Answer

Persons who are caught speeding in Jersey are prosecuted and enter the judicial system one of two ways. If the speed is committed under a certain threshold, or with no previous convictions within the last 12 months, that person is warned to attend a parish hall enquiry, and a subsequent fine is placed on the offender based on the honorary policing sentencing guidelines provided by the Attorney General.

If someone exceeds the speed limit by greater than 20mph, they will appear in front of the Magistrate. In such cases, an application can be made to the Magistrate for the vehicle to be forfeited and destroyed, which has happened on a number of occasions in the past.

Notably, such an application may be made in reference to a number of Road Traffic related offences, not just exceeding the speed limit. This should be balanced on proportionality, taking into account various considerations and any mitigating factors.

Police also have the ability under the Police Procedures and Criminal Evidence (Jersey) Law 2003 to seize a vehicle as evidence of an offence – for example if a vehicle is stopped grossly over the stated limit for the road, the vehicle may hold data which supports the prosecution and will be examined by DVS. Any such seizure would also be based on the proportionality test.

1.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North OF The Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding outstanding debt owed by Andium Homes (WQ. 174/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide details of any outstanding debt owed by Andium Homes and advise what assessment, if any, has been undertaken of the reduction in rental income which Andium Homes could sustain and yet remain economically viable; and if no such assessment has been undertaken, will she explain why not?

Answer

At the end of 2024, Andium Homes had property assets designated for social housing rental valued at £1,172m (under existing use for social housing). The outstanding debt, all of which is unsecured, as at the end of 2024 was as follows:-

- £227.6m from the States of Jersey Housing Development Fund
- £100m from the Private Placement (PP) arranged in November 2024
- £105m from the Revolving Credit Facility (RCF) arranged in 2020 and extended in January 2022. Andium has the capacity on the RCF to drawdown to a maximum of £250m.

Andium has a robust and carefully balanced business model that enables it to maintain its homes and invest in the delivery of new homes for Islanders. The premise of the model is the Minister for Housing's social rents policy and the annual return Andium makes to the States of Jersey each year, currently c.£30m pa.

The rent policy sees new tenancies set at 80% of market rent and annual increases are capped at 4%. Tenants are also protected through Income Support, which is available for up to the full amount of rent charged, with c.60% of Andium tenants in receipt of Income Support.

Andium's sole purpose is to provide homes for Islanders but is not funded by Government and so all its services and the delivery of new homes are funded through the rental income it receives and sales proceeds.

If Andium's rental income was reduced, Andium may have to undertake the following steps to remain economically viable:

- Reduction in maintenance and other services
- Reduction in delivery of new homes
- Increased borrowing
- Mixed tenure sites to incorporate some open market products

Andium regularly assesses its financial position to ensure it remains financially stable by projecting its cash flows over a 40-year period, with all borrowing projected to be repaid by 2050. These projections are then stress tested for the impact of, for example, changes in the rental and sales

market, inflation and interest rates. It is the responsibility of the Andium Board to monitor financial viability and debt levels in accordance with their own risk appetite, and I am satisfied that the necessary assessments are being regularly undertaken.

1.4 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of The Minister for Health and Social Services regarding intrauterine insemination treatment (WQ.175/2025):

Question

In relation to intrauterine insemination (IUI) treatment, will the Minister advise –

- (a) the processes and pathways for accessing both public and private treatment;
- (b) the treatment costs for private patients, including pharmacy costs;
- (c) the current waiting times, for both public and private treatment;
- (d) how many Health and Care Jersey staff are currently qualified to carry out IUI treatment;
and
- (e) how many cycles of IUI were carried out in each of the years 2022, 2023, 2024 and so far in 2025, broken down by year into publicly-funded and private cycles;

and will he also provide any policy documents that detail the qualification criteria for publicly-funded treatment?

Answer

- a. the processes and pathways for accessing both public and private treatment;**

Intrauterine insemination (IUI) is considered as a treatment option as an alternative to vaginal sexual intercourse for a variety of reasons, these include:

- people who are unable to, or would find it very difficult to, have vaginal intercourse because of a clinically diagnosed physical disability or psychosexual problem who are using partner or donor sperm
- people with conditions that require specific consideration in relation to methods of conception (for example, after sperm washing where the man is HIV positive)
- people in same-sex relationships.

For people with unexplained infertility, mild endometriosis or mild male factor infertility, who are having regular unprotected sexual intercourse:

- intrauterine insemination is not routinely offered, either with or without ovarian stimulation
- the individual is advised to try to conceive for a total of 2 years before IVF will be considered.

The pathway commences when the individual sees their GP, and the GP agrees to consider referring if indicated by the presenting symptoms / situation and the results of initial investigations. The GP will arrange for a seminal fluid analysis and several investigations for the female, including ovulation and hormone tests. The GP can refer to the Assisted Reproductive Unit (ARU) regardless of whether there is sperm, as IVF or DI may be appropriate for those with no sperm present.

When the ARU receive the GP referral, eligibility for publicly funded treatment will be assessed in accordance with HSG criteria for treatment. NICE guidance was used to develop this such as Fertility problems: assessment and treatment, as published in Clinical Guideline Reference number: CG156 Published: 20 February 2013 Last updated: 06 September 2017. If the criteria for publicly funded treatment is not met, then discussions can subsequently take place whether private treatment is appropriate.

a. Pathways and processes for private treatment

For private treatment, IUI / DI (Donor Insemination) is often used in combination with exogenous FSH ovarian stimulation in women who already spontaneously ovulate. Although this may give a higher pregnancy rate the multiple pregnancy rate is >12%. With the associated prematurity and infant morbidity associated with multiple pregnancies stimulated IUI /DI should not be carried out. DI is also available privately for single women and same-sex couples.

Patients may be seen privately because:

1. They self-refer to ARU
2. They have been referred to ARU by their GP but do not meet the eligibility criteria
3. They have completed all cycles of publicly-funded treatment, but want to continue trying to conceive through assisted means.

The pathways are:

1. Self-referral is achieved by the patient contacting the service
2. The patient is informed that they are not eligible for publicly-funded treatment in their initial ARU appointment, or they have completed all the publicly-funded cycles. Options are discussed, and if the patient decides to pursue private treatment and is clinically appropriate, they are accepted into the private pathway.

b. the treatment costs for private patients, including pharmacy costs;

The treatment costs for IUI for private patients, is £650 per cycle. This cost includes sperm preparation. There is no pharmacy cost as IUI / DI is not carried out with ovarian stimulation.

For patients who require DI, there are additional costs for the purchase, transport, documentation and storage of donor sperm.

c. the current waiting times, for both public and private treatment;

There is no waiting list at present, i.e., the ARU team will contact the patient once the referral has been received and will normally schedule a first outpatient appointment within 2 weeks.

IUI / DI treatment will then commence after appropriate investigation and work-up. The time from referral to the first cycle commencing will vary, depending on factors such as whether donor sperm is required (which needs to be delivered), and whether the women's menstrual cycle is such that ovulation occurs during the week, when ARU is open.

d. how many Health and Care Jersey staff are currently qualified to carry out IUI treatment;

Each of the four HCG consultant gynaecologists are qualified to carry out IUI.

There are also plans for the current 2 Fertility nurses in ARU undergo training in 2025 and 2026.

- e. how many cycles of IUI were carried out in each of the years 2022, 2023, 2024 and so far in 2025, broken down by year into publicly-funded and private cycles;

Year	Publicly- funded	Private	Total
2022	1	14	15
2023	3	17	20
2024	4	12	16
2025 (01 Jan – 15 Apr)	3	4	7

1.5 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of The Minister for Social Security regarding the gluten-free subsidy scheme (WQ.176/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what plans exist, if any, to review the gluten-free subsidy scheme, and will she –

- (a) state how many individuals received vouchers in 2023, 2024 and to date in 2025;
- (b) state the total amount paid out under the scheme in 2023, 2024 and so far in 2025; and
- (c) advise when the effectiveness of the scheme and the appropriateness of the level of subsidy provided were last reviewed?

Answer

- (a) The number of individuals receiving at least one voucher:

2023	476
2024	477
2025 Year to date	473

- (b) Total paid out (being the value of the vouchers spent)

2023	£283,737
2024	£300,179
2025 Year to March	£46,695

- (c) The gluten free scheme was examined in March 2024 and considered alongside provision in the UK. The Jersey scheme was found to be effective and the level of subsidy appropriate to support the additional cost of staples, such as bread, flour and pasta for people with a medical requirement for Gluten free foods.

1.6. Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of The Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding money currently owed to the Treasury (WQ. 177/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise the total amount of money currently owed to the Treasury, indicating the amount owed for three years or more, and will she detail what plans, if any, she has for using debt payments to restore the Stabilisation Fund, and if no such plans exist, explain why not?"

Answer

The 2024 Accounts (to be published early May) will show sums owing to the States of Jersey (Receivables) of £394 million (excluding amounts due to subsidiary companies). This includes amounts due for taxation, and amounts owing to departments for services provided where there is a charge. It does not include amounts relating to Prior-Year Basis Taxation.

Not all of these amounts are past their due date, for example where a tax assessment has been raised to be settled by payment on account. At the end of March 2025, the total debt overdue was £210 million, of which £72 million has been owed for 3 years or more.

In line with accounting standards, income is recognised in the accounting period in which it accrues, and the same basis is used in financial forecasts included in the Budget. As such the settlement (payment) of debt does not generate additional unbudgeted funds that are available for use.

Repayment of debt does not constitute a windfall - it is funding that has already been allocated. It is therefore not available to restore the stabilisation fund and for this reason I have no plans to use these debts to do so.

1.7 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of The Minister for Social Security regarding the factors that support the statement that Jersey has a “buoyant labour market” (WQ. 178/2025):

Question

Further to the Minister’s response to [Oral Question 81/2025](#), when she stated that Jersey has a “buoyant labour market,” will she provide information on the factors that support this statement and how the high cost to businesses of increasing demand for Licenced and Registered staff impacts on the Island’s “buoyant” labour market?

Answer

My reference to a “buoyant labour market” was based on the high levels of employment and low levels of unemployment in the Island.

- As at 31/3/25 710 adults were registered as actively seeking work, with the monthly number varying between 670 and 820 from 1/1/2024 to 31/3/2025.
- The June 2024 labour market report recorded a total of 65,290 jobs in the island, the highest number on record.

The high number of jobs in the labour market and the low number of unemployed workers suggest that the cost to businesses of the demand for staff is having no significant impact on the labour market.

1.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding changes to the ID Trans Inclusion Guidance (WQ. 179/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise whether he is considering any changes to the [ID Trans Inclusion Guidance \(Non-statutory guidance for CYPES including schools and educational settings in Jersey\)](#) in light of the launch of the e-petition entitled [Revoke trans guidance in schools until parents have been consulted](#); and if not, why not?

Answer

I am not currently considering any changes to this guidance following the launch of a petition. It would not be good practice for a Minister to consider making changes based solely on the launch of a petition.

Conversely, it is good practice for Ministers to take a full consideration of matters raised by petitions, and any consideration for change, as and when they pass the relevant thresholds, 1,000 signatures for a Ministerial response, 5,000 signatures to be considered for an in-Committee debate by the States Assembly.

1.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of The Minister for the Environment regarding a net-zero carbon emissions target (WQ. 180/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise whether it his assessment that the transition to a net-zero carbon emissions target is likely –

- (a) to increase or to decrease costs for households and businesses; and
- (b) to have a greater impact on lower- and middle-income households and if so, what actions, if any, he is considering to offset that impact;

and will he advise, further to his response to [Written Question 432/2024](#), whether any additional consideration has been given to the funding requirements of the transition to net zero, and if not, why not?

Answer

- (a) The move to net-zero will require a range of changes across the economy and the community in order to transition away from fossil fuels and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions. With the two largest sources of emissions from transport and heating our buildings, the greatest changes that we are going to see are in the move away from petrol and diesel vehicles and oil and gas heating.

There are various different ways that this transition can be achieved, and the choices taken will influence where the costs are felt. For example, switching away from private car journeys to cycling would lower both purchase, maintenance and fuel costs. Whereas, switching to an electric car, might be a higher up-front cost to purchase than an equivalent petrol or diesel car currently, but then deliver savings in terms of ongoing fuel and maintenance costs.

Similarly, energy efficiency improvements to a property will reduce the heating demand and heating costs. Switching from an oil boiler to a heat pump requires a significant upfront investment but then provides an efficient heating system that is low cost to run.

During phase 1 delivery of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap (2022-2025) the policies have focussed on providing financial support for the upfront costs of electric vehicles and low carbon heating

incentives as well as subsidies for home energy audits to identify where energy efficiency improvements can be made. We are increasingly also seeing the market evolve to provide preferential financing solutions including loans and mortgages, where loans are provided to support the upfront investment in green technology and repayment is supported through the savings on the running costs.

It should be noted that this isn't a zero/sum situation and that there are costs associated with not decarbonising or delaying decarbonisation and with dealing with the consequences of a changing climate. The [Carbon Neutral Roadmap](#) (p.64) acknowledged that *'As well as the local co-benefits of the proposed policies set out in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, the Carbon Neutral Strategy also considered the social cost of carbon, which is a proxy for the negative impacts of carbon emissions that would be avoided. This was assessed to be as high as £600M if no steps were taken to reduce emissions in the areas of transport and heating.'* Consideration should be given to the likelihood that the impacts (and costs) of a changing climate will be felt disproportionately by middle and lower income households, especially in developing countries.

- (b) A number of policies within the Carbon Neutral Roadmap provide an improved service to Islanders at no direct cost to the householders or businesses. For example, bus service development trials and improved cycling infrastructure. Other measures predominantly impact higher income households – for example increasing Vehicle Emissions Duty for the most the largest and most polluting vehicles categories.

However, we do need to recognise that any initiative that requires a high upfront investment (such as a new car or a new heating system) will be more difficult to access by those on lower incomes. The Carbon Neutral Roadmap made a commitment to not increase overall income inequality across the breadth of policies that it proposed. This commitment fed into the design of the incentives.

For example, the Electric Vehicle Purchase Incentive was designed to allow second hand electric vehicles as well as new to access the funding. 81% of applications were for used EVs at the point that they were first imported into the Island and the average purchase price for all electric cars (new and used) funded under the initiative was £23,174. Overall, the incentive saw 1,208 electric vehicles brought into the Island, these vehicles will contribute to the availability of electric vehicles at lower price points in the local used car market in subsequent years.

As part of the incentive a survey of electric vehicle owners was completed. They were asked a specific question regarding the running costs of electric vehicles relative to petrol and diesel. The results were 76% of respondents using their EV for personal use reported that charging an EV was significantly cheaper than fuelling a petrol or diesel vehicle.

In addition, the Low Carbon Heating Incentive was design to provide additional support to those on low incomes. Initially there was up to £5k grant which was offered on a match funded basis to the general population. For those qualifying as low income, up to £10k was available and there was no requirement to provide matched funding. The scheme was also designed to include energy efficiency improvements within the grant funded envelope when the heating system was being replaced, in the hope that the property energy demand would be reduced and the ongoing heating costs to the householder reduced.

It should also be recognised that those on the lowest incomes are less likely to own their own properties or have their own vehicles. The upfront costs of heating system replacement won't fall directly on them, but they will hopefully benefit from improved efficiency of the heating systems in their rented properties.

- (c) Further to the response given to [Written Question 432/2024](#), officials are continuing to develop costed proposals for the second Carbon Neutral Roadmap delivery period from 2027 to 2030. Funding arrangements for this period will form the first phase of the Net Zero

Financing Strategy (NZFS), as noted in Budget 2025 – 2028 (p.91). These proposals will be brought forward following the election next year for the Assembly to consider and approve. Looking beyond 2030, we expect to develop the NZFS in four-year phases in tandem with the requirements of each CNR delivery plan.

Preparations for Budget 2026 – 2029 are now underway, with consideration being given to the revenue to be allocated to the Climate Emergency Fund as a proportion of fuel duty and vehicle emissions duty. Work to bring forward the proposed fuel duty replacement policy commenced in 2024 but has now been paused for this term of Government. Revenue from new polluter pays taxes and charges is expected to form part of the NZFS where there is agreement that it is appropriate and timely to bring forward such measures.

In developing the NZFS, there will also be investigation of alternative public and private sources of funding.

1.10 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of The Minister for Social Security regarding the Health Insurance Fund (WQ. 181/2025):

Question

In relation to the Health Insurance Fund, will the Minister provide details of the following –

- (a) the amount of income that has been received into the Fund for each of the last five years;
- (b) the amount of expenditure that the Fund has incurred for each of the last five years;
- (c) the projected value of the Fund for the next five years; and
- (d) the actions, if any, that are either being taken or considered to limit any reduction in the value of the fund?

Answer

(a) the amount of income that has been received into the Fund for each of the last five years:

£000s	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Revenue	40,363	41,192	37,933	56,442	56,116

Source: Annual Report and Accounts for the States of Jersey (Draft for 2024)

(b) the amount of expenditure that the Fund has incurred for each of the last five years:

£000s	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Expenditure	34,800	37,225	38,772	49,338	57,345

Source: Annual Report and Accounts for the States of Jersey (Draft for 2024)

(c) the projected value of the Fund for the next five years:

£000s	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Closing Value of Fund	103,927	93,998	85,038	76,274	67,375

Source: Budget 2025 to 2028 (Government Plan)

(d) the actions, if any, that are either being taken or considered to limit any reduction in the value of the fund?”

The [Budget 2025- 2028](#) identifies the anticipated fall in the value of the Fund in coming years and on

Page 83 Ministers set out their position in addressing the increased costs of primary care support:

The value of the fund is expected to fall to just under £70 million by 2028. This represents just over one year’s worth of expenditure.

The ageing demographic is increasing the cost of health services in the Island, including the costs met by the fund. These pressures will continue to increase in coming years. Changes will be needed to pay for future healthcare costs in a sustainable way.

The Health and Social Services Minister is continuing to review the Island’s health and care costs, with options for the future funding of our whole health and care system being developed. These options will include possible reform of the Health Insurance Fund but, in the meantime, the current role of the Health Insurance Fund in subsidising the cost of specific primary care services will be maintained.

1.11 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the Cost-of-Living Ministerial Group’s work on minimum income standards (WQ.182/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide an update on the Cost of Living Ministerial Group’s work on minimum income standards including, but not limited to, the terms of reference for the workstream, aims, timeline, and details of the associated budget?

Answer

The Cost of Living Ministerial Group has been discussing options for its work on minimum income standards. These discussions are near conclusion and an update, including those aspects mentioned in the above question, will be shared once discussions have finalised.

1.12 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the number of apprenticeships offered since the adoption of P.5/2023 (WQ.183/2025):

Question

Further to the adoption of [P.5/2023](#), as amended, will the Minister publish any available data to demonstrate what change, if any, there has been to the number of apprenticeships offered by businesses, charities, and other employment organisations?

Answer

Further to a Freedom of Information [Request](#) published in March 2025, the number of business apprenticeships also attending courses at Highlands College has remained relatively steady in recent years.

This represents the vast majority of apprenticeship pathways on the Island and the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department also provides support to cover course costs for apprentices studying at other authorised providers.

Combined, the overall numbers of apprentices have remained relatively similar since 2023 at over 450 per year.

To mitigate the potential negative impact on apprenticeships from the minimum wage increases towards a living wage, the Better Business Support Package includes provision for employers to receive £2,000 per eligible apprentice in 2025 and 2026. Apprenticeship uptake will be carefully monitored over this period.

This is alongside the existing support offered by CYPES for the funding of up to £1,600 per apprentice to cover course costs.

These 2 funding sources work in parallel to recognise the value that apprenticeships bring to continuing professional development of the individual and the long-term, wider benefits to the economy.

1.13 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding first choice secondary schools (WQ.184/2025):

Question

In respect of students in secondary schools, will the Minister –

- (a) publish figures for the last 5 academic years, including 2025, showing the number of students who did not receive a place at their first choice secondary school;
- (b) state the number of these students who lived within the catchment area for their first choice secondary school;
- (c) provide the capacity figures for each secondary school; and
- (d) for each school, provide the current total number of students and, if any schools are at capacity, advise whether the option to increase student numbers has been considered?

Answer

(a) and (b)

Annual Admissions for Year 7 are completed during January to March prior to transition in September. In the first round of this process children that require a place at a non-fee-paying secondary school are allocated their catchment secondary school. In the second-round families can request a different school than their catchment, we call these out of catchment requests.

2025

- First Round - 27 children were denied their catchment school (following the published criteria).
- Second Round – Fewer than five of the children denied a catchment school place in the first round were also denied in the second round. 11 children were denied an out of catchment request

2024

- First Round – Fewer than 5 children were denied their catchment school (following the published criteria).
- Second Round – Fewer than 5 children were denied their catchment school. 7 children were denied an out of catchment request

2023

- First Round – 9 children were denied their catchment school (following the published criteria).
- Second Round – fewer than 5 children denied their catchment school in the first round went on to receive their catchment school in the second round. 31 children were denied an out of catchment request

2022

- First Round – 0 children were denied their catchment school
- Second Round – 28 children were denied an out of catchment request

2021

- First Round – 0 children were denied their catchment school
- Second Round – 11 children were denied an out of catchment request

(c) and (d) As of the Spring Census 2025:

School Name	School Capacity	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total Students
Grainville	750 - 825	147	173	169	127	135	751
Haute Vallée	750 - 825	149	170	129	112	98	658
Le Rocquier	750 - 950	148	162	148	134	110	702
Les Quennevais	750 - 850	182	174	196	158	165	875

Les Quennevais is the only school currently over capacity. This is due to an extra form of entry in the current year 9. This has limited further numbers to the school due to already being over the maximum capacity.

1.14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of The Minister for Health and Social Services regarding public and private patient outcomes (WQ.185/2025):

Question

Will the Minister state what assurance he can provide, including what data there are available, that the outcomes for patients receiving treatment in the public sector are no better or worse than for private patients in receipt of comparable procedures and treatments?

Answer

Outcomes for publicly funded treatment are described through clinical effectiveness and audit outcome data and reports. Some of these are included in the public board papers for Health and Community Services Advisory Board. Health and Care Jersey (HCJ) has enrolled with the High-Quality Improvement program (HQIP) which covers a range of surgical and medical specialities and will provide data to inform both clinical effectiveness and quality to the board. HCJ does not however have access to the outcomes in relation to the private activity conducted by healthcare professionals, who act as independent practitioners. Those practitioners employed by HCJ are however required to reflect upon the scope of their whole practice as part of the annual appraisal and any concerns here would be escalated to the responsible officer. No such concerns have been raised.

1.15 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding a breakdown of the £6.7 million funding allocated in 2024 for agriculture and fisheries (WQ.186/2025):

Question

Further to [Written Question 3012024](#) and the adoption of ‘Increase in revenue expenditure for agriculture and fisheries’ ([P.742023](#)), as amended, will the Minister provide a breakdown of the £6.7 million funding allocated in 2024 identifying –

- (a) each organisation that received funding;
- (b) for what purpose each such organisation received funding;
- (c) the amount spent, where and how it was spent; and
- (d) the outcomes of the funding provided;

and will he advise when a full report detailing the outcomes of the schemes will be published?

Answer

- (a) and (b)

Grant funded organisation in 2024 (as indirect support to rural and marine sectors) :-

1. Jersey Island Genetics Ltd – a grant of £230k for the purpose of delivering herd management services, livestock recording services, milk recording, provision of liquid nitrogen, and enablement of productivity focused improvements to the genetics of the Island’s cattle sector.
2. Jersey Product Promotion (2017) Ltd – a grant of £259k to provide management services to the Genuine Jersey Products Association, and promotion of rural and marine products both locally and for export; an additional specific grant of £70k for the promotion of the Jersey Royal crop through media activity, undertaken on a match funded basis with industry.

Organisations (limited companies and sole traders) in receipt of direct support as part of the rural and marine support schemes (listed by scheme).

	Business name / approved farm business reference (where not a Limited Co.)	Purpose of funding/ qualifying scheme
1	Woodlands Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme

2	Master Farms Limited	Rural Support Scheme
3	Le Gresley Farms Limited	Rural Support Scheme
4	Potage Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
5	Meleches (2007) Limited	Rural Support Scheme
6	Labey Farms Limited	Rural Support Scheme
7	La Robeline Cider Company Limited	Rural Support Scheme
8	Lomah Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
9	J&S Growers (2009) Limited	Rural Support Scheme
10	Anneville Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
11	Jersey Watercress	Rural Support Scheme
12	729	Rural Support Scheme
13	LS Farms Ltd	Rural Support Scheme
14	Cowley Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
15	Happy Hens Limited	Rural Support Scheme
16	The Wellness Practitioner	Rural Support Scheme

17	PB Field & Paddock Maintenance	Rural Support Scheme
18	Jersey Dairy Limited	Rural Support Scheme
19	La Ferme Limited	Rural Support Scheme
20	Clairval Farm	Rural Support Scheme
21	DA Richardson Limited	Rural Support Scheme
22	Freedom Farms Limited	Rural Support Scheme
23	332	Rural Support Scheme
24	La Mare Vineyards Limited	Rural Support Scheme
25	Lodge Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
26	Trinity Manor Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
27	The Reserve (registered business)	Rural Support Scheme
28	The Jersey Royal Company Limited	Rural Support Scheme
29	1445	Rural Support Scheme
30	460	Rural Support Scheme
31	Le Tacheron Limited	Rural Support Scheme

32	1414	Rural Support Scheme
33	Hamptonne Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
34	HFP Equestrian	Rural Support Scheme
35	BirdSong Garden	Rural Support Scheme
36	Field Farm	Rural Support Scheme
37	La Hougue Farms (1975) Ltd	Rural Support Scheme
38	Jersey SeaSalt	Rural Support Scheme
39	La Chasse Produce Ltd.	Rural Support Scheme
40	Panigot Farm	Rural Support Scheme
41	Happy Hooves	Rural Support Scheme
42	Jersey Fine Tea	Rural Support Scheme
43	Hambury Farm	Rural Support Scheme
44	La Source	Rural Support Scheme
45	Bayview Livery Limited	Rural Support Scheme
46	Mont Cochon Farm	Rural Support Scheme

47	777	Rural Support Scheme
48	Ville Machon Limited	Rural Support Scheme
49	Equine and Canine Solutions Limited	Rural Support Scheme
50	Malzard Ltd	Rural Support Scheme
51	Le Rendu and Sons Limited	Rural Support Scheme
52	Carre Farms Limited	Rural Support Scheme
53	AMW (Jersey) Limited	Rural Support Scheme
54	Greencliffe Equestrian Centre	Rural Support Scheme
55	Bloom'n'Goodness	Rural Support Scheme
56	Three Oaks Vineries Limited	Rural Support Scheme
57	Vers Les Monts Organic Farm	Rural Support Scheme
58	Woodside Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
59	Sprouts Farm Club	Rural Support Scheme
60	La Barcelone Farm	Rural Support Scheme
61	Domaine Des Vaux Limited	Rural Support Scheme

62	51	Rural Support Scheme
63	PLCS Limited	Rural Support Scheme
64	Cannacine Ltd	Rural Support Scheme
65	La Roulerie Farm (registered business)	Rural Support Scheme
66	Somerleigh Farms (1996) Limited	Rural Support Scheme
67	Fosse au Bois Growers Limited	Rural Support Scheme
68	The Smokey Shed (registered business)	Rural Support Scheme
69	Grow Jersey Limited	Rural Support Scheme
70	La Croiserie Farm & Veg Stall	Rural Support Scheme
71	Jersey Flower Farm (registered business)	Rural Support Scheme
72	La Hauteur Stables	Rural Support Scheme
73	La Croix Farm	Rural Support Scheme
74	Didier Hellio Limited	Rural Support Scheme
75	Person & Freire Limited	Rural Support Scheme
76	819	Rural Support Scheme

77	Hay-feuvre (registered business)	Rural Support Scheme
78	Hi Ho Growers Limited	Rural Support Scheme
79	Brooklands Farm Limited	Rural Support Scheme
80	Vergee Ltd	Rural Support Scheme
81	1503	Marine Support Scheme
82	1513	Marine Support Scheme
83	Rock Fisheries Limited	Marine Support Scheme
84	1502	Marine Support Scheme
85	1506	Marine Support Scheme
86	Jenna-Dee-Scallops	Marine Support Scheme
87	1512	Marine Support Scheme
88	1514	Marine Support Scheme
89	1519	Marine Support Scheme
90	Greenbean Supplies Ltd	Marine Support Scheme
91	1516	Marine Support Scheme

92	1515	Marine Support Scheme
93	1505	Marine Support Scheme
94	1509 & 1543	Marine Support Scheme
95	White Waters Limited	Marine Support Scheme
96	1522	Marine Support Scheme
97	Le Bulot-eh Limited	Marine Support Scheme
98	1523	Marine Support Scheme
99	GreatCatch Seafood	Marine Support Scheme
100	Southern Rock Fisheries Limited	Marine Support Scheme
101	Jade-S Fisheries Jersey	Marine Support Scheme
102	1528	Marine Support Scheme
103	1520	Marine Support Scheme
104	Provider Fisheries Limited	Marine Support Scheme
105	1527	Marine Support Scheme
106	1529	Marine Support Scheme

107	1531 & 1545	Marine Support Scheme
108	1533	Marine Support Scheme
109	1508	Marine Support Scheme
110	Wheelhouse Limited	Marine Support Scheme
111	1504	Marine Support Scheme
112	1534	Marine Support Scheme
113	1535	Marine Support Scheme
114	1541	Marine Support Scheme
115	1507	Marine Support Scheme
116	1518	Marine Support Scheme
117	1550	Marine Support Scheme
118	P.A. & C. Gay Fisheries Limited	Marine Support Scheme
119	1537	Marine Support Scheme
120	1542	Marine Support Scheme
121	The Seymour Oyster Company Limited	Marine Support Scheme

122	La Rocque Fisheries Limited	Marine Support Scheme
123	Jersey Oyster Company Limited	Marine Support Scheme
124	1536	Marine Support Scheme
125	1538	Marine Support Scheme

(c)

The Rural Support Scheme (RSS) and Marine Support Scheme (MSS) reward local businesses using a points based ‘credit’ system, which is used to calculate support payments based on economic, environmental and social inputs across pre-defined components which make up the credit ‘matrix’ on both schemes.

Credits were awarded to each business for a range of activities and converted to a grant payment at a standard rate (the 2024 grant rate was £12.50 per credit in both schemes). A number of items within the credit matrix are applicable to both sectors and there is an ongoing effort to ensure a consistent and joined up approach is maintained to closely align both schemes.

Reporting of expenditure on each component of the credit matrix has been summarised for all scheme applicants below rather than reported on an individual organisation basis (as this would involve several thousand data points).

The schemes are delivered in three tiers.

Tier 1

Tier 1 rewards accreditation under independently audited quality schemes and integrated business management plans – written statements for each organisation detailing specific arrangements made for each enterprise for each topic area covered. These management plans are subject to independent review as part of the audit process undertaken by the various accreditation bodies.

Credits are offered to organisations to promote working to the highest accredited standards and help offset the costs of gaining such recognition.

LEAF Marque Membership or accreditation and/or Organic certification are a requirement to access the RSS.

A fishing licence and vessel safety certificate or, for aquaculture businesses membership of the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) , are required to access the MSS.

All other scheme elements are voluntary but rewarded in an effort to raise professional standards of the sectors and ultimately promote Jersey as a jurisdiction which operates to the highest independently verified standards.

RSS

MSS

COMBINED

Tier 1

Accreditation

LEAF MARQUE	£	262,500.00		£	262,500.00
ORGANIC	£	71,250.00	£	-	£ 71,250.00
LICENCE/SAFETY CERT			£	73,725.13	£ 73,725.13
SAGB			£	3,000.00	£ 3,000.00
RED TRACTOR	£	40,500.00			£ 40,500.00
SALSA	£	6,000.00	£	-	£ 6,000.00
KIWA	£	1,500.00			£ 1,500.00
GLOBAL GAP	£	9,000.00	£	-	£ 9,000.00
BHS	£	12,000.00			£ 12,000.00
BRC GLOBAL	£	11,250.00	£	-	£ 11,250.00

Integrated Management Plans					
SOIL	£	32,500.00			£ 32,500.00
WATER	£	35,000.00	£	1,500.00	£ 36,500.00
NUTRIENT	£	30,000.00			£ 30,000.00
WASTE	£	36,500.00	£	1,500.00	£ 38,000.00
ANIMAL HEALTH / BIOSECURITY	£	20,000.00	£	1,500.00	£ 21,500.00
ANIMAL WELFARE	£	15,000.00	£	1,500.00	£ 16,500.00
CONSERVATION PLAN	£	28,000.00	£	1,500.00	£ 29,500.00
ENERGY	£	21,000.00	£	1,000.00	£ 22,000.00
CARBON NEUTRAL	£	20,000.00	£	1,000.00	£ 21,000.00
CARBON DATA	£	8,500.00	£	-	£ 8,500.00
WOODLAND	£	15,000.00			£ 15,000.00
HEALTH AND SAFETY			£	1,500.00	£ 1,500.00
EIA			£	1,000.00	£ 1,000.00
SEAWATER QUALITY			£	1,500.00	£ 1,500.00

Tier 1 Payments	£	675,500.00	£	90,225.13	£ 765,725.13
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Tier 2

Tier 2 rewards activity which contributes directly to improving food resilience or recognises and promotes sustainable land management practices with a formula incentivising various primary land use activities.

Tier 2	RSS	MSS	COMBINED
<i>Livestock / Fishing Activity</i>			

DAIRY COWS	£	728,000.00		£	728,000.00	
BEEF CATTLE	£	29,487.50		£	29,487.50	
POULTRY	£	84,708.75		£	84,708.75	
GOATS	£	3,112.50		£	3,112.50	
PIGS	£	11,150.00		£	11,150.00	
SHEEP	£	19,875.00		£	19,875.00	
DAYS AT SEA			£	152,487.58	£	152,487.58
OYSTER PURIFICATION			£	19,775.00	£	19,775.00
Primary Land Use						
GRASS >1 YEAR LEY	£	577,285.63			£	577,285.63
OTHER LAND	£	2,874.59			£	2,874.59
OUTDOOR CROPS	£	462,154.38			£	462,154.38
ROUGH GRAZING	£	3,964.25			£	3,964.25
INDOOR CROPS	£	9,112.00			£	9,112.00
CONSERVATION	£	47,042.00			£	47,042.00
OYSTER CONCESSION			£	24,401.25	£	24,401.25
MUSSEL CONCESSION			£	1,000.00	£	1,000.00
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Tier 2 Payments	£	1,978,766.59	£	197,663.83	£	2,176,430.42
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Tier 3

Tier 3 rewards activity delivered across a wide range of activities to underpin the social, environmental and economic resilience and sustainability of both sectors. The interventions are designed to promote adoption of working practices which align with high level Government policy ambitions.

Tier 3 includes support for ‘project’ grants, with businesses offered a specific amount of funding dependent on the number of credits awarded within the scheme. In 2024, 120 projects were approved and funded with the support representing 52% of the total value of projects delivered, the balance of funding from sector level investment.

Tier 3	RSS	MSS	COMBINED
<i>Social Incentives</i>			
STAFF FTE	£ 225,000.00	£ 53,875.00	£ 278,875.00
WORK PERMIT FTE	£ 87,500.00	£ 11,250.00	£ 98,750.00
YOUNG PERSON	£ 28,125.00	£ 10,312.50	£ 38,437.50
SEA SURVIVAL		£ 7,312.50	£ 7,312.50
FIRST AID		£ 7,650.00	£ 7,650.00
FIRE SAFETY		£ 7,650.00	£ 7,650.00
<i>Food Resilience Incentives</i>			
EAT SAFE	£ 1,550.00	£ 2,362.50	£ 3,912.50

GENUINE JERSEY	£	10,312.50	£	2,787.50	£	13,100.00
GREAT TASTE AWARD	£	500.00	£	-	£	500.00
PRIMARY FORAGE	£	130,003.75			£	130,003.75
LOCAL FOOD (OUTDOOR)	£	32,684.00	£	525.00	£	33,209.00
LOCAL FOOD (INDOOR)	£	55,295.29			£	55,295.29
MARKET GARDEN	£	9,311.45			£	9,311.45
ORGANIC (FOOD)	£	61,035.50	£	-	£	61,035.50
ORGANIC (GRAZING)	£	3,405.63			£	3,405.63
FOOD HYGIENE	£	1,800.00	£	2,300.00	£	4,100.00
HEALTH CERT			£	6,825.00	£	6,825.00
PURIFICATION CERT			£	75.00	£	75.00
<i>Environmental Incentives</i>						
COVER CROP SOILS	£	121,757.81			£	121,757.81
CROP BIOCONTROL	£	41,220.63			£	41,220.63
CROP BIODIVERSITY	£	106,323.75			£	106,323.75
PUBLIC ACCESS PATH	£	18,470.10			£	18,470.10
HEDGE MAINTENANCE	£	248,341.40			£	248,341.40
WILDLIFE PONDS	£	14,375.00			£	14,375.00
WASTE RECYCLING	£	83,646.75	£	3,375.00	£	87,021.75
<i>Economic Incentives</i>						
PROJECT GRANTS	£	1,716,530.21	£	45,446.95	£	1,761,977.16
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Tier 3 Payments	£	2,997,188.76	£	161,746.95	£	3,158,935.71
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Summary of Rural and Marine Support Payments 2024

Direct Support Payments	RSS	MSS	TOTAL
Total Payments (Tiers 1 to 3)	£ 5,651,455.35	£ 449,635.91	£ 6,101,091.26
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Indirect Support Payments			
Jersey Island Genetics Ltd			£ 230,000.00
Jersey Product Promotion (2017) Ltd			£ 259,000.00
Jersey Royal PR Campaign			£ 70,000.00
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Total Rural and Marine Support Expenditure			£ 6,660,091.26
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Allocated 2024 Budget		£	6,672,000.00
Balance		£	11,908.74
Underspend	0.18	%	

(d)

The design of financial support interventions is focused on the delivery of improved outcomes with a large range of measures which essentially underpin the social, economic and environmental sustainability of these traditional sectors.

In summary, several high-level outcomes are targeted as a result of the ‘Increase in revenue expenditure for agriculture and fisheries’ (P.74/2023). 2024 will provide baseline data to enable year on year comparisons to be made going forward on a wide range of measurements which seek:

- An increase to the number of organisations participating in both these sectors (and receiving support);
- An increase in the area of managed farmland with primary land use defined on the RSS;
- An increase in the area of organic food production on the Island;
- An increase to the amount of food produced for local consumers;
- An increase to the supply of locally produced forage for livestock;
- An increase to participation of young people as owners/directors of organisations;
- An increase to rewards for workers within these sectors;
- An increase in the diversity of products available from local production;
- Improved economic performance and resilience of the sectors (profitability);
- Added value for fish and farming products;
- Improved levels of productivity across organisations within the sector;
- Better energy efficiency within organisations;
- To enable the transition to a carbon neutral trading environment;
- Improved soil health;
- Improved water quality;
- Enhanced biodiversity on farmland;
- An increase to areas of land managed for conservation;
- Improved public access to the countryside;
- An increase in waste recycling by the sectors;

The final report on the performance of the 2024 allocation of funds under the RSS and MSS has been rescheduled to Q4 2025 to allow sufficient time to collect 2024 financial data from every organisation in receipt of funding (a condition of scheme access) so that financial results can be included as an element of correlated data analysis to assess the impact of the schemes.

To date, the number of businesses registered for the RSS and MSS in 2025 has increased to 165 (from 125 in 2024) indicating a positive trend clearly influenced by the level of funding now available.

1.16 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of The Minister for Health and Social Services regarding plans to align Jersey's regulatory framework with the World Health Organisation's recommendations on good regulatory practices and reliance mechanisms (WQ.187/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what plans, if any, exist to align Jersey's regulatory framework with the World Health Organisation's recommendations on good regulatory practices and reliance mechanisms ([WHA 67.20](#)); and, if such plans exist, will he explain what this would involve?

Answer

The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides principles, not operational frameworks: WHO guidance like WHA 67.20 sets high-level global best practices. These are not technical standards like EU-GMP but principles and system-level practices that guide how a regulatory authority should function.

The WHO provides guidance on good regulatory practices (GRP) and reliance mechanisms to support countries in strengthening their medicines regulation. The WHO under WHA 67.20 explicitly encourages countries to rely on the decisions of trusted regulatory authorities – such as the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA), European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – as part of its strategy to improve regulatory efficiency, reduce duplication, and facilitate faster access to quality-assured medical products.

The Government of Jersey has an MoU with the UK medicines regulator, the MHRA, and therefore uses the expertise of an internationally recognised National Regulatory Authority. Jersey aligns its medicines regulatory framework with the UK's MHRA to ensure legal, operational, and market compatibility with UK systems. All medicines placed on the Jersey market should be authorised by the MHRA and manufactured in accordance with EU-GMP standards, ensuring high-quality, safe, and effective products.

While WHO's WHA 67.20 sets out high-level best practices – such as transparent, risk-based regulation, reliance on trusted authorities, and good governance – these are already embedded within the MHRA's approach. By aligning with the MHRA, Jersey indirectly meets WHO principles.

This approach avoids duplication, ensures regulatory efficiency, and maintains public health protection.

1.17 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of The Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the general regulatory framework for medicinal products (WQ.188/2025):

Question

Will the Minister state what plans, if any, he has to enhance the general regulatory framework for medicinal products (including medical cannabis and medical technology) and, in particular, to

implement measures to improve the oversight of the manufacturing and prescribing of such products to ensure local alignment with internationally-recognised regulatory standards?

Answer

The regulation of medicinal products falls under the provisions of the Medicines (Jersey) Law 1995. The Medicines Advisory Council is a statutory body that advises on matters relating to this legislation.

Controlled drugs are subject to additional regulation under the Misuse of Drugs (Jersey) Law 1978. The Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs is a statutory body that advises on matters relating to this legislation.

While both pieces of legislation remain functional, it is recognised that aspects of each require development to ensure they remain fit for purpose in a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape. This review and development work is underway and ongoing.

In terms of the practical regulation of medicines and medicinal products, this function is led by the Chief Pharmacist's team. To support this work, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in place with the UK medicines regulator, the MHRA, thereby drawing on the expertise of an internationally recognised National Regulatory Authority to provide specialist technical input to our processes.

Jersey aligns its medicines regulatory framework with the UK's MHRA to ensure legal, operational, and market compatibility with UK systems. All medicines placed on the Jersey market should be authorised by the MHRA and manufactured in accordance with EU-GMP standards, ensuring high-quality, safe, and effective products.

It is important to note that prescribing is a clinical decision made by appropriately qualified and professionally registered prescribers. All prescribers practising in Jersey are registered with the Jersey Care Commission (JCC). Should any concerns arise regarding an individual prescriber, these would be addressed through the appropriate professional regulatory body.

It is recognised that the regulation of the wider clinical environment, including the operation of clinics that specialise in prescribing unlicensed Cannabis Based Medicinal Products (CBPMs), is important to ensure appropriate standards. In this respect, it is intended that such clinics should in due course fall under the remit of the Regulation of Care (Jersey) Law 2014 and the Jersey Care Commission.

In summary, I am satisfied that our current regulatory arrangements, drawing on the support of the MHRA, are appropriate and robust. Any future enhancements to Jersey's regulatory framework will be considered carefully, with a view to maintaining patient safety, supporting clinical independence, and ensuring appropriate oversight.

1.18 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of The Minister for Social Security regarding the prescription of opioids and cannabis based medicinal products (WQ.189/2025):

Question

Regarding the prescription of opioids and cannabis based medicinal products, will the Minister state –

- (a) the total amount that has been dispensed annually for each of the past 5 years (since the introduction of prescriptions for cannabis-based medicinal products);
- (b) how many of the above are repeat prescriptions for patients that have been taking the drug for a period longer than one year; and

- (c) how many people have received repeat prescriptions for opioids for a periods longer than 5 years and 10 years?

Answer

As Minister for Social Security, I can provide information for Health Insurance Fund 'Pharmaceutical Benefit'. Those are medicines included on the Prescribed List, prescribed by primary care practitioners and supplied at cost to the Health Insurance Fund (HIF). Cannabis is not including on the Prescribed list and residents who receive prescriptions for medicinal cannabis do so as private patients. The information below also excludes prescribing and dispensing in secondary care.

- (a) A number of opioid-containing medicines are available under the HIF with a range of potencies, from relatively mild painkillers such as co-codamol to strong opioids such as fentanyl and oxycodone. Table 1 (below) provides a breakdown of the number of prescriptions dispensed for each of these medicines each year. The figures show declining numbers of prescriptions dispensed although the relative use of some medicines, such as oxycodone, is increasing. Note that these figures do not indicate the total quantities of each medicine dispensed (for example, a prescription for 10 tablets and a prescription for 60 tablets will both be counted as one prescription in these figures).

To get an overall measure of the total quantities of opioids being dispensed and to account for their different potencies, a measure called the Oral Morphine Equivalence (OME) is used. For this measure, each opioid is given a 'morphine equivalent' dose depending on its potency and the total number of these doses dispensed is expressed in milligrams (mg). Table 2 shows the total Oral Morphine Equivalence (OME) in milligrams dispensed under the HIF each year together with figures for total OME/1,000 patients for Jersey and England. These show a declining use of opioids overall.

Table 1: Annual total number of HIF prescription items dispensed for an opioid					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Buprenorphine	1,365	1,696	1,974	2,157	2,199
Fentanyl	1,014	910	763	636	652
Morphine sulfate	3,497	3,955	4,542	4,729	4,664
Oxycodone hydrochloride	2,350	2,694	2,693	2,969	3,011
Oxycodone hydrochloride/naloxone hydrochloride	1,358	1,457	1,320	1,389	1,334
Pethidine hydrochloride	53				
Tramadol hydrochloride	7,352	6,888	6,664	6,203	5,770
Co-codamol (Codeine phosphate/paracetamol)	24,222	23,447	22,721	22,174	21,187
Codeine phosphate	5,009	5,464	6,399	6,668	6,627
Co-dydramol (Dihydrocodeine/paracetamol)	3,805	3,681	3,758	3,431	2,845
Dihydrocodeine tartrate	6,153	5,732	5,630	5,677	6,069
TOTAL number of prescriptions dispensed	56,178	55,924	56,464	56,033	54,358

Table 2: Total opioids dispensed (expressed as Oral Morphine Equivalence*)					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
JERSEY - total opioids dispensed (mg)*	22,539,577	22,529,456	22,145,090	21,297,506	20,908,003
JERSEY - total OME/1,000 patients	204,905	204,813	201,319	193,614	189,047
ENGLAND - total OME/1,000 patients	340,750	326,217	313,573	300,117	288,337

*This measure describes the total oral morphine equivalence (OME) in all opioid prescribing (excluding prescribing for addiction) including low-dose opioids in drugs such as co-codamol and co-dydramol.

(b) and (c):

The Employment, Social Security and Housing (ESSH) Department holds information on dispensing volumes per prescription. This data does not include information on the patient so repeat prescribing information cannot be identified from ESSH data.

1.19 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of The Minister for Infrastructure regarding why a phased approach to redevelop Fort Regent was not undertaken (WQ.190/2025):

Question

Will the Minister explain why a phased approach, as previously proposed by the Future Fort programme, is not being undertaken for the delivery of the new plans to redevelop Fort Regent and what research, if any, has been undertaken to establish that a complete closure is the better option?

Answer

The decision to close Fort Regent was taken and upheld by the last two Governments and was confirmed by the present Government.

In response to oral question 91/2025, I explained that a clear site will enable the regeneration of Fort Regent to be safer, quicker and more cost effective, enabling the reopening of a 21st century facility by the end of 2028.

Coordinating a phased approach for works to the fundamental operating systems would add significant complexity and cost to the work, which would almost certainly mean that large parts of the Fort would be closed to the public for longer.

As has been explained in Scrutiny and States Members briefings, and at a public meeting on 22nd April, the status of the Fort as a publicly accessible building is critical, and the closure of the facility could be mandated on any day due to critical infrastructure failure, including water and electrical systems, asbestos, and deterioration of the roof and glazing.

The operational infrastructure in the Fort is more than 50 years old and has been coaxed through the recent years. The electrical system is very fragile – if one of the 5 transformers fail, then a new transformer will be required as the original items are obsolete and not available. This will require new electrical distribution boards because modern protocols are different from the original standards. The new boards will require new wiring which, as the original wiring was set into the fabric of the structure, will probably disturb hazardous material. This would necessitate closure of the Fort

anyway, but precipitate it in an unplanned way that will have a greater effect on those businesses trying to operate.

By closing the venue completely, management of unauthorised access is much easier. Anti-social behaviour issues around the site are increasing, but by excluding any public access, it will be easier to mitigate activities which could harm the structure and the individuals.

For these reasons, a full closure of the site, enabling a quicker re-opening, is deemed to be the best option for the public.

1.20 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of The Minister for Infrastructure regarding the uplift in expected costs of the Fort Regent development plan (WQ.191/2025):

Question

Further to his statement in [May 2024](#), in which the Minister stated that development plans for Fort Regent were expected to cost in excess of £80 million, will the Minister explain the uplift in expected cost to £110 million (included in the [recently published proposals](#)) and will he also confirm the proposed source of funding for this project?

Answer

At a quarterly public hearing on 8th May 2024, I said that the plans for Fort Regent “are going to require in excess of £80 million worth of investment.” The £110 million cost associated with the plans published in April 2025 is entirely consistent with that statement.

As Members would expect, the anticipated costs were further refined between May 2024 and April 2025, and include proposals to relocate the cinema from the Waterfront, and the provision of a cable car link from town. The final cost for the redevelopment of Fort Regent will depend on the outcome of the public consultation and the confirmed plans that result.

As has been explained in Scrutiny and States Members briefings, and at a public meeting on 22nd April, the feasibility costs for this project are being met by profits from the College Gardens development. Financing for the project will come from Fort Regent revenues, borrowing, existing capital budget contributions, and additional Government contributions delivered through efficiencies and budget surpluses where available. Details in these respects are under development.

2. Oral Questions

2.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding new consumption taxes (OQ.115/2025):

Given the predicted decline in revenue from fuel duty, relative to inflation, and the decrease in tobacco consumption, will the Minister advise whether she is considering any new consumption taxes, including a tax on sugar?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question. The latest analysis shows that revenue from fuel duty remains steady for the time being and is not declining at the rate that we might have anticipated. As described in Budget 2025, Ministers have been closely monitoring fuel duty levels and are ready, when needed, to propose alternative charges that will begin to make up the funding lost from declining fuel duty. Such alternatives are more likely to be paid by motorists rather than by consumers of other products, particularly those with a sweet tooth. Alternatives could include a form of vehicle ownership charge

or a road user charge, but it is too early to comment on whether and when these proposals will be brought forward, but it appears unlikely with this Council of Minister's term of office.

2.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The U.K. (United Kingdom) has a tax on sugary drinks, the S.D.I.L. (Soft Drinks Industry Levy), which led to manufacturers adjusting their recipes to reduce the sugar content. This levy equates to 24 pence per litre for drinks with 8 grams or more sugar per 100 millilitres. Will the Minister adopt the same levy in Jersey, since it has been widely accepted in the U.K. since April 2018?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

A sugar tax or soft drinks levy is not currently under proposal. The primary driver for the U.K.'s sugar tax is to change behaviour and reduce childhood obesity through a reduction in sugar consumption. The revenues raised by the levy are negligible in proportion to the U.K.'s overall tax take. As the Deputy pointed out, the U.K.'s sugar tax has spurred many makers of soft drinks to reduce their sugar content in their products to escape the higher rates of tax. Those products are, of course, now imported into Jersey with reduced sugar levels. It is not clear how a sugar tax would be implemented in Jersey. There would certainly be difficulties for Customs in administering in-scope beverages at the border. Crucially, the tax does not generate a huge amount of revenue and, even more particularly, the U.K. sugar tax appears to have had very little impact on obesity levels in the U.K.

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

Will the Minister confirm whether she will maintain the commitment made by this current Council of Ministers to seek to resume above R.P.I. (retail price index) increases in fuel duty from 2026?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is a matter that will be considered when Council of Ministers formulate the Budget for 2026, and those discussions have not yet begun.

2.1.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

If the Government chooses not to reintroduce this increase in fuel duty from 2026, what alternative measures will be considered to fund Jersey's Carbon Neutral Roadmap and the Carbon Emergency Fund that is funded through R.P.I. increases in fuel duty?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I say, no decision has been made so I cannot really comment on hypotheticals of what might be. But I have met with the Minister for the Environment recently and we will be discussing in the coming months the future funding for the Carbon Neutral Roadmap.

2.1.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

The Jersey obesity rate with the adult population is about 50 per cent. With children we are looking into 30 per cent. It is really high overweight. Would the Minister look into other jurisdictions and other options to introduce tax on sweetened beverage?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I have just said, that is not on policy at the moment. The sugar tax, as we call it, has not had a significant impact in the U.K. I believe in Norway, for example, they have very high sugar taxes, and that has reduced the element on chocolate and sweets and all sorts, but it will not raise significant revenue, I do not believe. In terms of policy, I do not think that taxing goods is necessarily the best way to change behaviour. There are other ways of supporting that. Increasing the cost of unhealthy foods may have severely unintended consequences for the families who rely on those foods. It is a

very big subject. I absolutely agree with the Deputy's concerns, but I am not totally convinced that the tax system is the place to deal with childhood obesity or adult obesity for that matter.

2.1.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I do believe that to start somewhere we need to change the behaviour and we could see some payment changing behaviour. Would the Minister look into our neighbours' results because France introduced tax of all sweetened beverage since 2012, and it is 12 years and probably we will see if it is working or does not work in France.

[9:45]

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I say, we do have results from the U.K. The U.K.'s tax ... sorry I cannot remember when it came in, but it has not had a significant impact on obesity. Excess weight and obesity in the U.K. have continued to increase. There is more to it. I know the U.K. are considering now extending the tax to milk-based drinks; for example, milkshakes. I imagine that would not go down particularly well in Jersey with our dairy industry. There are lots and lots of things you can do to try to reduce sugar consumption. I think there are parts of South America where, rather than using the traffic light system, they put a big black sticker on everything saying: "This is high in sugar, fat" and whatever else that is unhealthy. It is a huge question and I am just not sure, as I say, that the tax system is a place to address it.

2.1.6 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Minister for Health and Social Services has spoken frequently about the need to address public health through preventative measures. Does the Minister not accept that, as the Minister for Health and Social Services is asking for money for this, that this is at least one way that some of the money could be raised to help tackle some of those issues that he has raised?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I accept that, in principle. But the U.K. experience has been that it has not been effective. The sugar tax in the U.K. raises ... total revenue between 2021 and 2022 was £330 million. That is a population ... I do not know what the U.K. population is, but I think it is about 60 million or 70 million. We are a population of 100,000. The amount of money that I would guess would be raised on taxing bars of chocolate or cans of fizzy drink would not come close to meeting any of our health challenges. While we could do it, I think we are already in a position where, with soft drinks, we are already seeing products being imported that are already responding to the U.K. levy and which have reduced sugar, so they would already pay less tax. There would be a huge amount of work and it would be very controversial in some areas. For a small population, the work, the effort and the financial outcome would not outweigh the benefits. Personally, I think we should be doing whatever we can to reduce obesity, but I do not think taxing sugar is the answer. There are many other things, ultra-processed food, hamburgers, chips; there are lots of things that contribute to weight and to limit it solely to sugar is difficult. It is a huge subject and we need to do something that works for Jersey. I am open, but it is not on my policy agenda at the moment. I do not think that it would be an effective thing to do, but I think that there are things we could do that would be more effective.

2.1.7 Deputy J. Renouf:

The reason why we tax things like alcohol and tobacco and so on is partly to help pay for the damages caused, and that principle is well-established in taxation. Listening to the Minister speak, she is saying on the one hand she is open, on the other hand she has deep scepticism. I wonder if she could provide some clarity on whether she, in the end, has an in-principle objection to this kind of tax on sugar or, indeed, ultra-processed foods. In other words, using the taxation system in this way. Or is she open to the possibility that it might be a viable solution?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

On balance, I do not think that we should put any more taxes on food or sweeties because we would be effectively penalising children and possibly penalising the very low-income families that are most troubled and most at risk of obesity. I heard a piece on TV this morning; a clinic in the U.K. that is working on childhood obesity and the vast number of children they are seeing are from disadvantaged backgrounds. What we have to do is support those families with education. There are things like the Early Start vouchers, which provide free fruit to families with children under 5 on income support. Initiatives like that are more likely to be beneficial to the population than putting tax. Tax is a blunt instrument. On balance, as I said earlier, the amount of work and the implications in terms of cost I think are disproportionate and will not help either the tax take or the reduction of obesity. So no, I do not support tax on sugar or ultra-processed food. I have now formulated my thinking during the process of this discussion.

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

Does the Minister agree with me that the Government should prioritise nutrition education over that of imposing a sugar tax?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, absolutely.

2.1.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Is the Minister in agreement with me that such a tax would be impacting the low and middle income who are already the burden of personal income taxation?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes. As I have previously said, additional taxes on food will have a greater impact on those on low incomes than it will do on others who have higher incomes.

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

While I understand the reasons for the Minister for Treasury and Resources being asked those questions, I wonder whether the Minister for Treasury and Resources would agree that taxation decisions are best taken within the context of a long-term policy and in the context of working towards the Budget for this year. Would she perhaps invite Members to take part in a refresh of the last long-term tax policy given, which I think was done in 2014, in order to anchor down the fall-off in revenue that she is having to deal with? It is a helpful suggestion. I think she agrees that long-term taxes are best dealt with anchored into long-term policies, not short-termism. Would she agree?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I think I have said that already. I absolutely agree that tax decisions need to be taken in the context of our Budget. They need to be considered carefully to make sure that they work in the long term, as the Deputy says, and that there are no unintended consequences that impact those who are least able to bear them. I am not quite sure what the Deputy meant in terms of the tax briefing, but that is something we can consider in the future. As we are about to start the Budget, and we have a number of other very big projects, it is possibly not something that is at the top of my list just yet. I thank the Deputy for his suggestion.

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

The Minister's attitude seems to be that there are plenty of things that we could do, but she proposes to do nothing. Is that not an accurate description of her policy?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I do not think it is. It is an accurate description of my views as regards using the tax system to deal with issues about public health and childhood obesity. I do not think that is the place, generally speaking, particularly not where food is concerned. I am sure there are things that could be done that would be more effective, but those sit within other policy areas such as health and public health and possibly education.

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

Does the Minister acknowledge that families might be choosing sugary foods and drinks over healthier foods because of the high cost of food at the moment? Does the Minister not think that if there were some kind of tax on these unhealthier foods we could use it to subsidise the healthier foods, perhaps along the lines of a healthy start scheme, which they have in the U.K.?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I have said, we do have a healthy start scheme here as well. That is a question that the Minister for Social Security could perhaps comment on, on another occasion. We have a healthy start scheme, which I believe gives vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables to income-support households with children under 5. We already have that scheme. But I do not believe that taxing unhealthy food, which many people do rely on, will generate the amount of money that we need to subsidise other foodstuffs or to support income support.

2.1.13 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

This healthy start scheme, are the public aware of this? What is the take-up of this scheme?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I say, that question is outside my remit. Although I know about the high levels of this scheme, I cannot comment with any certainty on the operational aspects. That is a matter for the Minister for Social Security.

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

Does the Minister think that G.S.T. (goods and services tax) as a blanket tax makes it harder for low-income people to afford healthy food?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The subject of G.S.T. on food has been debated at length during the sitting. G.S.T. relies on being, applying to everything, the more complexity ... reducing G.S.T. may actually have the unintended consequence of reducing costs, so I do not propose to do anything with G.S.T. on food.

2.1.15 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister has mentioned clearly that sugar tax is not on her policy agenda. Can the Minister report on any progress on taxing vaping products as a form of consumption tax?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I can. I should have mentioned that earlier. We are continuing with work on a vaping tax and it will be coming forward in the Budget for 2026. I cannot quite remember the start date. We just have some systems issues in Customs about what the actual start date will be, but I anticipate a form of vaping tax being in place next year.

2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Patient Travel and Related Costs Policy – Revised October 2020 (OQ.107/2025):

Will the Minister advise whether the current policy for travel to the U.K. for medical treatment remains the Patient Travel and Related Costs Policy – Revised October 2020, and whether it was reviewed 3 years from approval, in October 2023, as stipulated?

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

The Deputy's assumption is quite correct. The policy currently in use is the one that was revised in 2020. The policy was not reviewed in 2023 but I am pleased to say that it is now under review, and I expect an updated policy to be in place later this year. Pending completion of that review and in light of a situation that was kindly brought to my attention by Deputy Southern, I have asked officers to make an interim change to the policies to state that we may fund escort accommodation, in addition to travel, where both the patient and patient escort are from households on income support.

2.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

When the Minister says the policy will be subject to review, what exactly does he mean by "review"?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

A thorough review, reviewing all elements.

2.2.2 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

Can the Minister explain why the travel and cost policy mentioned in the question does not apply to I.V.F. (in vitro fertilisation) patients receiving publicly-funded treatment in the U.K.?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Because the free treatment of I.V.F. came into play some time after the review in 2023. Having had that brought to my attention, I am happy to look at that as part of the review while not committing to anything at this point.

2.2.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister give a bit more detail, what are the parts of the review? What are the contents of the current review?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I am not able to do that at this stage. I have not at this stage had a close look at it. When some of the recommendations come through then I will start to take a closer look. But at this stage I have not been heavily involved in the review so far.

2.2.4 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can the Minister commit that the decision of the States Assembly will be implemented as the Assembly decided?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Could the Deputy be more specific about that which I am supposed to commit to, because I am a bit confused?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, can you clarify what decision you referred to?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It was a States Assembly decision to pay for the partner or accompanied person to the treatment. It was a very clear States Assembly decision then to change the policy for companion traveller.

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I am not entirely sure precisely which section that refers to. We do have payment in the policy as it is to pay for additional travellers under certain circumstances. I was not aware that there is an Assembly decision that has not been implemented, but if that is the case then I will certainly look at it.

[10:00]

2.2.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Minister said that there will be a thorough review of the travel policy. Could he tell us what the guiding principles of that review will be? For example, what is the policy considerations that he would want to make sure are included in that?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

One of the things that we will have to take into consideration is the pressure on our budget at the moment. When we say we are reviewing it, it will not be that all elements of it will necessarily be more generous than they are at the moment. We may have to make special provisions for people on low income, but it could be that certain areas of it are tightened up simply because of the budgetary pressures that we are under at the moment.

2.2.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

Trying to look at it, I suppose, from a patient and user point of view, are there any guiding principles to say that, for example, everybody should be able to be accompanied and that the partners that travel with them should have only travel paid or that they should also have ... we should aspire to pay for their accommodation? What is the provision that the Minister would like to and thinks that is appropriate for Government to assist with?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

The aspiration has to be as broad ranging as we can possibly manage but I make no bones about it, and I have said it probably a dozen times before in the Assembly, there is a huge amount of pressure on the Health budget. Not because of inefficiency but because of the amount of treatments that come out every year that we are obliged to offer people. It is a very, very difficult decision-making process. We will do our best with it, but at this stage of the game, as I say, I cannot make any guarantees, and I certainly do not expect it to be generally more generous than it is at the moment.

2.2.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister admit that one of the problems with this system is that of payment in advance for those people who are in need of support, for example? In the past, the costs have been offset against special payments made through social security in order to cover those types of incidents?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I will certainly concede that certainly in my 13 or 14 months in the job, but there are instances that present difficulties, and they have been pointed out to me. Some of those are when people have to go at very short notice to the U.K. That is an area that I have asked to be reviewed as well, so that we might be able to make special provision in certain urgent circumstances.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

In terms of funding ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Was that part of your last question, was it?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I believe it is an extension of what we were discussing.

The Deputy Bailiff:

If you have had your final supplementary, you have had it.

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I am very happy to answer that. I will just say that that is the point of the review, to look at what might be done and the way in which we would do it to make it practical and workable.

2.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Chief Minister regarding La Collette Fuel Farm (OQ.118/2025):

Considering the importance of La Collette Fuel Farm to Jersey's energy security, and given the safety concerns which have been raised in recent years, will the Chief Minister advise, in the context of consideration of the Fuel Farm Lease renewal or otherwise, whether the Government has developed a comprehensive plan to ensure the optimal safety and operational integrity of this critical infrastructure in the long term, and if not, why not?

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

The long-term comprehensive strategy being pushed along, of course, by the recent States decision is being developed which will identify the longer-term options which may lead to fuel storage arrangements changing and may result in some of the fuel storage areas at La Collette fuel farm being reconfigured in future. Turning to safety, there are comprehensive requirements in place under the Petroleum (Jersey) Law 1984 to ensure adherence to the very latest safety requirements relating to fuel storage. Legislation includes a requirement for the operator currently, La Collette Fuel Terminal Limited, to comply with a petroleum storage licence in order to operate the fuel farm safely. This licence has to be renewed annually following a review by the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service in consultation with external specialists to ensure that the very latest safety standards are met on the La Collette site and are in accordance with our law and international best practice.

2.3.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I recently had a meeting, as the Chief Minister knows, with himself and the Minister for Infrastructure, and then subsequently found out that the Council of Ministers at present intends to issue a 15-year lease to the incumbent operator. I wonder whether the Chief Minister, in the context of that 15-year decision, having had 10 years in order to plan ... I have asked him questions whether he really believes that he is putting the public interest tests of safety and security and integrity in the at the heart of these and just not simply putting it off to the next Council of Ministers.

Deputy L.F. Farnham:

The Council of Ministers has agreed in principle to a long lease, but I intend to discuss the matter further with the Minister for Infrastructure, and perhaps I think in light of concerns or pending the outcomes of the fuel energy strategy that we are working on, it might be wise for the Council of Ministers to consider the length of the lease. Whether 15 years is appropriate or perhaps we could put in some break clauses pending the outcome of our energy strategy. Of course technology and fuel is changing all the time and we want to make sure we are in a position to be reactive. Before any lease is issued I intend to take it back to the Council of Ministers for further discussion.

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

In the Chief Minister's answer he mentioned about the Petroleum Law. We are seeing an evolution of fuels these days where petroleum is no longer the main ingredient, as in fuels like RD100. Is any work underway to update this law to include modern fuels?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think that is outside the question which is about the fuel farm lease.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Can I rephrase that then to make sure whether the Chief Minister is taking into account non-petroleum based fuels for any lease within the fuel farm?

Deputy L.F. Farnham:

I think the type of fuel we supply now and into the future will be a key part as we consider the strategy. I will write to the Deputy to provide him an update.

2.3.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Given his answers so far, has the Chief Minister given any consideration to the idea of a short-term extension of the fuel farm lease to allow for a more detailed examination of the issues that might ensure the optimal safety and operational integrity of the fuel farm in the future, in the long term?

Deputy L.F. Farnham:

I think the short answer to that is yes, but I need to discuss this further with the Minister for Infrastructure and the Council of Ministers. I think it might be wise to consider that if not a short-term lease perhaps a break clause that would allow some flexibility so we are more able to respond to any information or changes in direction that the energy strategy might present. The short answer to that: yes, we are going to discuss that.

2.3.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

Clearly a lot is hinging on a future discussion in the Council of Ministers. Can the Chief Minister outline the timetable for when this will come back to the Council of Ministers and is there time, given the renewal lease schedule, for these discussions to happen?

Deputy L.F. Farnham:

The current lease expires, I believe it is the end of April 2026 or January. It is early in 2026 that the lease expires. I know the Minister for Infrastructure and the team are working on putting a lease together now. I expect that to be discussed within the next month or 2. We need to, I think in fairness, give as much notice to the current operator as possible of our intention so they can plan. Obviously, this new lease would enable the incumbents to invest further in the facilities. I would say the next 4 to 8 weeks.

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

The Chief Minister talked a lot about safety standards, but I was wondering if he could expand, if they are also within the terms of the potential new lease environmental and resilience standards and, on top of this for all 3 areas, what enforcement mechanisms would be in place if safety, environment or resilience standards fall short?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The company have had several conditions placed on their licence, a licence which continues to be reviewed every year. I am sorry, without the law or the necessary paperwork in front of me I could not go into the detail, but I am happy to discuss that separately with the Deputy, if she would like to. But after having meetings with officials and the Fire and Rescue Service prior to dealing with this question, I can reassure Members that the standards required are best international practice, compliant with our safety laws, and are very high.

2.3.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

As the Chief Minister raised, some issues have arisen as to why there is a delay in potential changes to a potential new lease that Deputy Ozouf has continuously raised in different questions. I am wondering if the Minister could confirm with the Minister for Infrastructure ... they come to Scrutiny to discuss it before any lease is finalised.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, I cannot confirm that without discussing it with the Minister for Infrastructure. But in line with the practice of the Council of Ministers, we are very happy to discuss all and every aspect of our business with Scrutiny.

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

Would the Chief Minister agree that the lack of competitive tendering for such a vital national service raises questions about transparency and value for money? Will he commit to publishing the advice and the policy rationale that led to the Government's current position on the lease renewal?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No. I think a tender process was an option; the current Minister and Council of Ministers decided not to go along those lines at this stage. We always consider how we can make optimal use of government-owned land so it serves the best interests of the Island. At present, Ministers consider that the existing fuel farm is a necessary strategic asset in order to give stability and resilience to our current fuel supply. This is therefore considered to be the optimum current use of the site at La Collette. Also, over the last 20 years we have seen a significant narrowing in the gap of the difference in price per litre between Jersey and other jurisdictions. The current site is safe and secure and able to readily receive fuel imports from the adjacent fuel berth as well. The size and the scope of the safety zone is also governed by the location of the neighbouring gas storage facility, and there are no plans to change that at the moment. While there are other options and other routes that could be taken, the current Government's position is that we stay with what we have, issue a further lease, and perhaps put some conditions in that lease that would allow us to respond more quickly, subject to the development of our energy strategy.

2.3.8 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Could I ask the Chief Minister if he is committed to a competitive tendering of the fuel farm?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure, so I think the answer to that is no, I am not completely committed. I am not going to say to Members that the Government will go down that route; I think it will come up in discussion again when we sit down and discuss whether we are going to issue a 15-year lease or a shorter lease.

2.3.9 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Chief Minister confirm if there is a plan for a States Members-type of briefing or presentation to explain the decision, if there is some confidential stuff that cannot be presented to the public?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am happy to ask the Minister for Infrastructure to provide a briefing on the current position for States Members, if they are interested. I am sure we can arrange that.

2.3.10 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Is the Chief Minister considering bringing the lease renewal to the Assembly for ratification? As indicated in the Public Accounts Committee Report 2016, reviewing the previous renewal of the lease which was ... at least according to the funding.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe - and I stand to be corrected - that anything over, I think it is a 9-year lease, can be called in by a Member for a discussion by the Assembly, so I think that that is the composition. Judging by the mood of the Assembly, if a 15-year lease is proposed, it is very likely to come to the Assembly.

[10:15]

2.3.11 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am somewhat grateful for the Chief Minister's answers because - as other Members have heard - I have been trying to get the facts out in relation to the fuel farm. I asked the Chief Minister in January, in an oral question which I gave notice to him for. He said that basically the lease clauses were going to be extended until 30th April and then the Government would consider procurement options. Would he agree that the mood of the Assembly, in having been somewhat aghast at hearing that now there is not maybe going to be a certainty of a 15-year lease ... would he urgently now take seriously the questions that have been raised, with respect, and in the public interest about the replacement of the fuel farm? Would he agree to meet with me and any other Member that wishes to discuss the options, including the chair of the Scrutiny Panel, in order that we may have a proper discussion about Jersey's most vital important fuel farm facility?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The first question; I and other Ministers are always prepared to meet with any States Member at any time, so the answer to that is yes. I just want to iterate that we always consider how we can make best optimal use of our land. Presently, the Government considers that the existing fuel farm is required as an important strategic asset in order to give stability and resilience to our fuel markets in these rather uncertain times. We consider the optimum site as being La Collette in the current setup, with a new lease to the incumbent which would allow them to continue to invest in the site. The current site, I reiterate, is safe, secure and able to readily receive fuel imports from the adjacent fuel berths. Logistically, there are other issues outside of that with gas storage and so forth. I do respect the Deputy's long-term position on this issue. I have some alignment with it, and that is why we need to - with the Minister for Infrastructure - discuss at the Council of Ministers exactly what sort of lease, length of lease, relevant terms, et cetera, need to be put in place, not only to secure the short to medium-term future of our current fuel supply, but to give this Government and future Governments options to respond to any future energy strategy. I hope that is helpful.

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

Sir, I do apologise for interrupting Questions, but in a moment of realisation, I realised that I should have said about Deputy Le Hegarat that she is not en défaut; she is actually in London attending the C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) International Executive Committee and therefore she is on States business. I just completely forgot to make that point.

The Deputy Bailiff:

So, she should be marked absent on States business.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, because she is one of our regional reps. Sorry about that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

2.4 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding managing and monitoring health and safety policy within the Health Service (OQ.116/2025):

Will the chair outline how the States Employment Board is managing and monitoring health and safety policy within the Health Service and, given recent staff concerns regarding working conditions raised in the media, will he advise whether the S.E.B. (States Employment Board) intends to review the application of the policy, and if not, why not?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (Chair, States Employment Board):

The health and safety policy for the Health Department is aligned with the policy that is in place for the whole public sector; obviously appropriately designed for the Health Department. The implementation is formally delegated to each department that manages the day-to-day operational aspect, as the Deputy will well know from her former lives. The States Employment Board is monitoring the policy by receiving monthly updates, which is a standing order on every S.E.B. agenda. Following concerns raised in in the Assembly by Deputy Catherine Curtis, the States Employment Board has invited the chief executive officer of Health and Care to provide an update in person at its next meeting next week, I believe. In addition, communications have been sent to all staff regarding statutory break periods and secondary employment. A link has been sent to all health staff to make contact if they are not receiving the correct breaks, so that the situation can be remedied. At this stage, we would like to speak to the chief executive and do some further investigations before we decide whether a full review is necessary.

2.4.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I thank the Chief Minister for his response. In September 2022, the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) report identified ongoing weaknesses in the management of the States Employment Board which oversees - as the Chief Minister said - all employees in Jersey. Specifically, the C. and A.G. highlighted issues related to health and safety at work, noting that there was still work to be done on this issue. Could the chair explain what progress has been made in the last 12 months with regard to oversight, how health and safety policy is applied on the ground, and if it has been adapted in response to changes in workload, infrastructure or staffing?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The States Employment Board works with all States departments and Health and Care Jersey has established processes in place to manage and monitor implementation of the health and safety policy. More recently, these have specifically included health-specific training, audit, safety tours and walks, inspections, operational management through the department's Health and Safety Committee, more detailed investigation of reported incidents, analysis of outcomes from occupational health reporting, and the work undertaken by the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. Additionally, staff rosters are subject to a formal monthly check and an assurance governance process to ensure they are compliant with both the law and the department's most stringent patient safety rules.

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

After I raised this matter, Deputy Ferey wrote to me to say that he was following this up with the chief people officer, as mentioned, and the Minister for Health and Social Services arranged for me to meet with the director of workforce for Health and Care Jersey. This was a productive meeting, so my question is: how often does the S.E.B. meet with the director of workforce for Health and Care Jersey?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I cannot answer that; I have to look at the record or discuss with Deputy Ferey on that. But like I say, we have monthly health and safety policy updates from the relevant official - from the overall official responsible - and the chief officer of People Services is representative of the public sector at our meetings. With meetings with officers at lower levels, I would have to speak to Deputy Ferey to confirm that, but I will certainly do.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Could that be followed up in writing?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, either myself or Deputy Ferey will continue the correspondence with the Deputy.

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

Given the very high vacancy rates within Health and Social Services and the strenuous attempts to bring staff in, is the Chief Minister aware of circumstances whereby, finally, a successful recruitment has been made, the post has been given, and then the post holder has come to Jersey and left because of concerns about health and safety policies as raised by my colleague Deputy Wilson?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Relevant to the question, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think it just about is, yes.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The answer is no, I am not aware of any staff coming in and then leaving because of the reasons that the Deputy suggested. I am not personally aware.

2.4.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I asked the question to try to get a sense of the importance which health and safety and the issues of staff and safety policies and all the rest of it are being given by the S.E.B. I wonder whether the Chief Minister could say how much time he has spent as chair of S.E.B. actually discussing some of the concerns that have been raised very publicly about health and safety. Has he spent much time at all? Any time? No time?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

As I have said on a number of occasions - not recently in the last few minutes - health and safety is one of the key areas that the States Employment deal with, to the point that it is a monthly standing order item on our agenda and we see full, detailed, lengthy reports about health and safety aspects throughout the whole public sector, including the Health Department. I happen to believe that we have a fantastic, qualified health staff working under difficult circumstances, dealing with challenges - not least staff shortages; there is a global staff shortage in qualified staff - who are complying with all of the very stringent health and safety rules and patient requirements, as required in the department. The States Employment Board is not aware of any circumstances as described by Deputy Curtis. That is why we are looking into it in depth and in detail. I, Deputy Ferey and all members of the States Employment Board spend a lot of time working with it. I am helped enormously by Deputy Ferey, who is the vice chair. I am not sure if the Deputy has ever sat on the States Employment Board, but if he has, he will realise that it is a time-consuming and important role; we do that to the very best of our ability and with as much detail as possible.

2.4.5 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the emphasis he places on that, but we still hear of reports where breaches of health and safety are still occurring, so it does question the reliability of the systems in place. Could he give some indication of how the S.E.B. responds to things like exit interviews or surveys - or even engages with staff-side organisations - to track these systemic issues in staff retention and morale that are related to safety concerns in particular?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We receive regular reports and statistics on that. Depending on the circumstances and the statistics that arise, the States Employment Board will agree policy decisions on dealing with that. Recently, we were quite concerned at the number of exit interviews that were actually taking place and that is something that we are exploring, because we would like to see more leavers participating. Of course,

we cannot make a member of staff leaving participate in an exit interview, but recently we have put in place instructions to try to increase that so we can better understand why people come into the organisation and why they leave. That is a constant work in progress and the current States Employment Board are striving in all aspects of the work that we have to do to make continued improvements not just in the health service but right across the board. I am pleased to say that recent reports have shown that some improvements are being made, not least the report in relation to the reduction in bullying and so forth. We are doing our very best; we are moving in the right direction. I thank the Deputy for her questions.

2.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding States Members confirming their declarations of interest (OQ.104/2025):

Will the chair advise whether States Members who are signed off work for any reason during the annual period within which they must confirm their declaration of interests will be reported to the Commissioner for Standards for not responding within the required timeframe, and if so, why?

Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

Standing Orders require Members to notify the Greffier in writing of any change in or addition to his or her interests within 30 days of that change occurring. On or around 1st June every year, apart from an election year, the Greffier is required to send every Member a copy of their existing interests for review. Members are then required to provide a written confirmation to the Greffier within 30 days that their declaration is correct, or to make changes or additions. If an elected Member fails to provide a written response without a reasonable excuse, then Standing Order 153(5) states that the Greffier must report the matter to the Commissioner for Standards. If Members are signed off work, then that would arguably be a reasonable excuse, but they would need to have informed the Greffier that that was the case. If Members do not share this information with the Greffier and she subsequently receives no reply, despite making several attempts to get in touch with the Member concerned, then the Standing Orders are unequivocal and the matter must be referred to the commissioner. That said, the commissioner will then consider the matter and make contact with the Member. If satisfied that there are mitigating circumstances, the complaint will not be taken forward. I thank Deputy Andrews for this timely question, as it highlights that the Greffier should be made aware of any health issues which may prevent a Member from fulfilling their responsibilities, particularly in relation to their declaration of interests.

2.5.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Would the chair give consideration at her meeting on Monday for circumstances such as parental leave or bereavement leave, and whether that should maybe be incorporated as well as, say, annual leave within Standing Orders, to look at possible ways of modernising Standing Orders and to also be more inclusive for family households?

[10:30]

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I am happy to discuss this with the committee. However, I would say that reasonable time is given to all Members; all Members should be aware that they need to do this on 1st June every year. If the Greffier contacts a Member, then I would say that reasonable time is given. I will discuss this, but I think that, at the moment, the Standing Order is quite fair.

2.6 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding funding for the Island's schools (OQ. 109/2025):

Will the Minister advise whether the funding for the Island's schools is expected to remain within budget for this year, and what actions, if any, he considers should be taken to ensure that funding allocated to schools is sustainable in the longer term?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question. The funding allocated to schools is the budget; therefore, it will remain within budget for the year. In terms of longer-term sustainability, I do thank the Deputy for the question here because it is important that we have a longer-term conversation - as demographics change but need increases - so that school funding is protected during that time. Of course, there will be the usual process of business cases and growth funding consideration as we go through each Council of Ministers. I would say, for every Minister previous to me and way beyond me, this will be an issue that they will need to push for in terms of protection of budget and the changing nature of schools, which I fully recognise. There are real challenges into the future.

2.6.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

It has been reported that in the last 5 years, expenditure and staff numbers have gone up by 30 per cent above inflation, roughly. Does the Minister accept these figures and, if I understand him correctly, does he think that education spending still has to rise further to correct historic underfunding?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I cannot tell you off the top of my head whether that 30 per cent in the reporting is entirely accurate. Of course, the costs have gone up because numbers have increased in terms of schools, particularly in the area of special educational needs. For example, there are many more teaching assistants that are employed and that are increasingly skilled and quite rightly being paid appropriately for those skills and providing real service in our schools. In terms of funding for education, I do believe that funding will need to increase because of the increasing need. An example is in 2017 - and I do know some figures off the top of my head - there were 212 children on a Record of Need. Now I have just forgotten the accurate figure for the second one, but currently there are 519 or 539 - I will look it up and I am sure the Deputy will be fine with the ballpark figure - more than doubling of that type of need. The Record of Need rightly comes with a significant amount of funding once that has been recognised, and a significant amount of support that is needed within schools. So, those demands will push up the cost of education. But I will say here, and I say repeatedly, that everything we spend on education is an investment into the future of our Island.

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

The States Employment Board agreed pay awards above inflation for teachers, and I just want to know whether the Minister is confident that the additional expenditure that has been agreed will be within the agreed budgets for 2025 and 2026.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I can reassure the Deputy that the pay increase was funded separately from school budgets; so that increase was funded. What we hear in social media is not always true; I will just make that point.

2.6.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

There have been several deficits reported in the media across some of the Island's primary and secondary schools. I just want to know why is it that these overspends exist, and what actions are being taken to address those incidents?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just check with the Deputy whether he means previous deficits at end of year or forecast deficits? Because they are 2 completely different things.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, it was what was reported in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* several days ago and that was the forecast.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Part of the problem was that those 2 things were merged together. A school is a very complex organism and has many challenges throughout the years; and we have a number of different schools. In previous years, those so-called deficits have been addressed from the overall budget by the end of the year. Forecasts are very difficult and that is one of the reasons why I think publishing forecasts is very challenging. First, it pits one school against another. Second, it does not really give an accurate position of where we will be at the end of the year; it is a snapshot at that time. There can be challenges. For example - and I will say to the Deputy - if a school has 20 young people on a Record of Need, they will have a completely and significantly different challenge to address in that year than others. We have to adapt to those challenges and we have to try and support as best we can. I think I have answered the question.

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

The Minister has talked about some of the drivers of why budgets have increased, but could he say how much the education budget has increased over the last 5 years?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will have to get back to the Deputy; I am afraid that is not a figure I have held in my head. I hope the Deputy is okay with that. I can answer that in writing if that is okay.

2.6.5 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister to get back to me. My second question is: if there is an increase, is the Minister concerned about this increase and concerned that he will not be able to find that money going forward? If so, does he intend to review the school funding formula or the way in which funding is allocated to schools? Will he consider this going forward?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think any Minister sensibly would have concerns about funding into the future and would want to protect and increase their funding. I am pretty sure any Minister would stand up and say they want more funding for their department, and quite rightly. I have mentioned before that need is increasing and therefore we have to be cognisant of that and we have to address it. In terms of the school funding formula, I am sure it will change as we move forward because it is an iterative process. Given that the funding formula is published, we have never been so transparent in the way in which schools are funded in every single different area. Now, within that funding formula some things will increase, some will decrease; I think the ability to respond is exactly what is needed in the funding formula. I mention again the Record of Need simply because it is on my mind that the funding for Records of Need has increased in the school funding formula in recognition of that need. Yes, we will have challenges into the future, but also - if I may just take a second longer on this answer - there is also a huge opportunity for us as demographics change. There will be opportunity to maintain funding and use that funding more effectively across our school estates, and not simply do the numbers game in terms of how many people are there.

2.6.6 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

What does the Minister have to say to the leader of the teaching union who said that: "For the Government to agree to a 2024 pay rise and then not to fund schools to make up for this, it is outrageous", as was reported in the press?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I simply do not think that is what happened; I believe it was funded. I think it was the right thing to do because we had teachers on strike, we had children not at school, we had a very expensive situation and money was being wasted having to deal with other areas. We are still picking up the pieces for that relationship. I would say to whatever union leader that is to come and talk directly to myself because I think that would be a much more constructive conversation rather than third party through the media.

2.6.7 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can the Minister confirm when the pay rise was agreed for the teachers? Did C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) ... did the Minister receive additional funding from the Treasurer and it was passed to schools? Or did schools need to fund the pay rise within their budgets?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I believe that the funding was passed to schools. If that is not the case and the Deputy knows something I do not, then I would like to address that, absolutely. But yes, I believe the additional funding for the pay rise was passed to schools.

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

I will come back to some more reporting in the press. There is concern made by Victoria College representatives that the 47:53 per cent split, which had been approved by the States Assembly in 2017, was no longer being correctly applied. Would the Minister like to comment on that commentary?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, be careful what you read in the press. I believe that that - it was a States decision - is still applied. The A.W.P.U., as it is called - the average weighted pupil unit - applies to the fee-paying schools. There is discussion at the moment to move to the funding formula and what that would mean and what that would look like into the future, which may be a very positive thing because we have much more clarity. I am afraid we do have to have further discussions on that situation, and I think it is around some specific areas. But no, the 47 per cent is maintained.

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

Can the Minister outline the roles and responsibilities of the trustees and governors when it comes to setting budgets and overseeing spend?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Governing bodies have a really important role to play, particularly around school funding and monitoring spend. It is a very difficult job on a governing body and subsequently we are - in fact, the first meeting is in 2 weeks' time - to talk to governing bodies about the new ... much more clarity in what their roles are. We have put something together and some work has been going on over the last few months to go very clearly through the areas of decision-making, roles and responsibilities, monitoring, accountability and the stakeholder voice for governing bodies. Following that will be a formal day of training to help back governing bodies in their role. So yes, they have a very important role, and I would thank all of those who give up their time for the governing bodies. It is really important we support governing bodies to know what their role is in holding headteachers to account in a positive but effective way.

2.6.10 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Does that mean that the governing bodies are the first point of accountability for school budgets or does it sit with the headteachers or you as the Minister?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy because that is a very good question. It would be the headteacher who is the main person responsible for the budget, but yes, the governing bodies do have an important role in monitoring spend. However, as I have said, I think more support is needed for governing bodies to enable them to do that job as effectively as possible. That support is actively happening at the moment, and I am very pleased to see it happening. But then ultimately, all of the budget is my responsibility; of course it is. We will do our best to maintain good practice and the effective use of money from the Education budget.

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

Would the Minister agree that the pay increases have had an impact on the current financial position, and can he confirm that these are now fully funded? If not, is this likely to lead to an increase in the overspend even more so, and if so, what will he do about this?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think I have already answered the question about whether they were funded. Do they have an increase? Yes, they do; a positive effect, because what we have done is solve a dispute. We have a 3-year deal so that we do not face disputes in the next 3 years, which I believe will help maintain staffing, will give some consistency from staff, and in the long term will save money simply because we are not going through so much transience in staff and poor relationships within our education system. But the pay rise was agreed for the right reasons, funded, and I fully back it.

2.6.12 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I think there is something about balancing the books as well as addressing the industrial relations issues. I wondered, given that there are still some outstanding issues relating to finalising terms and conditions which were promised, what plans he has to fund any additional expense that these may incur, and whether this increases the risk to the budget even further?

[10:45]

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that is absolutely right. The move in terms and conditions, particularly in making more time for teachers to do their job and to plan and mark, for example, is going to have a cost; that is one of the challenges we face. Overall funding - yes, of course, that will increase the overall funding need. It is one of the many challenges that we have in school. But if we are going to have an education system where staff feel valued, where staff feel that they can do their job effectively and professionally, where they can be paid enough to stay on our Island and live here, and where children get the best possible opportunity in education, that will cost money. That is the difficult but honest conversation we have to have across Government, across this Assembly and across our society. You cannot get something that you are not going to pay for. If you want the best, you have to put the money up to get the best. That is the discussion that we now have to have. There was another part to the question I think I missed; sorry, that is me going on.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

It was to ask the Minister whether he was of the view that additional risks would be presented through finalising the terms and conditions that were promised, and how he intends to fund those. This is not an everlasting pot of money and it is about balancing the books, so how does he plan to balance the books?

The Deputy Bailiff:

You can answer briefly because we are a little behind this morning.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do not think the way to balance books is to cut teachers' pay. It was tried before, some years ago, with N.Q.T.s' (newly qualified teachers) pay and the effect of that, 5 or 6 years on, was that we were losing staff hand and fist. It did not work then; it will not work now. But yes, of course we need to find ... it is not massive amounts of money that we have to find and we have to be flexible with trade unions. But as I have said with the trade unions in a very open discussion, it is the first time ever we are talking about how we are going to get P.P.A. (planning, preparation and assessment) time increased and not whether we will. I think that is a really significant change in the discussion.

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

I wanted to clarify whether or not the Minister is going to stand by his statement that the latest pay increase, all of it, was fully funded. If he is not quite right in relation to that, would he come back to the Assembly? Because I think there is some uncertainty in relation to the base level estimate of funding and the future funding, which may give parents some concern.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, of course I would. The focus on pay rises is unfortunate. I know that the Deputy was in a Government that seemed to be happy to have industrial action; I am not.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

With the greatest of respect, my late civil partner was a teacher and I know teachers; I think it is rather not right. I would ask him to withdraw that suggestion.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sir, the last Government sent a letter to teachers about the pay dispute and I think I am absolutely accurate.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I do not think this means that you can have a free-for-all. You need not withdraw the remark.

2.6.14 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I would be grateful if the Minister would come back to the Assembly, perhaps before the end of the sitting, and kindly confirm - because I know that he would be concerned about it and parents would be concerned about it and journalists in the media are going to be all over us - the extent to which the pay rise that was agreed by the Council of Ministers - the new one - was fully funded or not, and what impact that is going to have on schools. It would just be helpful for clarity.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I do believe the pay rise agreed was fully funded for schools. The funding issues that have been going through the press and filled a number of column inches are around many other areas in the complexity of schools. They have conflated a number of different issues around S.E.N. (special educational needs), around costs for schools, around employment, et cetera. But to point to the pay rise as the reason for that is simply, I believe, not the case. We have been through this a number of times now, so I think I am going to be clear on that.

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

Does the Minister accept that agreeing the terms and conditions for teachers is also a vital part of improving the overall package and the experience that teachers have while delivering their excellent experience and care to our children?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I do agree with the Deputy. As somebody who was teaching and a head of department, I knew how challenging it was for staff. I knew how much commitment they gave to their job, the hours put

in, and the energy that was given. That will, of course, be a challenge. There is a combination of factors with any workforce: the conditions in which they are working, the value that they are given, and the monetary value they are given, because they have to live on the Island as well. So yes, of course they are, and we are trying to do the best we can with those elements.

2.6.16 Deputy K.L. Moore:

When does the Minister expect to have that funded solution agreed with teachers?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Money will have to go into the Government Plan for next year. If we can trial in some schools to see the best effective use of money before that, we will do so. But that is one of the issues that we have to face. I think the earliest time will be from January 2026. I know that is in the middle of a school year, but I do believe that if headteachers are given the opportunity to make P.P.A. time from January, I am sure they will find a way because they know how important it is for their staff. We have to look as best we can and we have to get something in place and certain before the next election, because change inevitably will come, but we need to give some certainty to the workforce before that time.

2.6.17 Deputy J. Renouf:

Does the Minister accept that, as reported, school budgets for this year are under pressure? If so, to help clarity - and he has spoken a lot about the fact that there has been confusion - will the Minister publish an analysis of spending in education over the last few years, so that we can understand the additional costs that he has mentioned, whether the increased funding over the last few years has met those challenges, and therefore whether additional funding is really justified?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, school budgets are under pressure. Of course they are; they have been for many years. In terms of an analysis of school funding, I think it has been in every single Government Plan for the last few years, so it can be found. I will give an example of the pressures that schools face. I think it was 2022, 2023; the N.A.S.E.N. (National Association for Special Educational Needs) report was published about special education needs in schools. That generated a recognised need for I think it was £13.1 million; what was actually agreed by Council of Ministers was £6 million. The in-built deficit in what was needed has now, lo and behold, come to roost to some extent. That is not a criticism of anything before; it is an observation. If we take those intelligent observations and look forward, we can have a much more considered, thoughtful and honest discussion about what is actually needed for the education system that we all want. I hope that we can all have that discussion and we can move forward in a positive way.

2.7 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Children and Families regarding an update in relation to all current workstreams associated with same sex parental rights (OQ.113/2025):

Will the Minister please provide an update in relation to all current workstreams associated with same-sex parental rights?

Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter (The Minister for Children and Families):

I thank the Deputy for that question. All impacted departments have been preparing to bring the Children and Civil Status Law into force. A comprehensive stakeholder map and comms plan have been prepared to ensure that clear information is provided to affected families and other parties. The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs plans to lodge the draft Abolition of Legitimacy Law shortly. After this, I plan to lodge the Appointed Day Act to bring this package of legislation into force this autumn. When I last spoke on this subject in February, I was only able to say that would bring this into force later this year; so there is further clarity that it will be in the autumn that we bring those Appointed Day Acts.

2.7.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for his answers. Could the Appointed Day Act for the same-sex parental rights not be lodged immediately without waiting for the legitimacy work?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Staff have worked extremely hard to bring the Legitimacy Act forward and to bring it into force at the same time as the Children and Civil Status Law. I think it is very important that when bringing in the Children and Civil Status Law, we are also in a position where no child in this Island can be born and classed illegitimate in the future.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Sorry, Sir; the Minister did not answer my question. Is it possible for the Minister to lodge the Appointed Day Act for the same-sex parental rights separately? Is that something that is possible?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I would say that we have no plans to do that and that we want to bring both together. Would it be possible? It might be possible, but you are then left with the position that a child could still be born illegitimate; I think that that is a crucial part of bringing both parts of the legislation together. Technically, probably it is possible; is it wise to do so? I do not think so.

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

The States asked the Minister to take this forward in March last year. It has taken quite a long time to get to this point and, as the Minister said, maybe in autumn. What contact has the Minister had with stakeholders regarding this workstream, who has been contacted, and what outcomes have resulted from these engagements up until now?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Right, up until now. I also answered this question back in February. We will only make communications when there is clarity and when there are things to report. A stakeholder mapping exercise has been completed, which has identified the ways in which officers will engage with groups, including operational departments, charities and community groups and the directly impacted families. The relevant heads of communication have been briefed by policy on the key changes, and a comprehensive plan has been developed. Changes to the Government web pages have been identified and officers will work with the web team to make the amendments when the Children and Civil Status Law comes into effect when the Appointed Day Act is agreed. At the moment, communications are focused on operational departments that will be key partners in delivering the changes, such as the Family Court superintendent registrar. It is planned that clear and accurate communications - and I stress "accurate" because I do not believe in *ad hoc* communications where dates are uncertain and later you have to come back and say: "Actually, we cannot deliver it on that date" - will be rolled out to families and community groups once a coming-into-force date has been put before the States Assembly via the Appointed Day Act for both Acts. Once Members have debated this, we will be in a position to communicate to families with certainty.

2.7.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

This Government committed at the beginning to be open and transparent with citizens, and of course this legislation will affect a specific group of people who have been pushing Ministers and past Ministers to get this finally passed. Does the Minister not think that it would be a good idea to be continually communicating - as he does with the States Assembly, giving us some assurances - with those who specifically reached out to the Minister in the last 12 months, to give them some assurance that this will come before the end of the political term?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Speaking to the States, that means that the information is in the public domain and is reported on. Once again, I stress that I believe in accurate communications. There is no attempt to hide anything. I was contacted only yesterday by one of the parties, and I am quite happy to send them a response in a very similar way to the way I am updating the States today. But as regards overall communication, I think it is important that the communications go to everybody at the same time. I will also stress that they need to be accurate. With the addition of the Legitimacy Law - and I have to thank staff for working so hard to get that done at the same time as the other Act - I think that it would ... to quote inaccurate dates, et cetera, I do not believe in that. So, that is where it is; there is no attempt to hide anything; that is my style of communication.

2.7.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Minister says autumn; are there any risks that could derail that timetable?

[11:00]

The Connétable of St. Peter:

No, I do not believe there are. I can tell you where we are on certain of these sub-workstreams. Surrogacy guidance has already been drafted. Parental orders and recognition orders: process maps and draft forms have been developed for the parental order and recognition order. The Family Court has been briefed on these changes and is making preparations to hear applications. The superintendent registrar is working to design and order registers and put the new registration process into place. Further work is required on the Assisted Reproduction Unit to finalise guidance and relevant parental consent forms, but I do not believe that any of those will prevent us from meeting that autumn deadline.

2.7.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I just confirm then that the Minister has 100 per cent certainty that the Appointed Day Act will be brought before the end of this political term, in the autumn?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Well, is anything in this life 100 per cent sure? I do not think it is, so I will not say 100 per cent; I will say 99.9.

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

I just wondered whether or not, given the erring - I do not want to take any of the Assembly's time - would the Minister agree to meet, rather than just communicate via the Assembly, some of the parents that have been spoken about? Because it does sound rather distant. Would the Minister just agree to meet some of the parents concerned? They are a growing number of people, and they would be listening and thinking that we have got a remote government.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

It is interesting you say that, but I have not actually had contact from parents. If somebody wished to meet with me, then yes, I would meet with them. As of yet, I have not had contact from parents. I have had contact from organisations; I had one yesterday. As regards the parents, no I have not, but I would be quite happy to meet.

2.7.7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I wonder whether the Minister could just say whether he has ever met a same-sex parent and discussed these issues with them. Has he done so in the last 6 months, raising these concerns?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I certainly have met a same-sex parent, not necessarily in relation to this law. I have to say again, I think the staff have done an absolutely marvellous job in bringing this legislation together and I would like to thank them. Thank you very much.

2.7.8 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

The Minister indicated that he believes that it is wrong to bring the parental rights law before the Legitimacy Law. I would like to check with the Minister if he, with stakeholders - I have several in mind, including organisations - and if this is their view as well, that they would rather wait for the Legitimacy Law before the parental laws are brought forward.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I do not think it would actually make a great deal of difference in the time. I think the 2 laws ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It was about the consultation. Has the consultation taken place or not?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I would have to check whether the officers have actually consulted, but I would say that the news that the Legitimacy Law was to be brought in place at the same time as this law when we spoke about it in February was very well received. I cannot say whether the officers have consulted; I think they have done what I consider to be the very best for the families and children involved.

2.7.9 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I believe there is a pregnant couple right now that would welcome the parental laws coming in force. I would like to get a clarification from the Minister if during the last year the Minister had a meeting or meetings with any stakeholders connected to this law.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Certainly, the officers involved - and I would expect it to be the officers involved - have met. As I said before, if somebody contacted me I would be quite happy to meet them. But I do not necessarily meet everybody involved with every law, and I do not think any other Minister does.

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

Would the Minister be aware of how many families are involved with this situation?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I do not have to hand the exact number of families involved; however, in a matter like this, whether it is one family involved or a number of families, I think it is as important, even if it was just one family, to bring this legislation.

2.7.11 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I speak purely because, by the way the Minister describes the process, that the cost seems to be enormous. I am not disrespecting those families who are obviously seeking to resolve this, but there has to be a point at which the money runs out. I think that we should be conscious of what these things cost to put into legislation ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you have a question to put to the Minister?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will the Minister consider the costs of putting this into legislation when he makes his decisions?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Of course we consider the costs, but I come back to that these are fundamental rights for the children and families involved. I have difficulty in answering this because my view is that this is something that we have to put in place. You cannot say: “Oh, well the costs do not matter.” But in this case, I am happy that the costs involved are reasonable for something that should have been part of our laws some time ago. As I have said, I would be doing this even if there was just one child and family involved.

2.7.12 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Despite my disappointment in some of the lack of consultation, I am pleased to hear that the Minister is defending the need for this legislation. Could the Minister please check firstly on the communication? I am concerned that he may be inadvertently misleading the Assembly, because I am aware that there have been some communications that have gone unanswered. Could he please go back and check that? Secondly, a related issue; in terms of same-sex parents accessing these rights, the Minister for Health and Social Services has said that they will look into the cost for same-sex parents to access these rights. Currently, same-sex parents have to access the assisted reproduction clinic and the costs can be up to £8,000 just to achieve a pregnancy and access these laws. Families who do not have money to access the clinic still may not be able to access this legislation even once it is in force. Could the Minister commit to resolving that with the Minister for Health and Social Services please, preferably before the law comes into force so that nobody has to miss out on it?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Thank you for that. I will look into the communication issue. Somebody did actually highlight this yesterday. I did look, and the matter had been answered - not by myself - and they had said that they would return to them, and I do not believe that that had happened. But I only became aware of that yesterday. On the matter of the Minister for Health and Social Services, that really is a matter for the Minister for Health and Social Services. It is not in my control to be able to force him to do that. I am certainly happy to talk to him. I would like to see progress on that - on the costs of using the reproductive unit. I am sure that between myself and the Minister, we can have a discussion and make some progress on that. I would rather get the law in place and pursue that matter separately, so I am not going to guarantee that anything can be done from by the time the law is in place, because that might be difficult. I certainly will take the matter up with the Minister for Health and Social Services.

2.8 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Housing regarding the construction and total build costs for new social housing (OQ.111/2025):

Will the Minister advise what data he holds regarding the construction and total build costs for new social housing, including by Andium, and if he has any data, will he advise the typical or average costs social housing providers are paying to deliver new units of accommodation?

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

I do not personally hold data regarding the total build costs for new social housing. If I did, I am not entirely sure how far I would want to go in disclosing the details of it, because I would not want to jeopardise the social housing provider’s ability to negotiate the best contracts possible in delivering new housing. What I can say to the Deputy is that the Minister for Treasury and Resources undertakes a third-party assurance review of Andium’s development proposals prior to granting her consent as the shareholder representative. In doing so, she will consult with me, although that is more on the kinds of homes proposed in developments rather than the financials. I understand that the third-party assurance review considers financial matters such as the forecast outturn costs for constructing the development and projected income from the rent and sales on completion of the development. The purpose of that exercise is to make sure that all of those numbers add up and that all of the

developments are viable and viable in such a way that Andium can deliver those new housing developments in line with the policies that we have as a government, including their responsibility to abide by the social housing rents policy and to provide affordable homes for purchase. How that works on every development will look different, because the costs are necessarily going to be different, whether it is a development in the countryside of lots of houses versus a block of flats in town and whether there is public realm improvements included in that or other amenities that are not especially housing, so it would differ from site to site.

2.8.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Minister has quite rightly highlighted the third-party assurances performed by Treasury. I am surprised that he does not have access to those himself. Does he consider, as the Ministerial authority in Housing, that understanding the market for the cost of providing social housing, both in the countryside and in town, is incredibly important for the policy and political lead for how social housing prices and rent is set, as well as how we can have a viable and good quality stock of social housing and that should be part of his purview?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No, is part of the answer to that. I am not the shareholder representative. The Minister for Treasury and Resources is the shareholder representative for the various companies that are owned by government. That means that she and her team have those people with all of the financial expertise you would want to ensure that there is good governance over these processes. I am content in that part of the system. When authorising a development to go ahead, the Minister for Treasury and Resources does consult with me. I believe that I have good input into that, in terms of what kinds of homes we are seeing on particular developments and whether they meet what I would regard as the housing need that we are aware of at any given point. If we were to move to a system where the entire governance of Andium as a social housing provider was given to me rather than shared with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, that may well cause as many issues as it resolves. So I am not necessarily convinced that a change to that would be something I would welcome.

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

Given that build costs and borrowing terms influence new social housing developments, can the Minister confirm how these factors affect the rents charged and what the implications are for long-term affordability?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

In a sense there may be some chicken and egg here, in that the developments that are authorised are done so on the basis of current policies. If we wanted to change policies, we are democratically free to do so, but we would have to be cognisant of the financial impact that that would have. That does not make that impossible. That makes it something that is within our rights to examine and see if tweaks are possible. I certainly support doing that. Going forward on any future developments, all of that would have to be taken into account, including whatever social housing rents policy we had at the time and ensuring that everything is viable. I have faith that the kind of exercise that already exists to ensure that that is the case is working well.

2.8.3 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Does the Minister hold that on the current level of demand for family-size social homes, to buy or rent, and can he outline any plans to increase the availability of such units, including how affordability is considered in their cost, design and delivery?

[11:15]

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The future provision of family-sized homes is absolutely what we need to be focusing on at this moment in time. We have had years of providing for smaller homes for that kind of need. That was right to do, but now I do believe we need to pivot to delivering family-sized homes. Much of that will be in the rezoned sites in the Bridging Island Plan. Those have been calculated based on projections of need for those kinds of homes. Andium has gone to the market and has found a good funding mechanism to help deliver on those homes. There will still need to be assurances and approvals as they deliver on those sites, to make sure that Treasury, from a shareholder perspective, and myself, from a housing policy perspective, are content that the sites are doing what they need to and are providing the right balance of affordable homes for sale and for social rent.

2.8.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

There was a recent Ministerial Decision regarding Maison Les Arches development in town which was taken over by Andium, which would have potentially highlighted the high costs of development. In fact, there were questions in the Assembly regarding the viability of that scheme. Does the Minister worry that the costs of construction is affecting the viability of social housing providers whose capped rents may not cover these costs in the future?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No, I could not disagree more. There is a process for appraising the viability of these projects as they go ahead. The one that the Deputy refers to - Les Arches - was one where Andium were proposing buying the extra properties on that site that initially were not to be included as part of Andium's portion of it. I fully supported that, because I thought that that seems to be a good thing to do in the market. Andium believed that they could do it. The Treasury ultimately believed that they could do it. It would mean all of the homes on that site, rather than just a portion of them, would end up in the social rental sector. We went through a process to work out whether that was viable and everybody concluded that it was. That is good news.

2.8.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

I would like the Minister to confirm that he did read those documents relating to Maison Les Arches development and the total cost, because it is a reasonable question to ask whether the total build costs are in the construction sector at the moment, which can only be covered by rents, which is the only income that the social housing providers have, that at some point those total build costs might exceed the rental income. Does the Minister have any concerns about that?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I have to be honest, we are going around in circles. There is a process that exists specifically to answer the question on a development-by-development basis that the Deputy is asking. In the one that he has highlighted, they examined it and concluded that the answer was that it was viable. If, in the future, we come to development and costs have changed and needs have changed, et cetera, and they look at a proposal and they go through it and conclude that it is not viable then we will have that drawn to our attention and we will have to find a way of overcoming it. The process for determining that has worked for those developments up until now. I believe that it would work in helping us identify when there is one that is not viable.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Sir, could I ask for clarification around the point of whether the Minister did see the Les Arches documents?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you were asked a question about your personal involvement in this by the Deputy.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes, I did.

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

In a written answer that was published today, there is a provision of the current borrowing of Andium, which amounts to over £400 million. Does the Minister believe that it is viable for Andium to continue to borrow at such levels in order to deliver future developments?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I have to confess and say that I have not seen that specific written question. I am presuming that that was directed at another Minister. The short answer to her question is yes, I am satisfied with it.

2.8.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Andium is Jersey's largest housing developer and could be providing the Minister with rich data on build costs. Given the Minister considers the housing crisis a priority of his, does he not consider that understanding the relationship between build costs, rental costs, and purchase costs is essential to making informed policy and legislative decisions about the housing market and if not, why not?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am going to reiterate what I have said throughout this questioning, that there is a process in place for working out the viability of developments when they are proposed. It is a good process. It is working and the developments that Andium are going ahead with are viable and are working. I have to be honest, I am not sure what the Deputy thinks is not working in that and what I could solve if extra responsibility on that was given to me or moved away from Treasury. I do not understand the problem that he is trying to get out that he thinks I could solve with a different system. The developments that are going ahead are viable. That is good news.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I do not believe the Minister answered my question there. My question was about the fact ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

From what perspective?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

My question was not about the viability of social housing schemes. It was about the fact that all the data that the Minister could have access to should inform his wider legislative policy, for example, about creation of housing or rent measures or any of that. The Minister focused purely on the viability of social housing schemes, whereas I was asking for his view as to why he does not use construction cost data within his political policy making.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The question you originally asked was about the construction build costs for social housing.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It was and that is because of the larger source of data the Minister has available to him. The question was not necessarily about viability of schemes. It was specifically about the fact that he should have access to 1,000 properties of development data. I interpret that I should be able to ask about how he could use that for his own portfolio not for, necessarily, just those schemes.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Whenever I am considering changes to the offers and developments or social housing rules or anything connected to Andium, we make these decisions on the basis of all of the information available to us in the round. Andium has themselves lots of the data that Deputy Alex Curtis is

referring to, so when I speak to them about potential changes, they will be the ones with access to that data that they would bring to the table for any part in that discussion. I do not feel like I am losing out, because all of the people who I would need to discuss all of those potential changes with have that and are able to bring it to the table at that point anyway. I do not feel I am lacking anything or potential access to any data when any opportunity comes to me to change policy.

2.9 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding an update on the timeline for the offshore wind workstream (OQ.106/2025):

Will the Minister provide an update on the timeline for the offshore wind workstream, including a target debate date for the draft consenting legislation, and the anticipated timeframe for a further States debate on the strategic options and commercial leasing process?

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

Work is progressing well on the development of policy and legislation to set in place a process to lease, consent, regulate and decommission an offshore windfarm. I have instructed officers to prepare 2 documents. The first, a draft law, which would establish a framework for consenting the construction, operation and decommissioning of offshore energy installations, including offshore wind. The second document will be a proposition that sets out my proposed approach to identifying and securing, facilitating and opening of a formal leasing process once relevant legislation and processes are in place. As I have previously said in this Assembly, it is my aim to present both these papers here to Members during the autumn and debate the proposals and legislation before the end of this year. The proposal that I will bring forward will include the strategic drivers for such a project and the benefits case for the Island, taking into account likely market conditions.

2.9.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I am glad to hear the Minister is saying that he anticipates autumn to present to us the papers and debate before the end of the year. The Assembly, of course, has a lot of potential legislation coming forward for the end of the year. There are a lot of things happening in autumn. Could the Minister outline what he sees as the potential consequences of any significant delays to Jersey's offshore wind infrastructure programme if we are not able to debate it before the end of this term?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I have made it very clear to officers some months ago now that I wanted the debate on offshore wind to happen this year because I realise that there will always be the inevitable backlog of papers coming to this Assembly before we go into purdah. I really do not want to have the offshore wind debate in 2026. It will be far too close to the election. I have made it, as I said, absolutely clear to officers that I wanted this legislation, the draft law and the proposition to come to the Assembly during this year. I cannot be clearer than that with the Deputy.

2.9.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Does the Minister have the full support - unanimous support - of the Council of Ministers to proceed with the scoping and preliminary work for the windfarm, including the legislation?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I believe I do have that support, inasmuch as I have the full support of the Assembly to move forward as I am currently doing. As I said, I will come back to this Assembly by the end of this year with the best option. The best option may be that we do not proceed. We will have a look at all the different alternatives and the best option will come back here to be debated. A decision has been taken to move forward to the next stage. That decision, the main decision, will be taken at the end of this year as to whether we move forward further. We have these steps in the right place at the right time. If we get to the end of the year and we do not proceed, we will not have spent years at work and millions

and millions of pounds worth of money proceeding to something which would be rejected at some time in the future, but we will have done enough work to inform the Assembly that moving forward is the right thing to do.

2.9.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Ultimately the decision about moving forward will depend on the fine detail of the windfarm and who benefits from it, essentially. Does the Minister agree that it would not necessarily be the worst thing in the world if this legislation were to come back after the next election, so that the Members who are seeking re-election or new candidates for this Assembly could seek a fresh mandate and therefore a fresh decision for the windfarm from the public, including what any new windfarm would look like in reality?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We have had one debate in this Assembly on the subject of an offshore windfarm and unanimously this Assembly voted in favour of moving forward. I want to use that enthusiasm to make sure that the next decision is taken by the same Government. If we decide to move forward and the next Government, sometime later next year, decide that is not the way they want to move, they will have it within their remit to change that decision. The ultimate decision to sign up to somebody to move forward ultimately will not be taken at the end of this year, but a decision to move to the next stage, where we know the costs, we know the type of development we might wish to do, will have been done. Ultimately, the end of this year will be a really important decision, but it will not be a signature on a piece of paper that commits. There will be a point at some time in the future, if we decide to move forward, where we will have to sign one way or the other and that will commit future Governments, because no developer is going to sink millions of pounds into a development knowing that the decision might be changed. So at some time that important decision will have to be taken. We are getting closer, but we are not there yet.

2.9.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Does the Minister accept that a certain amount of speed is necessary because, for example, is he concerned that French plans to build their own windfarm to the west of St. Ouen's Bay may mean that Jersey's potential windfarm gets crowded out, to an extent, by the wind shadow and other considerations that apply if you have a lot of windfarms in one small area?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I cannot agree more. The danger with projects like windfarms, which will take at least 10 years, probably longer, if we were to make the decision this year, is that because it is such a long project one does not tend to address the urgency, which the Deputy quite rightly brings. Yes, we know the French Government have a lot of aspiration for additional windfarms to the west of the Island and, yes, we know about the potential shadowing effect that windfarms can have for others. That is all going to have to be discussed with the French Government as we move forward, if we move forward at all. The Deputy is absolutely right, this is a long-term project, but I address it urgently and I want another decision by this same Assembly before we get to the next election.

[11:30]

2.9.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

In light of the need for action, can he confirm that there remains private sector interest in a Jersey windfarm? Can he confirm that one of the options under consideration remains landing power from the windfarm in Jersey?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I can confirm there are a number of commercial entities interested in the Jersey opportunity at this time. I remain positive that there are options for the Island should we wish to proceed to the leasing round.

2.9.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We had a discussion earlier about whether it is useful to engage with stakeholders during the iteration of such legislation or whether to have it at the moment of debate. I am wondering if the Minister feels, like myself, that having a void in the national debate, because we are having a long time between the last debate in the States Assembly and potentially when these 2 proposals will be put forward by the Minister, if there needs to be more discussion around windfarm and more of a debate to help ... so there is not a void and not misunderstanding being discussed around a potential windfarm, from not only an infrastructure perspective but also for an economic opportunity as well for Jersey into the future and start to be coming part of the debate about the future economic opportunity for Jersey, and if he could start pushing that debate more in the next few months?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We have a Windfarm Review Panel, as the Deputy well knows, and they have an ability to ask questions, which they are doing. Officers of mine are meeting with them on a regular basis and we are updating them. I take the Deputy's point on board about more discussion. What I say to her is that at the moment we have experts looking at the subject and coming back with the alternative, coming back with the detailed answers that we would need to answer those questions that we may well get into discussion, if we were to broaden the discussion in the next couple of months. I say to the Deputy, I take her view on board but let us wait for this expert report to come back with the various options, having been looked at in detail, to show us how we might or might not proceed. At that point, we can have a discussion. A proposition will be put to the Assembly. It can be amended. I hope it will not be. There will be a proposition. There will be a proposed law. The law will stand us in good stead, because it could be used in future times for other sustainable energy inside our territorial waters, tidal maybe. The law is being written very specifically not for just a windfarm. It is being written specifically for all sustainable energy from or in our waters. Let us wait for the detail. Let us discuss the detail. Let us get back here and have the discussion by the end of the year.

2.10 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding improvements to ADHD services (OQ.120/2025):

Further to the Minister's commitment to develop the services available to people with A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) in Jersey to "better meet their needs" which he gave in response to the petition "Support A.D.H.D. Jersey to continue and expand the non-prescription service provided", will the Minister advise what improvements he intends to make to A.D.H.D. services and by when?

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

Work on a neuroinclusive strategy for Jersey is nearing completion. This will set out a number of objectives to improve services for people with A.D.H.D. and other neurodiverse conditions. It is going to identify priorities relating to healthcare, employment, education, the criminal justice system, support for families and training. The strategy is being developed through extensive engagement with members of the community, including public events, a questionnaire and workshops. Crucially it has been developed jointly with 2 key local charities, Autism Jersey and All Matter Neurodiverse Jersey. In addition to the forthcoming strategy, we have recently introduced living with A.D.H.D. groups. I am pleased to say that we are getting positive feedback from them.

2.10.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Ultimately the petition, which the Minister has responded to, asks for greater support for A.D.H.D. Jersey. Does the Minister believe that providing extra support for this organisation is a desirable way forward and if not, why not?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I did meet with the group. They were very enthusiastic people doing a very good job, if I may say so. We are limited. I will quote from my own letter to them. It says here: "There is a process that H.C.J. (Health and Care Jersey) are required to follow to identify potential partners to deliver services on behalf of H.C.J. A fundamental part of this process would be to ensure that potential service providers have the appropriate qualifications and registrations to safely and effectively deliver such services. That is the limiting factor for us." Plus the fact that they were looking for a large sum of money and - I am sounding like a broken record because I have made the point many times before - there is no surplus cash at this point in time.

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

I believe that this particular organisation and others are advocating for a hub, which would be where most of the funding would be needed. Given the strength of feeling behind this request, could the Minister consider where he might be able to work with existing facilities or just some way of providing a physical space where Islanders with A.D.H.D. could go to have some services provided?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

It is safe to say that this is under constant review. They made a very compelling case and I will not deny that. However, we have a number of constraints. There is a lot else going on in Health at this point as well. It is different to prioritise this. It will require extra money; there is no doubt about it. That is a constraining factor. From the strategy, as far as I am concerned, I have asked the team to provide whatever they can with the budget they have available. I have not yet seen the first draft of that and will be working to see what that can deliver. I am committed to try and make this work. As I say, it is a difficult nut to crack.

2.10.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister give some indication of what that might look like, what that budget might be or what the solutions might look like?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I can confirm that the budget is working within the constraints of the money that we have. I have yet to see the first draft, which I am hoping to do in the next few weeks. I will be able to report a bit more once I have done that.

2.10.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for his time, first of all, and hope that maybe we can continue offline and have meetings. Could I ask, the Minister has given a commitment in his statement to develop the services available to people with A.D.H.D. in Jersey, so given the fact that that commitment is to presumably improve the services currently on offer, how does he propose to do that if no new money is available?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

With difficulty, and I am not being facetious. I mean that, it is with difficulty. We are doing everything we can with the money we have available. As I say, I have not seen the new inclusive strategy yet. I am hopeful there will be some ideas in there that we can implement within the budgeting constraints that we have.

2.11 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding clubs operating out of Fort Regent (OQ.114/2025):

Will the Minister confirm whether all the clubs currently operating out of Fort Regent have been allocated adequate new facilities prior to the closure of the Fort and outline what engagement, if any, has taken place with the clubs concerned?

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

My officer wrote to the Deputy yesterday evening, pointing him towards my recent correspondence with the Economic and International Affairs Panel on this subject, which I hope was helpful. That correspondence included updates on the status of the private tenants who have been given notice to vacate Fort Regent. There has been regular engagement with all Fort Regent tenants in recent years with more detailed discussions since the beginning of this year. In the case of gymnastics, for example, I am delighted that the 3 clubs are working well together and have now agreed the design of the new dedicated gymnastics facility at Oakfield. A meeting that is scheduled for this week for the skating club that should have happened last week, but unfortunately some people were not available. We continue to engage, work with and offer assistance to those clubs and businesses who have not yet found new facilities. I have committed to engage and meet with them personally, where required, in order to find solutions.

2.11.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I thank the Minister for his answer and I can confirm I have received a copy of that correspondence between the E.I.A. (Economic and International Affairs) Panel and the Minister for Infrastructure advising interactions with sporting clubs. It identifies there are still a number of clubs for whom no home has been found. I notice the Minister has referenced Empire Skating, but there is also currently inadequate provision for outside sport, such as netball who require specialist surfaces. Does the Minister not agree with me that his department is trying to fit a quart into a pint pot and that the biggest losers of closing the Fort are the sporting community? Why is his department continuing removing sport from the Fort without there being sufficient capacity ahead of the decant?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Oakfield is being built at a cost of £8.4 million. The 3-court centre is being built as a direct result of engagement with Jersey Netball. We are trying our hardest with all sports, including netball, to find solutions. We have many courts that lay idle night after night, day after day, weekend after weekend, that are more than capable of hosting netball, 5-a-side football, basketball and volleyball. What I am trying to do with my colleagues from Education is ensure that we use our whole estate before we invest in any more sheds around the Island.

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

Respectfully, the idea of using education facilities is one that has been long established, given that there is a decant going on and there is a need to provide facilities for those who are being decanted. Will the Minister be more specific as to the challenges and delays in opening up the education estate, if that is one solution to the decant?

The Connétable of St. John:

It is a very good question. Only last year we finally agreed service level agreements with our tenants at the school. The buildings belong to the public of Jersey, not to a headteacher, not to a governing body, but to the public of Jersey. We are trying to work with our partners to ensure that we get far better utilisation with a centralised booking system and where people are able to book the court that they need when they need it.

2.11.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

That sounds like good progress the Minister is reporting on. Will he be able to update the Assembly as soon as possible on what timescale he intends those platforms and the new arrangements might come into play?

The Connétable of St. John:

I would like this to have happened within months of coming into office, but clearly things take longer than we hope. The foundation is for us to have got that service level agreement in place. That ensures who cleans gutters and who does not clean gutters and so on and so forth. The usage of the facilities, the priority clearly is the school when the school needs them, but when the school does not need them we need to make sure that we get best use out of them and that we are not playing pickleball for 2 people on a 5-side court when we have empty halls around the Island.

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

We have heard today that maybe what we read in the paper is not necessarily true, but we have seen a lot of letters in the paper about concerns for individual sports and sporting clubs not feeling that they are being listened to. I was wondering if the Minister could explain what steps he is taking now currently to help to facilitate their concerns and finding the right locations for these clubs.

The Connétable of St. John:

With my background in logistics, I find this very simple. It is basic logistics. Unfortunately, I have to leave it to officers to work together to find those solutions. I have met with many sports on many occasions. Only last week, in the throes of Liberation, I met with the organiser of the Fort group for over 1½ hours, discussed having a further meeting with him and his group, as well as individual sports, which I committed to at a public meeting. I am more than happy to. Some sports need specific surfaces. Netball has been mentioned. Skating has been mentioned. They play on totally different surfaces. We have those surfaces. We need to ensure we get the right sport in the right place at the right time.

2.11.5 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for his answer. Could the Minister confirm that all these sports clubs will have the correct places to go and continuing their sporting prowess when the Fort is closed at the end of the year?

[11:45]

The Connétable of St. John:

I have discovered in recent weeks that we have people who are sub-letting space at Fort Regent, which is contrary to their agreements. Those organisations are unknown to us as a government. We have organisations and people at Fort Regent doing massage, for example. That is not the responsibility of government. Our focus is on finding solutions for the clubs that need them and particular for young and old alike.

2.11.6 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Does the Minister understand why he received such a hostile reception at a recent meeting in the Pomme d'Or? How does the Minister believe he will improve communications with the various clubs going forward?

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes, I do. I was given an email mid-afternoon of that meeting saying that the group did not want to meet with me outside of that meeting. Clearly, having been at the meeting myself, it was quite obvious to me that they had not been asked I wanted to meet. A politician had been asked and had declined the opportunity. I am more than happy to meet with any group.

2.12 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the South Hill development (OQ.112/2025):

Will the Minister, as shareholder representative, advise when she was first made aware that the approved S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) plans for the South Hill development do not meet the minimum expected dimensions for bathrooms in new dwellings under Building Bye Laws, and will she advise whether she expects S.o.J.D.C. to design their accommodation in accordance with the minimum standards in applicable Planning and Building guidance documents?

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

Until Deputy Curtis tabled this oral question I was not aware of the suggestion that the plans for South Hill do not meet the minimum expected dimensions for bathrooms. I do not believe that statement to be wholly accurate. Having since made enquiries and responded to the Deputy's questions, I have been advised that although the plans for South Hill development have been approved, the Building Control Submission, which will set out detailed terms and dimensions, is yet to be submitted and will be fully compliant.

2.12.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I am surprised the Minister is not aware. It was 18th March in this sitting I spoke to the Minister for the Environment about the substandard dimensions. The Minister sits in front of the Minister for the Environment. Also briefly, apologies, I would like to correct that the dimensions have been checked by officers from the plans submitted from P/2022/1619. Will the Minister ensure that what is approved and built will meet the applicable planning and building guidance documents, namely both those in building bye law, relating to fire access, wheelchair accessibility, and those in the planning side, including revised space standards for minimum lounge, living, kitchen, dining and bedroom spaces and there will be no non-compliance?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The overall dimensions of the bathrooms at South Hill are identical to other recently built schemes and do, therefore, comply, I am told, with all building control regulations. I am advised that there has been direct communication between Building Control and S.o.J.D.C. that confirms this to be the case. S.o.J.D.C. has confirmed that the final full Building Control application will be made in the next couple of months and will be fully compliant.

2.12.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can the Minister state whether she believes it is the role of the shareholder representative to ensure that the States-owned companies do set the standard for others and that the standards set by these companies, in a sense, set the standard for the rest of the sector and it would, in future, be very poor practice were they appearing not to meet those standards.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I say, I do not accept that there is a lack of compliance. I would like to emphasise again that the States of Jersey Development Company are a professional organisation, who use professional advisers. They are not some fly-by-night, build-it-cheap, sell-it-expensive business. They are there to do the bidding of this Assembly, and they are seeking to do that. The whole notion that they are simply ignoring guidelines and that people would allow them to ignore guidelines is extremely misplaced. In terms of the process, I believe that significant time and money is spent in preparing a detailed application for which there is a risk of refusal. The detailed application therefore ensures the overall minimum dimensions of each room can fit within the overall apartment shape and then further design development is undertaken during the building control stage, to ensure best use of money and to ensure full compliance. Once the detailed application has been approved, further enquiries and confirmations are obtained to ensure a scheme is fully compliant and the layout is optimised for each department. I have no concerns that S.o.J.D.C. will be building a fully compliant development at South Hill.

2.12.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

It does remain the case that measurements that were submitted as part of the original plans were not compliant. It seems that this is going to be corrected at the building control stage. My original question, in some sense, stands: does she accept that the S.o.J.D.C. and other States-owned entities should represent best practice, should be seen to represent best practice and will she commit to ensuring that that is the case?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

This is a matter of law and regulation, quite apart from what the Assembly asked S.o.J.D.C. to do. Clearly, I am not going to instruct a development that is not compliant and nor are they going to attempt to build one. As I say, I do not accept that they are a non-compliant builder and I have every expectation that they will deliver compliant developments.

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

When the Planning Committee saw the drawings for the now approved South Hill development, the drawings had to be adjusted because some of the flats did not meet the minimum residential space standards at that point. Has the Minister then seen the new drawings that will be submitted as part of the Building Control application and has she done a comparison to the previous one submitted?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

It will probably come as no surprise that the answer is no, I have not. I could not identify the difference between one plan and another. That is not my job. That is why we have architects, designers and engineers and people who understood floor spacing and special layout. There is no point in me looking at plans for a development like that. If the initial plans were non-compliant, as I have said, I think that is because the planning application sets out overall context and measurements, Building Control refines those to make sure that they are compliant with space standard.

2.12.5 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Has she been assured that any new diagrams that are being presented for building controls will be compliant and they should not be refused?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

It appears to me that you cannot necessarily predict a planning process, but I have every confidence that the plans that are submitted will meet guidelines and regulations and it is then up to the Planning Committee whether they then agree with that, but I am quite sure that S.o.J.D.C. will do entirely the right thing.

2.12.6 Connétable R.D. Johnson of St. Mary:

The questions being asked of the Minister are as shareholder representative. Given that this question relates to a planning matter, does she consider that it should be within her brief to deal with such detailed questions and should perhaps the M.O.U. (memorandum of understanding) chain of command be focused more on the Department of the Environment?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Constable for his question. Yes, I quite agree. I do not think my job as shareholder representative is to get involved in the operational day-to-day proceedings of each of the 5 entities. That is simply unfeasible. We have professional people running S.o.J.D.C., who use expert advisers. I do not think it is a matter for them or you. It is an operational matter. As shareholder representative, I am there to ensure good governance and financial sustainability and not to interfere in day-to-day operational matters. Policy matters rest elsewhere, possibly with the Minister for Housing. The Minister for the Environment is there to decide on planning matters rather and so he is in a position

of conflict. S.o.J.D.C. are here to do what this Assembly tells them to do or asks them to do. I am sure they will do that to the very best of their ability.

2.12.7 The Connétable of St. Mary:

I thank the Minister for her answer. Given that the purpose of the Minister's role is to ensure that there is Ministerial responsibility rather than just relying on the officers of the entity concerned, if she is not to have that responsibility does she think there should be a different framework whereby the burden of such matters are directed towards another Minister rather than just the company concerned?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am somewhat confused by the question. In terms of overall policy, in terms of what is being built, that sits to a degree with the Minister for Housing, if they are building homes. In terms of design and approval, that is a matter for Planning. We have planning laws and Building Control, and they have to then design developments that sit within planning. It seems to me that it is the planning system that supervises what S.o.J.D.C. ultimately delivers, in terms of quality of those homes being delivered and whether they meet planning and building control regulations. It makes no sense to hold S.o.J.D.C. to different standards to any other private developer. We have standards and everybody has to comply with them.

2.12.8 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I am afraid the Minister, I believe, is misrepresenting what I have done. I have to provide this in context. I know Standing Orders allow me. The bathrooms are 1.26 metres wide by 2.72 metres deep. These were submitted to a building regulation officer. This is not a planning matter. They came back and said: "The example bathroom layout indicated below is significantly ..."

The Deputy Bailiff:

Ask your question, not making a speech.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It is not, Sir, but I need to provide the clarity that only ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

The Minister has not seen any of these plans.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

They are public plans, Sir. Okay, very quickly. Given that the Building Control Department came back and said: "The example bathroom layout indicated below is significantly smaller than the minimum standards set out in paragraph 11.3 of technical guidance document 8" and that is a fact confirmed by the department, will the Minister accept that our S.O.E.s (States-owned entities) are not infallible and engagement with States Members is a valuable way of improving quality and not just defending actions that are currently non-compliant?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not accept. Deputy Curtis clearly has information in front of him that I do not. I have not reviewed the plans. I have said that. That is simply not my role and there is utterly no point in me looking at plans because I cannot tell you whether one room is compliant and not another. However, I am assured that S.o.J.D.C. have had communication with Building Control and that there will be a further building application which mean that it will be fully compliant. There are several processes in the iterations, and it will be compliant.

2.13 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the proposed funding for the Island Regeneration Plan (OQ.110/2025):

Will the Minister provide an update on the proposed funding for the Island Regeneration Plan?

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

The Island Regeneration Programme remains in development under the leadership of the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister. An overview was given to the Council of Ministers at a workshop on 1st May. Further workshops are scheduled for the rest of this month to finalise the scope of the programme and consider funding arrangements. It is anticipated that briefings will then be provided to Scrutiny and to all States Members over the course of June. These briefings will outline the proposed approach to funding.

2.13.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

On 31st January, the Chief Minister gave an interview in which he said the details about funding would be published around March-time. In the last Assembly meeting, the Chief Minister said he was aiming for full publication in mid-May. What is the current timetable for publishing the funding arrangements around the Island Regeneration Plan?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

As I just said, we will briefing States Members in June.

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

Will the Minister advise whether plans have changed at all with regards to funding, following announcements of the 2024 Annual Report and Accounts and whether they have made any change to plans for funding?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The plans for funding have not yet been finalised, so the publication of the 2024 Annual Report and Accounts represents our position at the end of 2024. We are now looking at 2025 and forward over, in some cases, a fairly considerable period. Funding will be worked on once the programme has been fully scoped. The programme has changed and evolved over a period of time, as has the timescale. Once we have an idea of what the scope and content really is and the Council of Ministers have agreed that, we will then be able to consider all the funding requirements and we will consider the full range of funding available to us to come up with a funding strategy.

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

Can the Minister confirm that any funding model for the Island Regeneration Plan will not, under any circumstances, be funded through austerity measures?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not think we are looking at austerity measures, but there are numerous funding options being considered. One funding source will be rebalancing of government's day-to-day spending, which has grown disproportionately in recent years. We know we have to rein in spending and some of that will go towards funding, but it will be a part and not all of the funding mechanism.

[12:00]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. That brings that period of questions to an end. The balance of questions that were not reached will be answered in writing by Ministers in the usual way. We now move to the first period of questions without notice. Those are for the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

The STATES noted that in accordance with Standing Order 63 (9), a written response would be provided to the following questions that had not been asked during the time allowed at the meeting –

2.14 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding financial support for accompanying persons in instances where the patient does not fall into the criteria set out in the Patient Travel and Related Costs Policy (OQ.108/2025):

Question

Where Islanders have no alternative but to attend a hospital in the UK for treatment, will the Minister advise what options are available for financial support for accompanying persons in instances where the patient does not fall into the criteria set out in the [Patient Travel and Related Costs Policy](#)?

Answer

Health and Care Jersey's current [Patient Travel and Related Costs Policy](#) will cover travel costs (flight, public transport or, if appropriate, taxi or hire car) of one relative or friend escorting a patient if the patient is under 18, over 75, or has a clinically assessed need. If not, the patient escort must pay their own way. For urgent travel within 24 hours, the Travel Office will book travel if payment is made up front.

The current policy does not extend to paying for food and accommodation. It is generally the case that patients needing additional escorts, or accommodation for those escorts, can seek charity funding.

I have, however, asked officers to make an interim change to the policy to state that we may fund patient escort accommodation, in addition to travel, where:

- both the patient and patient escort are from income support households
- the referring consultant has confirmed that a patient escort is clinically required, and
- the cost of accommodation is less than the cost of providing two return flights for the patient escort (ie. Jersey / UK flights to escort patient to the UK and back from the UK)

2.15 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding inter-Island ferry services (OQ.117/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what policy decisions, if any, have been taken with regard to inter-island ferry services and whether any subsidy has been provided by Jersey's Government to establish such a service, and if so, how much funding has been provided?

Answer

The Deputy will be aware that DFDS have agreed to provide weekly inter-island sailings on a reciprocal basis with Brittany Ferries. Over the last few weeks they have been working with the Government of Guernsey to agree specific sailing times and should be putting tickets on sale shortly.

None of the DFDS services come at any expense to the taxpayer.

Both Jersey and Guernsey have provided financial support to the Manche Isles Express and have been approached by another prospective operator with proposals for a year-round inter-island car and passenger service with multiple sailings per day.

Jersey has expressed a strong interest in supporting this route and the Chief Minister and I have met with the team behind the proposal. Guernsey have previously advised the prospective operator that they were not in a position to negotiate access to their harbour ramp but last week I wrote to my counterpart in Guernsey to ask that his committee reconsider which I hope they will do, particularly if Jersey were to financially support such a venture.

2.16 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the criteria to re-open historic murder cases (OQ.105/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what criteria is applied by the States of Jersey Police when considering whether to re-open any historic murder cases?

Answer

The decision to re-open past murder cases, sometimes referred to as ‘cold cases’ is taken with utmost seriousness and guided by a structured review process to ensure thoroughness and integrity. The key criteria include:

1. **New Information / Evidence:** The emergence of new, credible information / evidence that was not available during the original investigation. This could include new witness testimonies, or previously undiscovered material.
2. **Forensic & Technological Advances:** Significant advancements in forensic science, such as DNA analysis and digital capabilities, that can provide new insights or re-evaluate existing evidence.
3. **Legal and Procedural Changes:** Changes in legislation or legal precedents that may impact the interpretation of evidence or the application of the law.
4. **Public Interest:** Considerations of public interest, including the impact on the victim's family and the community, and the potential to enhance public confidence in the justice system.
5. **Operational Feasibility:** The capability and capacity of resources and the feasibility of conducting a thorough re-investigation without compromising current operational priorities.

6. **Review Recommendations:** Recommendations from formal cold case and thematic reviews, which identify new lines of inquiry or missed opportunities in the original investigation.

These criteria ensure that the decision to re-open a case is based on a balanced assessment of new information, technological capabilities, and the broader interests of justice. The States of Jersey Police fully recognise the public interest and the enduring impact that such cases have on families, communities, and the wider public.

2.17 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the optimal land use of the site at La Collette at the end of the Fuel Farm lease (OQ.119/2025):

Question

In consideration of the upcoming end date of the Fuel Farm lease, will the Minister advise whether any consideration has been given to the optimal land use of the site at La Collette, and whether or not an amended lease or alternative, could lift the designated Fuel Farm safety zone, and if not, why not?

In accordance with Standing Order 63(9) the written answer below has been provided to this Oral Question.

63(9). If any Oral question has not been asked before the end of the 2 hours and 20 minutes allowed, the Member of the States who was due to answer it must provide a written response to the Greffier for distribution as soon as practicable.

Answer

Ministers always consider how we can make optimal use of Government owned land so that it serves the best interests of islanders.

At present, Ministers consider that the existing fuel farm is required as a strategic asset in order to give stability and resilience of supply, and this is therefore considered as the optimum current use of the site at La Collette.

The current site is safe, secure, and able to readily receive fuel imports from the adjacent fuel berth.

The size and scope of the safety zone is also governed by the location of the neighbouring Gas storage site which currently has no plans for its re-location in the short or medium term.

A long-term energy strategy is being developed which will identify the longer-term options which may lead to different fuel storage arrangements and may result in some of the fuel storage areas at the La Collette fuel farm area being re-configured in future years.

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

3.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister stated this morning that a sugar tax would not generate the amount of money we need and she confirmed that she would not remove G.S.T. from food. Is the Minister considering raising G.S.T. from the current 5 per cent to cover any projected budget shortfalls?

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

No, I am not considering raising G.S.T.

3.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I am pleased that the Minister has confirmed that. Can the Minister advise if there are any other areas that she feels would increase revenue without raising G.S.T.?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am not considering raising G.S.T. and this Government has a Common Strategic Policy to keep charges and fees as low as we possibly can. We are continuing to focus on that C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy). We have said, as I have just mentioned, we are continuing our efforts to restrain government spending, particularly on things like consultants. That is proving benefits. We have more work to do in terms of looking at government spending, which has mushroomed out of all control and sustainability over the last few years. That is something we do need to look at going forward.

3.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister advise if the funds were relocated to Education to meet the grade pay deal with the teachers in 2024?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sorry, I did not hear the Minister's comments earlier. Funding was provided for the pay awards. I believe funding for pay awards comes from Central Reserve. I am not sure it necessarily goes to schools, but teachers are being paid. All civil servants are being paid and I do not believe that is the source of schools within schools.

3.2.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister confirm if the full amount of additional pay awards that were agreed late in 2024 was transferred to the department from the Central Reserve?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

To the extent funding is transferred from the Central Reserve to departments then, yes, that would have happened.

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

How confident is the Minister that rising wage and operational costs in Health and Education can be met in the current economic circumstances? Will she be considering pay freezes in the public sector as part of the Budget planning for 2026?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

We have a 3-year pay deal with our staff, which I believe cover 2024, 2025 and 2026. We will honour that pay deal. We have not started our Budget process for this year. We will consider how we spend money best and we will be looking at how we, as I say, minimise the mushrooming public spending, which is not sustainable. A pay freeze for 2026 is not under consideration and I clearly cannot comment on 2027 and beyond.

3.3.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Does the Minister accept that persistent deficits signal the need for either revenue reform or structural spending reductions and what might we see coming forward in the budget for this year?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not think there are persistent structural deficits. We know there have been significant challenges in Health and work is ongoing to consider how we manage the Health budget going forward. The Minister and I and our teams met 2 weeks ago to discuss the sustainable health funding model. The finance teams are working closely together in terms of delivering the financial recovery plan in the hospital. It is an area of close concern.

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

Will the Minister provide her analysis and sentiment of the current viability of Andium's build programmes across urban and rezoned sites?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

At this stage, I have no reason to believe that there is any lack of viability. As the Minister for Housing explained, when a development is begun, Andium do their work, it is subject to third-party assurance by the Treasury. We instruct a third-party adviser to confirm the viability of the development. Building costs will change depending on the building. I am confident that Andium, as things currently stand, are able to continue delivering the developments that are in their plan and that they have already begun or are beginning shortly.

3.4.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Under the current operating model, does the Minister believe the business plans give any flexibility for Andium to lower the rent charged on these developments without jeopardising viability?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is a question that needs to be considered in some detail. It is a matter for the Assembly to decide whether it wishes to lower rents. Clearly, if rents were lowered that may have an impact on Andium's operating model. It may have an impact on their ability to build and their ability to continue maintaining. That depends on what the decision of this Assembly is. The operating model is doing nicely. They have just delivered a number of new apartments in town. They are building on Island Plan sites. They have started work on sites in St. John. I have no reason to believe they cannot continue to do things as things currently stand, to continue building as the model currently stands. That is not to say that the model will not need review at some point, but it is a matter for the Assembly to decide what it wants to do in terms of rents.

3.5 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Further to the Minister for Health and Social Services' comments suggesting that the Strategic Reserve could be used to fund £100 million of spending on preventative healthcare and digital connectivity, will the Minister explain her thoughts on whether this is an appropriate use of the Strategic Reserve?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The Deputy may remember that we agreed a policy as part of the Budget for last year. We agreed a policy for spending from the Strategic Reserve. Any use of the Strategic Reserve will have to be in line with that. There is a backstop for hospital funding, but any use of it would have to be considered carefully and have the consent of the Assembly.

3.5.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

In a media interview, the Minister said she did not think the Strategic Reserve should be used as a piggy bank. Are there any circumstances in which she would consider allowing the Strategic Reserve to be used in the way the Minister for Health and Social Services described?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I agree, the Strategic Reserve is not a piggy bank that we can dip into as we need. There may be scope for the Strategic Reserve to be used to help fund infrastructure developments and capital developments, but I would not support its use for revenue. That is not what it is designed to do.

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

Would the Minister consider suspending the annual dividend paid by Andium to the Treasury to help reduce rental stress?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Under current models, Andium pay a dividend to the States. If we suspend the dividend that would be lost income that would have to be found from somewhere else. There is no magic money tree. If we do not have that dividend, we will not be able to spend the money and we will have to make cuts elsewhere.

3.6.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just to confirm then, the Minister for Treasury and Resources would be against the suspension of any Andium dividend payment?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is a very black and white question. I do not believe there is a black and white answer. What I am saying is that there would be consequences of suspending the dividend and that we would all have to consider how we then dealt with those consequences. If that meant other departments taking cuts then the Assembly would have to decide if that is what it wished to do.

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

The Jersey Audit Office recently published a grants and subsidies follow-up report and recommended the development of a government-wide framework to ensure grants and subsidies were given across all the different departments appraised and awarded in a consistent manner. Could the Minister advise whether she intends to implement this recommendation and, if so, what is the expected timeframe and, if not, why not?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, the C. and A.G. did make recommendations regarding grants. We will be reviewing the report and we will be responding to it, I expect, in the near future. I accept that I do think we do need to make sure that our governance in terms of organisations which receive grants needs to be carefully considered. But we also have to bear in mind that Government makes grants from, I think, millions of pounds to hundreds, if not the lower thousands. Governance arrangement which suits one will not suit another. We have to make sure that the agencies which receive small grants are not deterred from seeking grant funding from Government because they simply cannot deal with the bureaucracy. We will review the C. and A.G.'s recommendations on the basis of proportionality and impact on the relevant charities.

3.7.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for her answer. What mechanisms, if any, are currently in place to ensure grants and subsidies are delivering value for money but also social and environmental value and aligning with the strategic priorities of the Government if there is not a unified framework?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think there are rules within the Public Finance Manual but I cannot give detail at the moment; I do not have that in front of me.

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

The Annual Report and Accounts identifies that the group budget would be in deficit if it were not for the use of investment income for revenue expenditure. Has the Minister for Treasury and Resources considered a long-term solution to correcting this issue in order to better protect the investment revenue of Islanders?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not think that is quite right. I think our income in terms of tax income and operational income exceeds our day-to-day expenditure. With things like depreciation, there was a deficit as a result of depreciation. But we know where the deficits have come from and we know where our extra expenditure has come from in the last year. Clearly, we will be starting the Budget process for 2025 and we will be looking very closely at government spending, which has grown by £400 million since 2019. That is not sustainable growth and we will be seeking to bring that in very considerably over a period of time.

3.8.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Part of my question was with regard the use of investment revenue, £22 million being spent on revenue expenditure. What is the Minister's plan to resolve that so that Islanders' investment revenue can in fact be rolled up to increase the size of our Strategic Reserve, rather than net depletion of it?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sorry, I do not know what £22 million of revenue the Deputy is referring to; if she could clarify please.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I am referring to a figure that is outlined in the Annual Report and Accounts that the Minister has signed off.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not recollect a figure of £22 million. I do recollect that our investment returns were over £400 million and those are not used to fund day-to-day expenditure. The Report and Accounts is a very significant document and to pull one figure out and expect me to know every single figure in the accounts, I simply cannot go into that amount of detail. We will be starting our Budget process, we will be looking at our expenditure over the coming year and how we restrain spending in years to come.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I appreciate the Minister may not be able to speak to an exact figure but perhaps the Minister could speak about the issue, which is not rolling up or the failure to roll up the investment income of public money that is invested and should be returned to the Strategic Reserve and rolled up, like many investors would do with their own accounts, to increase the size of our Strategic Reserve, rather than in a net basis depleting it.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sorry, I am still struggling to understand the Deputy's point. We have a very carefully managed investment strategy. We have the Common Investment Fund which takes the assets of the Strategic Reserve, the Social Security Reserve Fund and the other funds, invest them very wisely and that has generated £410 million of investment.

[12:15]

That money is rolled up and is maintained; it is not used to fund revenue expenditure. I am sorry, I am just really not understanding the point the Deputy is making. I am sorry.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right. That brings that period of questions, effectively, to an end. Thank you, Minister.

4. Questions without notice to Ministers - The Minister for Social Security

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

Could the Minister please advise whether the work to extend parental benefits to same-sex parents, if that is complete and, if not, what stage that work is at, please?

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

I thank the Deputy for the question. My understanding is that parental benefits are currently available to same-sex parents. I would be surprised to hear that it was not. If it was not then I will absolutely pick that up as a matter of urgency.

4.1.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I believe that one of the other Ministers mentioned that there was still some work to do in this area in a previous debate. I would be grateful if the Minister could confirm that and also make sure that it is communicated to the families and the stakeholders.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course I will. When I was an officer I did work on the implementation of parental benefits, so I do know it quite well. My understanding is it is available to all parents.

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

In regard to long-term care, total household assets have to be less than £419,000, which has not changed since the scheme started. Is the Minister considering lowering this threshold or higher it to ensure the long-term care fund maintains a healthy balance?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I currently have no plans to change the threshold.

4.2.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Is the long-term care fund under regular review and, if so, when is the next one?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, of course the long-term care fund is under regular review. We anticipate the delivery of the next actuarial review at the end of 2026, beginning of 2027.

4.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

We have heard a lot about growth in public expenditure and also the pressure on infrastructure spend, the Infrastructure Regeneration Plan and ongoing infrastructure requirements. What is the Minister's view about whether the funds under her control could be used to invest in critical infrastructure using some mechanism, for example, like was used with the new government build?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The investment strategy for the funds are of course under the control of the Minister for Treasury and Resources in consultation with me. If the Minister for Treasury and Resources wished to change investment strategy, then that is something that of course I would support her in doing and consult with her in doing. I think the most important thing that we take into consideration when considering

any investment is the returns for the fund, longevity for the fund and the best outcomes for our community.

4.3.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Will the Minister confirm then that were a request to consider use of funds for critical infrastructure to come to her, she would not be completely opposed to it and might be prepared to consider it?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course I do not make investment decisions for the fund. I have the Minister for Treasury and Resources who is responsible, ultimately, for investment decisions for the fund on the basis of the advice from investment experts. It is upon that advice that any decision should be made.

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

Could the Minister advise if she will be bringing any work around pensions, both States pensions or private pensions, as part of the work plan for the end of her term? Will she be seeking funding for this work in 2026 Budget?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I would direct the Member and all Members to the departmental business plans, which clearly outlined the work that is planned to be undertaken. The work on the secondary pension scheme is outlined in there to be picked up again towards the end of this political term. The work that I intend to do is all within that business plan that has been published on the gov.je website.

4.4.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

In Scrutiny the Minister explained that the States pension is not enough to live on and other methods were needed to save for retirement. Is the Minister thinking of other methods to support Islanders to save for retirement and what would these be and would this be part of her work plan?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course a key part of my work plan was moving towards the living wage. I think that people can only be encouraged to save more for their retirement when they are earning adequately during their working life, which is why I prioritised that piece of work ahead of the secondary pension piece of work. I, of course, understand that encouraging people to save during their working life towards retirement is an incredibly important piece of work as well, and that is why that will be picked up towards the end of this political term.

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

Will the Minister provide an update on the transform programme?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The transform programme is a huge programme of work that will overhaul our very outdated I.T. (information technology) systems that deliver all of our benefits within Social Security. The work has now commenced with the supplier and contracts are now in place. I am content that the work is progressing with the first phase focusing on income support payments.

4.5.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Given suppliers have now been chosen and contracts signed, will she update the Assembly on suppliers and the use or otherwise of local suppliers in this exercise now that contracts are signed? I am sure that can be disclosed.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I will endeavour to give the Members more information in writing. I think that would be more appropriate than answering in an oral question. But of course utilising local suppliers was a key point in the decision-making when defining and choosing suppliers.

4.6 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Following the Minister for Treasury and Resources' response regarding Health Start for Jersey scheme, would the Minister explain in more detail; does it apply only to a pregnant woman and parents with young children, how young the children are and what is the uptake to the scheme? Because I tried to do a search online and it was not clear.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The reason I think the Deputy would not have found information as clearly online - and I will take that back to the department - is because people are informed automatically and receive the vouchers automatically with a letter. The vouchers are provided to families who receive income support who have children under 3 and low income pregnant women. Where we have got households that have been on Island for under 5 years and, therefore, not eligible for income support, referrals are also made into my department by health visitors. There are currently 384 households receiving vouchers.

4.6.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

There are children when they are at school they are eligible for the Jersey Premium when their parents are not entitled to income support because they are less than 5 years, how are these families supported with the food health safe vouchers?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Those families, as I referred in my previous question, would be referred by health visitors currently. The cost pressures on families that have been here for under 5 years is something that greatly concerns me. I do have regular conversations with my officers about how we can help those families. I have recently met with organisations, such as the headteacher of Hautlieu School and La Sente School as well. I would be keen for them to refer families directly to the department so that we can look at the best provision. Because I am aware that childhood poverty is something that we really do need to address and tackle with urgency.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Any further questions for this Minister? Deputy Gardiner, then Deputy Renouf.

4.7 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Following the publication of Annual Report and Accounts, we have seen it was reported that social benefit payments were £219 million, which is an £88 million rise compared to 2023. Would the Minister explain, what are the reasons behind it?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course there will be varying reasons dependent on the benefits. I will undertake to come back to the Member if I can provide any further detail regarding any particular benefits. The cost of living and cost-of-living pressures is something that I am consistently aware of. I am very, very keen that we do work as government to ensure that people are aware of the benefits that they can claim. For me, I am keen to see that we are ensuring that we do not have people under-claiming benefits. I am not concerned when the amounts of benefit that we are paying out are going up, as long as we are ensured that the people that should be claiming are claiming.

4.7.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

There is an option that the States grant was counted towards this. Does the States grant, it was reintroduced, will be calculated as a part of the social security benefits or it should be a standalone number? Because the States grant is the States grant, it is not paid now.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course I do not have the page in front of me that the Deputy is looking at. I am a bit confused because we are talking about payments of benefits, whereas the States grant is money going into the fund; they are 2 different things. Perhaps the Deputy could provide a written question and I am more than happy to provide the answer in writing.

4.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister provide an update on any measures that the Cost of Living Ministerial Group are working on that might help families with the cost of living?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The Cost of Living Ministerial Group is of course chaired by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and I do sit on that group. We still maintain the commitment to undertake the piece of work on minimum income standards. I was due to have an update meeting with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development on that yesterday but, unfortunately, that had to be postponed due to reasons beyond both of our control. I will meet with him imminently to get an update on that.

4.8.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for her answer. What policies are currently under consideration? Are there any policies that have already been implemented and which policies are being considered?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

That piece of work is more of a long-term piece of work and is very much all policies in development. I, of course, regularly discuss with all Ministers outside of those meetings as well, measures that we could be undertaking to reduce the pressure of cost of living and also how we can improve our benefit system, so that Islanders get the help that they need when they need it.

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

The Annual Report and Accounts makes mention of concern of the future viability of the Health Insurance Fund. Is the Minister concerned about this and what proposals does she have to turn it around?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, of course I am concerned about the longevity of the funds that go towards meeting our primary care needs within our community. It is of course something that the Minister for Health and Social Services is also very concerned about. As the Minister for Treasury and Resources mentioned in her questions without notice, myself and the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Treasury and Resources met just a couple of weeks ago to discuss further plans around overall health funding. It is my view that we need to see health funding in the round but also protect the very important funding that is there for primary care because of course that is what goes towards prevention of people needing secondary care into the future. It is of course very important in saving future expenditure.

4.9.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Does the Minister's mention of protecting primary care in the round mean that she will protect the Health Insurance Fund and ensure that it sits in her department going forward for that purpose?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think it is important that I ensure that it sits in the very best place to ensure that we have got the most efficient management and governance of that fund. Whether that is the Minister for Social Security or the Minister for Health and Social Services into the future is yet to be decided. But I am absolutely supportive and working very closely with the Minister for Health and Social Services looking at the future of health as a whole. That does need to be looked at as one picture so that everything all works together.

[12:30]

4.10 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:

Could I ask the Minister if she has any plans or initiatives coming forward to help our community out of the social security benefit system and back into full-time employment?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, of course the majority of people that are receiving income support are working people. Where people are unable to work due to health, for example, we have really good work that is being undertaken, for example, with the WorkWell scheme where people have short-term illnesses to enable that preventing getting into long-term absences from work. Also, we have our very hardworking Back to Work team who will help place people who are not working into suitable jobs. It is really important that those are suitable jobs and that team does really good work to ensure that people are placed well so that they can remain in work.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. That brings that period of questions to an end. We now move on to the third period of questions to the Chief Minister.

5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

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

The Chief Minister, like many other Members, may have received an email from someone whose partner sadly passed away, no will or intestate was provided. Is the Chief Minister looking at updating our Wills and Succession Laws to provide for common law partners and spouses?

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

Yes, I too received the email in very tragic circumstances. That is something that we would like to talk to the Legislation Advisory Panel about. I think it is time to review some of our laws on heirship; that has been something that has been discussed for quite some time in government. But I think we are approaching a time when we need a proper review of it, so we are open to that.

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

The United Nations report on 12th May 2025: “Gaza; starvation looms for one in 5 people, say food security experts; 71 days since deliveries were stopped of all aid and commercial supplies.” Following our Island’s very recent reflections on its own experiences of starvation during the Occupation, will the Chief Minister commit or at least consider committing the Government of Jersey to add its voice and use what forums and resources it can to help ensure that aid is able to enter and be distributed in Gaza, which the United Nations-backed assessment has concluded is at a critical risk of famine and 500,000 people, women, men, teenagers, children and babies, one-fifth of its population, are at serious risk of dying of starvation? **[Approbation]**

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I thank the Connétable for the question. I, like many Members and Islanders, are absolutely appalled and distressed at the tragic circumstances that continue to unfold in Gaza. I also strongly endorse a recent statement made last week by the Minister for the Middle East in Parliament, in which he

outlined the U.K. Government's fierce opposition to any expansion of the Israeli Defence Forces' operations in Gaza, including the reported plans for full military operation. I know the Minister for External Relations and his team are making our views known vociferously in Westminster to our counterparts and we will continue to do so.

5.2.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I was just going to say: does the Chief Minister agree that the United Nations' call for help is extremely serious?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I do. We have recently learnt in a statement given by the High Commission via the U.N. (United Nations), responsible for the situation that there is, potentially, for a major famine unfolding in Gaza. I deplore that and I think everybody needs to work together to try and end this situation as soon as possible, and Jersey will play its part.

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

As chair of the Regeneration Steering Group, does the Chief Minister take claims that planned development by S.o.J.D.C. do not comply with building control as serious? If so, how does he suggest his Government engages with those raising issues such as this?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I align my comment with the Minister for Treasury and Resources. Of course the Government cannot endorse developments that do not comply but I cannot really say more than that. The matter is in the hands of Building Control and Planning, I believe, and we must let them do their jobs. But of course we do not support anything that does not comply with the law and the rules and regulations.

5.3.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Given that strong support that schemes must comply, does the Chief Minister think it is most appropriate to engage openly with an open ear to those who might have studied these plans thoroughly and may have legitimate comments, rather than dismissing them as incorrect?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Of course, but we leave that to the officials who advise, and officials and the relevant committees at the end of the day that make the decisions. I think in relation to questions, we all take questions where we can but questions about plans can be directed to the officials, can be directed to different Ministers; Housing, Environment, Treasury and myself. Quite often I would strongly advise Members, when asking for specific details or technical details in the first instance, to give Ministers notice so they can collate the information and be sure of their facts or put the questions in writing. Because we do want to help and work with Members to correct or rectify any problems that may arise.

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

Does the Chief Minister have any plans to address the non-performance of Jersey Water in regard to connecting all Jersey properties to mains water?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

In short, the answer to that is, yes, plans are being discussed. We would need to discuss that with Jersey Water. In actual fact the extension of mains water and drainage throughout the Island forms part of the regeneration programme that is currently a work in progress and I look forward to updating Members in due course.

5.4.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

That is good to hear. Will the Chief Minister be considering any direct action like bringing Jersey Water back into full government ownership to enable Islanders to finally be connected to mains water?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think it is too early to give a definitive answer on that but I would not rule anything out. Members will understand that we have challenging times ahead, not least with balancing the books and taking account of our medium to long-term future. We must be open-minded and prepared to act in the best interests of Jersey and this Government will continue to approach all of these challenges with an open mind.

5.5 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The question follows on quite nicely. We have exceptionally buoyant tax revenues and yet Health is already struggling for this year. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning wants more money for education. We are also trying to invest £100 million more in preventative health and digital, connectivity in health. We also have very ambitious infrastructure plans throughout the Island, regeneration programme. Where does the Chief Minister think the money is going to come from?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

As we have said from the very beginning, that this Government is working on reprioritising our expenditure. There has been an unacceptable growth in the footprint of government; nearly 50 per cent in 5 years, that is unsustainable. The new prioritisation of spending also looks at our capital planning. When we look at how we plan for that into the future, and of course the workshop we are having on Thursday morning, which I hope as many States Members as possible can attend, will begin to understand the challenges. We have to reconcile population, finance, infrastructure, public realm and the economy. Aligning all of that is the most important piece of work we are going to have to do, so we understand that. We must remember though that we always think about the immediate cost. What we are doing when we are looking at longer term, short, medium and long-term plans, as we will soon be outlining in what was the Breakwater regeneration programme, an overall investment in Jersey will mean how we reprioritise the £100 million-plus that we have every year in our capital programme. Over the next 10 years we will be budgeting at least £1 billion, I would have thought, on capital expenditure. The big discussion is how we utilise that and we make sure we are spending it on the right things. It is my firm view that we look after the basics. We get the public realm right, we get the public infrastructure right. We make sure our roads are good, we look after health estate, we look after education and we invest in our economy. I am afraid the Assembly over many years, I think, has become a little complacent and we have allowed ourselves to take a big government, big-country approach to solving a lot of the problems that we deal with. If we are going to put things right we have to be bold enough to revisit some of those past decisions.

5.5.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I do not think anybody in the Assembly would disagree with the ambitions that the Chief Minister stated. But he talks about government having grown too big and, therefore, the implication is that the extra spending will come at least in part from trimming government. Does he accept that there is a mismatch at the moment between what has been achieved and what has been set out for the reprioritisation programme and the incredibly ambitious spending demands that are coming down the track, as I outlined in my original.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, what I think has happened is this Government has decided not to shy away or push the problem down the road or kick it into the long grass. It has decided to take the bull by the horns and try and address it, and we are making progress. For example, when you change policies it takes time to bed

in. We have seen this with the recruitment freeze. We have now extended that for another year. We took 1,000 job vacancies out of the system last year. Had we not done any of that then the accounts, in terms of expenditure, would have been significantly higher than they were. We have got to keep pushing forward with that. We need to rewind some of the growth we have seen in the public sector. But we are not going to do that and let that impact upon our front line services. Health, we heard from the Minister for Health and Social Services, that the technology advances in medicine, the cost of drugs, all of these are having massive consequences for the financial performance for Health. If we take that seriously we are going to have a look at where we are spending money or not spending money carefully and direct it to the areas that we need to spend money, such as health, education, public realm and so forth. We are addressing the problem and I hope this Government can leave good strong foundations for future Governments and future Assemblies and put us back in the right direction.

5.6 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Interesting to follow. The Chief Minister just mentioned 1,000 jobs out. From Annual Report and Accounts, from £1.2 billion budget over £659 million spent on staff costs, which is 13 per cent higher than in 2023; it is above inflation. How can we scrap that, freeze jobs out and we are still spending 13 per cent higher than in 2023 on staff?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Because we have started to reduce senior roles in central departments and put the resources where they are most needed into front line health and educational services. If you go into the detail of the headcount you will see where we are. We are never going to reduce the expenditure in real terms because the costs with inflation and wage costs they continue to rise. But what we need to do is curb that growth by reducing headcount in some areas and in some instances putting that into front line services where we need to. But I will be absolutely clear to this Assembly that if we are going to be prudent and serious about protecting our long-term financial security, which is strong because we have been careful in the past with our reserves, we have to start thinking about the size of government and how we spend our money, how we allocate it and how we prioritise it.

5.6.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I cannot disagree with the Chief Minister that we need to curb our growth and live within our means, saying this we are £76 million up in staff spending compared to 2023. How can the Chief Minister explain that according to the labour report that for one person recruited in the private sector, government recruited 4 people during 2024?

[12:45]

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Deputy, just repeat the last part of that question.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

A recent report was published and it was stated that for one person recruited in the private sector, government recruited 4 people in 2024.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Was the Deputy referring to an increase of 411? Right, she said 4, that is what threw me; 204 of those were in Health, 144 were in C.Y.P.E.S., 53 teaching assistants, 42 manual workers, which predominantly consist of the new catering roles in relation to the provision of school dinners, something that the Deputy will know about, 26 allied health professionals, 23 teachers and lecturers, 20 social workers, practitioners and counsellors, 11 doctors and consultants. That is where we are

increasing the headcount; that is where it is needed. But we need to bring back some of the very high-paid civil service roles that we have allowed to expand.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Ozouf, a £10 penalty is you I think, is that right? Yes, thank you. That brings that period of questions to an end and I can see it is 12.50 p.m. Is the adjournment proposed?

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to adjourn now? Adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:46]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:17]

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Deputy Bailiff:

Returning to the Consolidated Order Paper for today, there now follows a statement from the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the Future Economy Programme.

6. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development will make a statement regarding the Future Economy Programme

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

It is 3 years since the then Senator Farnham published the Outline Economic Strategy; 18 months we published its successor, the Future Economy Programme. We have now published a report on the progress across government to advance this work in the last year and a half. These 3 documents are milestones on a long journey and I wanted to take this opportunity to remind Members of exactly why the Future Economy Programme has been published and the challenges it seeks to address. The challenges are significant and complex. Like most economically-advanced countries our economic productivity has slowed and our population is getting older. This means that if nothing changes then the Government and the States of Jersey will struggle to provide the services Islanders expect. To avoid this situation we must strengthen our economy and significantly increase economic productivity. We know that in the next 15 years our population of over-65s will have grown by 30 per cent, while the number of those at working age, 16 to 64, will have decreased. Members will know that this problem is not unique to Jersey; it is one shared across Europe and it is felt particularly acutely in our neighbouring islands. The risks include having to raise taxes and cut essential public services. I am sure that all Members will agree these are enormous and pressing challenges which must not be kicked down the road for future generations to deal with. Instead Jersey needs to act now to make those changes that will ensure the Island is well placed to continue its success long into the future. At its core the Future Economy Programme is about preparing our economy today so that it can meet the needs of future generations; that is to develop the economy in a sustainable manner. The wide range of initiatives which are set out in the F.E.P. (Future Economy Programme) can be put into 3 groups. Some are aimed to ensuring that our public sector is right sized and is as effective as possible. Others are aimed at enabling the private sector to improve its productivity, which in turn will strengthen the profitability and resilience, while minimising the need for inward migration. The third group of initiatives aimed at finding alternative sources of revenue, thereby creating new career paths that ensure Jersey remains attractive to young people and at the same time ensuring that we are not forced to raise taxes that would make the Island economically less attractive. The Future Economy Programme has been instrumental in shaping the narrative, bringing these critical issues to

the forefront of public attention. The upcoming Island Longevity Conference next week is a clear indication that these topics are firmly on the public radar and are being actively discussed. Last year there were significant steps taken in all 3 areas of the Future Economy Programme, although, as I have said, this is a 15-year programme, so there remains a lot to be done. Future Governments will add their own actions to this list to bring us closer to our shared goal. Members will be able to read the report for themselves but I do want to highlight just a few of the 90 actions we set out in the original delivery framework. In the public sector, work is underway to ensure that arm's length organisations represent value for money and are aligned with the Future Economy Programme projects. Deputy Luce and I are ensuring a greater focus on economic factors in planning decisions with an action plan to be released shortly. We have completed the long-planned move to a single government H.Q. (headquarters) delivering a better environment for public sector workers and a single port of call for Islanders who need to engage with government, and this in itself has made savings for the taxpayer. For the private sector the Better Business Support Package provides grants totalling £20 million, which are now being used to stimulate investment in businesses to improve employer productivity and competitiveness. The first of these grants has already been issued and I urge companies, large and small, to take up this opportunity to reinvest in their businesses.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Sir, can I just raise a point of order? Sorry to interrupt. I know that some Members do not have a copy of the statement.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Apologies.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I have got a paper copy and I know an email has been sent round. But my anti-virus is still scanning it. I do not know if that is the case for other Members. Could I also raise the question about why the statement has not been circulated before the speech has begun? I do not think it is intended to be discourteous but I think it has the impact of potentially being so. It seems to be that in the past there was a precedent that we made sure we had paper statements in front of us before a statement was given.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, there is nothing in Standing Orders in relation to it. Obviously it is helpful with a lengthy statement like this to have it sooner rather than later but there it is. Have Members all got access to this statement now, either online or in some other way? No. Some Members do not have it. Is that because you simply do not have access to the email? It has not opened up to you yet, that is a difficulty. In that case, Minister, I think perhaps we should pause until everyone does have a copy of the document and they can open it, they can follow it, as they would normally do, alongside you reading it out. That being the case, I propose to briefly adjourn until all Members have it available in front of them on their screens.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, I think certainly on my screen it has come through but if Members want to check.

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

It was circulated by the Greffe, Sir, at 2.19 by email attachment.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. It sometimes does take a while for these to open. We will adjourn until all attachments are open and all Members can read the document.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, if I may just say because I know fingers will be pointing my way but my understanding is the statement was provided to the Greffier yesterday for distribution. That is my understanding.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, all right. I will look into that.

[14:24]

ADJOURNMENT

[14:30]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Just to remind Members of the relevant provisions of Standing Orders in relation to this sort of statement. The maker of the statement complied with Standing Order 17 and gave notice of his wish to make the statement by 5.00 p.m. yesterday and indeed supplied a copy of what he proposed to say. But under Standing Order 68: "When a Member of the States is to make a statement on a matter for which he or she has responsibility as an office holder or on a public matter for which he or she otherwise has such responsibility, he or she shall (a) give the text of it to the Greffier and (b) advise the Greffier whether the text is to be distributed to Members of the States before the statement is made or as soon as possible afterwards." In the absence of a clear wish on the behalf of the statement-maker to have it sent by the Greffier as soon as it is received, the practice has grown up that the statement is provided to Members just before it is made, and that is what occurred in this case. Of course if Members wish to adopt a different practice then that is a matter for P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) and Members, but that is what occurred in this case. Yes, Minister, do you wish to resume your statement? All Members have a copy to hand.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, yes, I think the climax had been somewhat taken away.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry about that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I apologise to Members, I understood it was automatic that it went through to Members, so we supplied it yesterday to the Greffier. I will continue. For the private sector, Better Business Support Package grants totalling £20 million are now being used to stimulate investment in businesses to improve employer productivity and competitiveness. The first of these grants has already been issued and I urge companies large and small to take up this opportunity to reinvest in their businesses. The Better Business Support Package is open to all private sector-employing organisations in Jersey and will see almost £5 million delivered in productivity grants open to all employers, £4 million pumped into apprenticeship schemes, an additional £2.2 million to support our rural and marine sectors and £8 million pushed into the visitor economy, including for projects to improve productivity in the hospitality sector, new funding to Visit Jersey and the development of new air routes, including to Europe. Connectivity is key to our Island's success. The more accessible we are, the more able to succeed we will be. The award of the ferry contract to DFDS will see £300 million invested in new ferries within the next 6 years. I struggle to think of an equivalent level of inward investment ever being made in Jersey. While there are teething problems with any change of this nature, the contract will see Jersey provided with a key part of its infrastructure, that being a reliable ferry service that serves the Island's many needs. Similarly, we have refinanced the agricultural loans scheme which has also begun providing loans to our agricultural sector to make much needed capital investments. The rural and marine economies are vital parts of a diverse economic ecosystem, helping us protect

Jersey's environment and playing a key role in improving the health of Islanders. The Financial Services Competitiveness Programme, which has been announced by the Minister for External Relations this week, will enable the financial and professional services sector to remain the engine at the heart of our economy. Changes to reduce red tape are well underway across departments, one example in my department being the modernisation of the Licensing Law, which is now in law drafting and will be lodged for States Members to consider later this year. Separately, through other partners within our Customer Service Training Programme, staff in hospitality and retail businesses have been receiving free training which will raise the level of customer service in Jersey and invest in the skills of Islanders. Hospitality and retail are also being supported by investment in the public realm, something which this Government is prioritising and will, in the coming months, bring forward plans to accelerate. There has also been good progress on the necessary legislation to lease part of our maritime zone for an offshore windfarm. Once it is operational, Jersey should be able to export energy into the European grid and so raise tens of millions in annual revenues. By 2040 I am sure those revenues will be supporting our public services and reducing the pressure to tax our working population. Further diversification is being achieved as we see the medicinal cannabis sector move into revenues. This has also led to Jersey attracting businesses in the biotech sector and, as a result, we are developing a cluster of firms that operate within this high-value, low-footprint area. Overall we have completed 70 per cent of the short-term actions we committed to in the F.E.P. delivery plan and the remaining 10 are all underway. We have also begun work on 44 out of 45 medium-term actions and 6 have already been completed ahead of the December 2026 deadline. We have also commenced three-quarters of the long-term aspirational actions which will be carried forward by future governments. To conclude, we are addressing the challenges raised by our ageing population but these are long-term challenges, and this report is just a milestone on a journey that will take the next decade-and-a-half. Change is not easy but it is crucial. Jersey has many, many qualities and we need to build on these, viewing the economy as an entirely intertwined ecosystem, by remaining international, innovative, highly skilled and outward-looking. We have made a positive start but it will be for future Ministers and States Assemblies over the next 15 years to continue that progress. The Future Economy Programme is about more than just economic growth. It is about creating an Island that is attractive to live and work in, while remaining at the forefront of business thinking and being prepared to consider significant development, particularly in regard to infrastructure. I am excited about working to deliver an economy in which all Islanders can see their future, where exciting careers in diverse sectors are possible and where our public services are well supported without needing to raise taxes. By achieving this, we will be able to continue Jersey's incredible success story, which has throughout time been dependent on Jersey maintaining an entrepreneurial culture that adapts and flexes quickly to the needs of business, society and the international environment. That is my statement but I would also like to add my thanks to my fellow Ministers because the work is across government. While it is being led by the Economy Department, it is across government, and it cannot be achieved without the participation of the whole Council of Ministers. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. We now move on to 15 minutes of questions and the first question is from Deputy Moore.

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

I thank the Minister for the update. One of the aspirational parts of the Future Economy Programme was a tunnel to France to help provide regular transportation links and also to ease affordability issues within the Island. Could the Minister include an update as to progress on that project?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for her question. Yes, in the previous Council of Ministers we undertook a basic study into the possibility of fixed links to France and that first piece of work looked at what type of fixed link would be preferable and the choice - or the recommendation from officers - was a tunnel. The next stage would be a feasibility project. This Council of Ministers has not chosen to take that forward at the moment. I do think it is something that the Island should look at, particularly in terms of if you want to solve the housing crisis, if you want to make sure there are no delays in food arriving in the Island, and if you want to make it the easiest possible way for tourists to reach the Island, then a fixed link, a tunnel, would likely solve many of those problems.

6.1.2 Deputy K.L. Moore:

What is the rationale of the current Council of Ministers for not allowing this work to progress?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not think there is any particular rationale at the time. Obviously, there was a change of Government; it was a tumultuous moment for the Assembly and for the Council of Ministers. Costs are certainly something that this Government is seeking to bear down on and I do believe that the feasibility study to do it properly would likely have cost many millions of pounds. So while I cannot say that that is the reason, I think that that is an understandable reason that something of this nature would be paused for a potential future government to pick up.

6.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

At the bottom of page 1 the Minister talks about right-sizing of the public sector. What does he mean by right-sizing? Does that mean a smaller public sector or a larger one?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think it means a public sector that is appropriate for the size of the Island. I was listening to the Chief Minister's questions without notice earlier and, at the current moment, because of the size of expenditure in the public sector, that would mean, in very general terms, a slightly smaller public sector.

6.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

A slightly smaller public sector. Does the Minister agree that a reasonable interpretation of the 3 points attached to this smaller public sector would be to interpret it as meaning a cut to government services, to privatise services and then funnel taxpayers' money to the private sector and to introduce stealth taxes? Is this what he is proposing? If not, what do those 3 points at the bottom of page 1 mean in reality?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for his supplementary question. I do not make decisions on any of those matters that the Deputy spoke to, so I cannot say exactly how the right-sizing of the public sector will unfold. That is a piece of work undertaken by others within the Council of Ministers and indeed the States Employment Board. From my perspective, the Deputy mentioned the private sector, and one thing that I am absolutely convinced about is that if Jersey is to remain a low-tax jurisdiction in terms of tax, the basic tax rate of 20 per cent, which I have always personally felt is a fair tax rate - I have grown up with this, I guess, in Jersey and it is what I have always felt - we will need to rely on the private sector to deliver in many different ways, whether it is infrastructure, whether it is economic growth. There are many different areas in which the private sector, we need them to become partners with government to deliver these things. I have a critique of the last 20 or 30 years in Jersey and that critique is that the private sector has stepped back, or been pushed away, as government has grown. That is just a recipe for higher taxation but I do not believe an Island of our size and our scale could cope with the economic impact of higher taxation because it would almost certainly force businesses out of the Island.

6.1.5 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I thank the Minister very much for the update. I think I am correct in saying that there was no mention of digital in the statement and I wonder if the Minister could speak to the importance of digital transformation in the future economy of the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I will come out straight with an apology, I had not spotted that and I do apologise, because even as I sit here there was definitely something about digital in here previously, as far as I can remember. So, no, technology - I will not even just talk digital - is vital to the Island's future economic development and, indeed, I would say social development as well. We need technology in order to help us gain that productivity increase that we need and so whether it is digital technology or any other technology, they are absolutely at the heart of what this Island needs to do.

6.1.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can the Minister address the role of Digital Jersey in that digital transformation? How important does he think that is?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Currently Digital Jersey plays an important role in particularly driving innovation and helping the Island understand what is possible in terms of digital. The Impact Fund, which is the £20 million fund, is already starting to help businesses in Jersey apply technological solutions to some of our most difficult problems, and that in itself is an extremely important role.

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

Just staying with the Business Support Package, he mentions £8 million will be pushed into the visitor economy, could he expand slightly on what projects that would involve? Also, it says new funding to Visit Jersey; exactly what proportion of the £8 million will be going to Visit Jersey because I understand their budget is quite large already.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am particularly interested in that last statement by the Deputy, purely because I met hoteliers yesterday afternoon; the Deputy's opinion was not shared by hoteliers. They feel that we need to provide more in the way of marketing and funding for marketing of the Island, the destination marketing of the Island. With regard to the specifics around the £8 million, there is within the Better Business Support Package, while we have funding available to all businesses - and I forget the exact amount off the top of my head, and I apologise for that - we have a separate part which is purely for the visitor economy. That was to ensure that those hospitality businesses which are significantly affected by the rise in the minimum wage have access to investment support that is designed specifically for them. In doing that and saying that, we also made sure that retail and other adjacent areas of the hospitality industry were included, so it is not specifically just for hotels, it is also for that wider amount.

[14:45]

In terms of funding ongoing for the air routes and things like this, I think it is £1 million per year to Ports of Jersey to help develop air routes, particularly to the south, to Europe, and also an extra £1 million a year to Visit Jersey to help with the marketing element. I think that is really important. Going back to that statement the Deputy made about Visit Jersey receives a lot of money, Visit Jersey has received approximately £5 million a year for the last 10 years. Inflation alone tells you that that £5 million is worth a lot less today than it was 10 years ago, and so it is really important that we do keep up with the increased cost of marketing. Buying advertising space, et cetera, is more expensive

now than it was 10 years ago, so I do think there is a need to adjust the budgets for Visit Jersey, and this is one way which we helped on a short-term basis.

6.1.8 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Is it the intention of the Minister to upgrade the Visit Jersey budget in the Government Plan due to inflation on top of the £1 million extra that it is receiving?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have not come to a conclusion on that yet. I think that is something that I consider but I have no conclusion in mind.

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

The Minister speaks of improvements and plans and I am told that some businesses are facing a summer season of uncertainty and missed opportunities now because of the ferry situation in particular. What areas of the economy does he believe are delivering improved productivity and improving the revenue position for the Island? Are there any areas of the economy where he has concerns that the investment made already is not delivering on those requirements and what will he do about it?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is far too early to tell whether the monies which have been paid out or invested already have had that return. I do think in areas such as the Impact Fund, that has been going on for a couple of years now, and I believe we are starting to see the value of that. Certainly in many areas of the economy - I am thinking Financial Services in particular - they are using technology constantly, upgrading their technology to increase productivity in those areas. I think we do have areas such as construction where there could be significant increases in productivity, particularly from adopting different methods of construction. Jersey is still very tied to specific methods of construction and that is not helpful to this Island. The construction sector is fantastic in that it has a strong multiplier effect, so £1 spent in the construction sector delivers £8 for the economy, if I remember rightly, so in that sense it is a very important economic driver in Jersey. It does appear, as far as productivity is concerned in the construction sector, a fair bit of work can still be done to improve productivity there.

6.1.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I appreciate it is quite a challenge, and certainly the conditions for an economic downturn are all in place, is he laying the foundations for an austerity budget through this statement? If so, does it mean he would support further tax rises to ensure the economy remains stable and where might he propose to focus his efforts should this be the position?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is a very interesting question, one that I slightly balked at. It had not occurred to me at any point while writing this statement that it had anything to do with austerity budgets or anything like that. Not at all. What this statement is saying is that we have a tax rate in Jersey, a standard tax rate of 20 per cent. Personally, I believe that that is appropriate for an Island of our size. If we were to follow major nations where you are taxing at 40 per cent rates, I think it would be devastating for our economy; so I think 20 per cent is an appropriate tax rate. It is encouraging to businesses, it gives them reasons to be here, it gives people reasons to live here. At the moment, in terms of taxation, the cost of living in Jersey is in itself significant. Discussing yesterday with the hoteliers, that is causing pressures in the hospitality sector as prices rise and we are competing against other tourist destinations which are significantly less expensive than Jersey. Increasing taxation would only put greater problems into those sorts of sectors and make Jersey a much less attractive place. I definitely do not argue for increasing taxation but, at the same time, no Member in this Assembly should take

this statement as an argument for an austerity budget. That was absolutely not in my mind at any point while writing this.

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

The statement has a hopeful vision of a thriving, sustainable economy by 2040, yet, as the Minister has just said - but there is no reference to it in his statement - Islanders are grappling with everyday goods, groceries, fuel, utilities. We still have a situation where there is a minimum of a 30 per cent differential between U.K. prices and Jersey prices. The Future Economy Programme speaks of productivity gains and diversification but where is his bold plan, does he have one, does he think there should be one, to deal with Jersey's basically punishing costs of increasing inflation?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for his question. One of the first things that it is important to state is that the incredibly high inflation rates that we saw in 2022 have passed through. When I say "passed through", they have obviously imprinted themselves on pricing in Jersey but the inflation rate now is significantly lower. That is very important but that does not mean that the cost-of-living difficulties have disappeared. I do chair, as the Minister for Social Security mentioned earlier today, the Cost of Living Group. There is no easy answer to the cost of living in Jersey. We have specific elements of the Island, such as having to import the vast majority of goods to the Island, which means that we are at the end of supply chains and, when those supply chains take inflation from the countries they come from, we receive that inflation. This was part of the rationale behind increasing the minimum wage. That does help Islanders who are struggling with the cost of living, it does help by increasing wages throughout the wage spectrum but that in itself can feed inflation, so it is a very delicate balance and one that there is no easy answer to. Obviously we have seen reductions in the price of housing units in the Island over the past couple of years, that has also helped with the cost of living, and is due to government policy because some of that is due to the increase in stamp duty for investment properties. That has helped Islanders who are searching for homes to have a greater market to themselves without investors competing but, at the same time, it has had a negative impact on the construction sector. There is no single, easy answer to any aspect of the cost of living. It is about taking steps that are considered - thoroughly considered - because every step we take in any direction will have impacts, and some of those impacts can be less than expected.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The 15 minutes for questions under Standing Orders has expired but a Member of the States ...

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

May I make the proposition to extend it under 68(3A) by a further 15 minutes?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. Are Members content to extend by 15 minutes? I have another 5 Members listed to ask questions. Do you wish to ask a supplementary question, Deputy Ozouf?

6.1.12 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Yes, Sir. I do not accept - but it is not for me to point out - does the Minister regret not putting in this statement, and would he come forward with, a series of measures that are possible to deal with the cost-of-living increases? He speaks about inflation as if it is an imported problem. He knows, I think, that the issue is of the domestic inflation, that is a rate of inflation that is baked in higher than that. Does he not think that the competitiveness of Jersey, all the good things that are in this report, is going to be undermined if we continue to have a domestic, which means a higher rate of inflation in Jersey, which is now baked in? The Minister is not doing anything about it, J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority) or anything else, does he not think that that is going to undermine

our long-term competitiveness? Does he not think that we should have a debate, or at least a conversation, about what to do with domestic inflation?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have to refer to my previous answer which is that there are no easy answers to the cost-of-living matters in Jersey. I was not saying that the only element of inflation is imported but an enormous part of inflation in Jersey, or the cost of living, is imported. That is a fact; it is simple. There is domestic inflation, that is one of the reasons why I prevailed upon the J.C.R.A. for many years to undertake a review into the construction sector, which they have done the first part of, but it will only be the first part. I spend a considerable amount of time speaking with the J.C.R.A. and encouraging them to use their competition powers to address matters of the cost of living in Jersey. We have to recognise some of the realities about life on a small Island where we have a number of industries that are high paying but obviously there are other industries which are less high paying. That in itself creates a dichotomy that is difficult because you have drivers of inflation on the one hand, which are lifting prices elsewhere. I really think the hospitality sector is one where you can truly see the difficulties that the cost of living create in Jersey because you can see it in their pricing to people outside. I will continue to work with my colleagues on the cost of living. I do apologise that it was not mentioned here but the Future Economy Programme does talk about the cost of living and the delivery framework does as well.

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

Does the Minister agree that in a high-cost economy like ours and global recruitment market, ensuring fair pay and access to a genuine living wage is essential for Jersey to remain competitive and attract and retain key workers and working-age Islanders?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think an important element of people's ability to live here is their wages but, as I said in a previous answer, it is really important to always balance any increase in wage against the increase in inflation because it is very simple. As you increase wages, the cost of living increases too, and so you must not drive one and therefore drive the other as well, so it is step by step.

6.1.14 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Mentioning the global recruitment market, what assessment has the Minister made of the U.K.'s recent visa changes and how might they affect Jersey's ability to attract the skills not available here that our economy and public services need?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I must admit, I am not entirely au fait with all the U.K. changes but what I will say is quite simply, since Brexit, since the U.K.'s decision to leave the European Union, Jersey has been placed with significant difficulties in attracting people to work in this Island. That in itself has helped increase the cost of living, or likely to have increased the cost of living, because people have had to pay more to attract them here, to deal with the unnecessary bureaucracy and restrictions that have been placed on people coming to live in Jersey by the U.K.'s decision.

6.1.15 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Minister lists 3 ranges of initiatives in his first page, all of which seem to require the public to engage and likewise a programme to engage back with the public. What techniques or ways is the Minister planning on making sure the Future Economy Programme is modern or future-looking in its way of engagement with the public and not necessarily using the most traditional methods?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is a very, very interesting question because I think one of the difficulties government has, and the States Assembly has as well, is communication with the public. I think it is very difficult. All of us will have realised at different times in our political lives how you feel like something has been said, surely everybody knows this, but then you discover that many, many people still have not heard what was being said. I do not have answers but I will say that I think it is incumbent on the Government to ensure that it uses as many means necessary to communicate sufficiently with different sectors of the public. We know, for instance, that young people communicate in a very different way to the way I would communicate. I know from personal experience, as I get older and my eyes change, because they clearly are changing, it becomes more and more difficult to sit there looking at the screen all the time, so I find myself reverting to paper. I think that is something that tends to happen as well. I think it is incumbent on the Government and the communications experts in government to find ways to communicate with people across all sectors of the population and that would include in different languages as well.

6.1.16 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

A quick supplementary. The Future Economy Programme website, with no disregard to the teams' effort, could perhaps be a little more snazzy. Will the Minister consider how the content as well, not just whether it is put on a social media platform, but the way of reporting and gathering feedback is considered to be maybe more interactive than currently, which is, at the moment, just an email address, and often through typical methods like consultations which have a start and an end date? Will he consider that as part of the next review?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Again, very interesting. I am more than happy to ask the team to consider that. I would also add a suggestion for the whole of government, the government website needs an entire review because it is not user friendly.

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

Will the Minister please expand on his comment that he will be ensuring a greater focus on economic factors in planning decisions? Where is he going with that?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Connétable for her question. It is not so much where I am going with it, as where we already are with it.

[15:00]

A brief piece of context, the 2022 Bridging Island Plan, almost no economic element was included in that. As a result, we now have a shortage of land in Jersey for economic use. My understanding is that the Economy Department was not particularly well consulted during that period of time. What we have undertaken as a department is to engage with the Planning Department to say: "You have to look at economic matters, so when you are being asked about the change of use from office or retail to residential or another use, you must engage with us, or please engage with us, as the Economy Department to understand our take on that. What are the economic impacts of that change of use? What are the economic impacts of building or, for instance, what are the economic impacts of not allowing rural economy businesses to develop outside of St. Helier?" That has been baked in, as I understand it, to the Bridging Island Plan. It is horrendous, the impact on that, because it means that rural economy businesses find it really difficult to grow and expand. There is no hidden agenda here, it is that the Bridging Island Plan subordinated economic matters to a dangerous extent. I am very pleased that the Minister for the Environment has been receptive to this. We have been working to ensure that the Economy Department, and the views of the Economy Department, are taken into account when appropriate planning applications are made.

6.1.18 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I find those comments very interesting. I am not going to say whether I agree or disagree with them. The Minister mentions that there will be an action plan. Will the action plan be from his department or from the Planning and Environment Department or will it be a joint project and who will lead on it?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is a good question; I would have to get confirmation. I have always seen it as a joint piece of work but, at the end of the day, the way the Planning Department and its processes are undertaken is for the Planning Department. In that sense, I do see the final outcome being led because many of the actions will be for the Planning Department but at the same time the Economy Department is definitely pushing in terms of saying: “We need to be listened to and we need to be heard” not listened to but heard.

6.1.19 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

All the comments about the cannabis industry, currently we have cultivation of the crop on the Island and it is exported and packaged in the U.K., Portugal and other jurisdictions, so basically Jersey does not have a finished medical cannabis product in Jersey. Would the Minister consider that the Jersey economy is losing from not having the proper finished medical products and only rely on the agricultural crop and what can be done?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for her question; it is a very relevant question. I am pleased to say that my department is working with the Health Department precisely to work on that issue because it is correct that the greater value in medicinal cannabis products is derived from the finished medicinal cannabis products as opposed to the commodity plant. We are working with the Health Department and businesses in the industry to try to move the Island and the relevant regulations into a position whereby manufacturing of finished products can take place in the Island as well because that is where the greater level of value is.

6.1.20 Deputy I. Gardiner:

How quick does the Minister envisage this work will progress and would we see changes in the regulatory framework within this term?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have to say I would have to get back to the Deputy on that; I do not know if there is a specific timeline but I do know that the Economy Department is engaged at a level that we are supporting staff in the Health Department to help us with that work.

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

I am pleased to follow up on Deputy Kovacs’s commentary around labour and labour costs. One of the biggest issues for us is access to labour. I am very conscious that the Minister for Social Security believes we have a very buoyant labour market, whereas we struggle to find anybody. What cost-effective policy changes does the Minister believe need to be made to improve access to labour, particularly in the hospitality industry?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I speak with slight trepidation in the sense that a lot of our problems with access to labour, as I mentioned earlier, are created as a result of the U.K.’s decision to leave the European Union and we still obviously sit within the U.K. visa policy sector. Any ability to access some labour from Europe or to make it easier for people who have moved to Jersey to go through the visa process, but equally

to have work permits which perhaps do not require 3 years off for 3 years on the Island, would help a great deal, I believe. I do appreciate that not all of these suggestions are in the power or in the gift of Ministers in Jersey. Many of them are outside of Jersey, and that means lobbying, speaking to the United Kingdom to get our message across in the hope that we may be able to come to some sort of accommodation.

6.1.22 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Minister has spoken about the importance of employment land and competition, and we have heard earlier today some peroration about the fuel farm. Bringing the 3 things together, has the Minister considered in his Future Economy Strategy ending the fuel farm in order to allow employment land to be created at La Collette 2? “Land is in short supply”, said Mark Twain once, “not building it anymore.” We have got some. Is the Minister serious about getting more employment land down at La Collette? If so, will he lobby the Chief Minister to deal with the fuel farm?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Future Economy Programme does not speak, I do not believe, directly to the fuel farm, but I believe in terms of land, it is one of our most precious resources in Jersey. It is one of our most scarce resources in Jersey and so it is important that we always consider the options available to us in terms of facilities on the Island and their relation to the use of land. I do not have a specific view on the fuel farm.

6.1.23 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not know whether the Council of Ministers have considered this but there is an alternative fuel farm, it is the use of the existing J.E.C.'s (Jersey Electricity Company) tanks which came up over 25 years ago. If that could be used for kerosene and the Island's non-flammable liquids, then would he not think that that would be a good economic prospect, that we could have lots more employment down at La Collette and we can deal with Jersey Gas at the same time?

The Deputy Bailiff:

You have got 9 seconds, Minister.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not know the subject well enough; I defer to the Deputy's knowledge on the subject.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

7. Road Traffic: offences and penalties (P.23/2025) - as amended (P.23/2025 Amd.)

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. That concludes the period of questions in relation to your statement. We now move on to Public Business and the first item is Road Traffic: offences and penalties, P.23, lodged by Deputy Catherine Curtis. The main respondent is the Minister for Infrastructure. Deputy Curtis, you have lodged an amendment, do you wish to take the proposition as amended?

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

Yes, please, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content for the proposition to be taken as amended? Thank you very much. I invite 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 Minister for Infrastructure, having consulted relevant stakeholders, to create an offence under the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956 for failing to stop and report an accident and to provide assistance to any injured persons, following a serious or fatal injury, with the maximum penalties for such an offence to include, but not limited to, a lifetime driving disqualification and to bring any necessary legislation to implement such offence before the Assembly.

7.1 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Firstly, if I explain the amendment. Having discussed the original proposition with the Minister for Infrastructure and his team, and having sought appropriate advice, I was pleased to add the amendment that relevant stakeholders would be consulted and to add the word “maximum” to penalties to allow appropriate discretion to remain with the courts. I also studied the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956 more carefully and noted that there was no requirement in the law to provide assistance to any injured persons, so that is included in the amended proposition. I think we would all recognise that it would be a basic human response to assist a person who had just been injured in a collision, whether by calling 999, by giving first aid, or by flagging down help, and that this should be included in the law, so these amendments refine the original proposition. Now if I move on to the main premise of this proposition, it is not about punishment, it is principally about safety and justice. Dangerous driving, especially when it results in serious injury or death, and not stopping and not assisting any injured persons, shows a reckless disregard for public safety. Allowing someone who has demonstrated such behaviour to drive again could pose a threat to others on the road. If an individual has already shown a willingness to endanger others, they may be more likely to repeat dangerous driving behaviours, making it essential to keep them off the road permanently to reduce the risk of further harm. The possibility of a lifetime ban can also act as a serious deterrent to dangerous driving and a serious deterrent to failing to stop and report an accident and failing to assist an injured person. As for justice, a lifetime driving ban acts as a form of justice, particularly for the victims and their families, and it sends a clear message that those who cause harm from negligence or recklessness cannot escape the consequences of their actions. A lifetime ban also reflects society’s commitment to ensuring that individuals who cause harm in such an extreme manner face significant consequences that align with the gravity of their actions. No family or close friends of a victim of a serious road traffic collision should have to see the perpetrator driving a vehicle at a future date, which brings me to my personal reasons for bringing this proposition. There have been terrible tragedies on our roads in the last few years. We had the deaths of Dean Lowe and his son, Charlie. This should never have happened. Like many people, I knew Dean. I worked for the Jersey Employment Trust some years ago doing an evening job, supervising the team of office cleaners. Dean was also a great friend of my ex-husband’s. Dean was a big character with plenty more to offer to life. That he should have his life cut short and that of his little boy’s due to the carelessness and callousness of another person is inexcusable. Since drafting this proposition, I have also spoken to people who have had a family member injured in hit-and-run collisions. I have been so fortunate to have never been in that position but I have had the awful experience of my daughter being seriously injured in a riding accident. The feeling of being called to the hospital, seeing your child cut and bruised with broken bones is shocking, and that shock never goes away, it always stays with you. If these injuries had been caused by a careless driver who had left my child at the side of the road to die, I would never want that person to drive again. As for those people who have been left at the side of the road to die but survived, they face a difficult journey of recovery, requiring strength and resilience. They may have permanent, life-affecting injuries. They will have post-traumatic stress and difficulties managing day to day, or for a period of time, or for the rest of their lives. We must consider victims and their families more and we must do more to prevent dangerous and irresponsible behaviour on the roads. Jersey has the highest road casualty rate in Britain and it is not okay for us to do nothing about this. Again and again I hear people saying that there is a huge discrepancy in sentencing of those who undertake road crime in comparison to other violent crimes. If a person

killed another by shooting them, if entirely accidental, but then walked away leaving that person to die, we would not give them back another gun licence, and yet we are willing to allow those who cause death of another person on the road, and who then leave them to die, to drive again. Now I do understand that a driver, having been in a collision, might well panic, and it is understandable if that driver just does not know what to do but any responsible human would stop and check on the person and offer any necessary assistance. Driving is not a right, it is a privilege.

[15:15]

If a person does not have the ability to drive in a responsible manner, and there is proof of that, then they should not be driving at all. That is why my proposition asks for a lifetime driving ban. However, I do understand the need for rehabilitation, but this must be balanced with the potential future danger that that person may pose, and it must be balanced with the need for justice. I also recognise that appropriate discretion must remain with the courts, which is why the amendment asks for a maximum lifetime driving ban. Through bringing this amended proposition, if it is supported by States Members, I expect the courts will recognise the will for more serious sentencing and penalties. A recent petition asked for an increase in sentencing for causing death by dangerous driving. When that petition reached 1,000 signatures, the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs responded to say that at that time she could not commit to an increase in sentencing, the Collision and Casualty Reduction Plan was still being drafted. But the Minister did respond with this and I quote: "I can confirm that I would support a review of sentencing for these offences to ensure that they are acting as an effective deterrent to those who would commit offences on our roads and to provide justice for road victims." This response to the petition was in August last year. I thank the petitioner for bringing this because it got me thinking. I wanted to see if I could do something to help prevent more serious collisions and to bring more justice to victims and their families, so I started to do research and then began drafting the proposition earlier this year. Because there is a need for this, there is public support for this, and because it is our role as States Members as elected representatives of the public to bring legislation, that is one of our primary duties. I am very grateful to the Minister for Infrastructure for his assistance with this proposition. Since it was published I have received many messages of support from members of the public. I believe there is a will to do something positive in response to the awful tragedies that occur far too often on our roads and I ask Members to support the amended proposition. **[Approbation]**

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can I ask a question of the Solicitor General?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Before that, is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Yes, you may ask a question.

Deputy J. Renouf:

It is just a question of interpretation, just to clarify something in the amended proposition. To create an offence under the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956 for failing to stop and report an accident and to provide assistance to any injured persons, can the Solicitor General confirm whether the offence would apply only to somebody who had caused an accident and failed to provide assistance or would it occur, according to the wording of this, for anybody, even in the vicinity, who was not involved in causing the accident, to be considered for an offence if they did not provide assistance?

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

It remains to be seen how the offence is formulated but the proposition is made in the context of an existing offence under the law, which is an offence that can only be committed by the driver of a vehicle which occasions injury to another. I assume, and if it comes to involvement from the Law Officers, the advice will be that it must be the driver who has caused the injury who fails to provide the assistance. I hope that is helpful.

7.1.1 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

I wish to begin my remarks by recognising the origins and the intent of this proposition from Deputy Catherine Curtis. The proposition is rooted in tragic events that we are all aware of and that we wish had not have happened and that we never wish to see again. This is, therefore, and, quite understandably, an emotional subject for everyone. The proposition seeks to ensure that we learn as best we can from these past tragedies and it aims to shape our legislation in a way that makes it less likely that they will happen again in the future. Further, if such events do occur, the proposition seeks to ensure that we do not see a repeat of examples of previous behaviour, if I may say, reprehensible behaviour, from some individuals involved. If such behaviour were to be repeated or to be considered by an individual, the proposition seeks to ensure that the penalties for such actions serve either as a deterrent or a more suitable punishment. Deputy Curtis has been clear with me from the outset as to her objective and motives in lodging the proposition. They are, in my view, entirely proper and good motives. I completely understand the Deputy's thinking and rationale. I have been supportive of her objectives from the outset and my aim has always been to make the proposition work. This proposition in its intent aligns clearly with our Collision and Casualty Reduction Plan which seeks a 50 per cent reduction in the next 10 years in those killed or seriously injured on our roads. That will require action. Some of that action will involve incentives and encouraging good behaviour but another aspect is ensuring proper deterrents are in place and that poor behaviour is appropriately dealt with. We have committed to a review of legislation in the plan and I am very happy for this proposition to form part of that work. I am grateful to Deputy Curtis for engagement in recent weeks since this proposition was lodged. She has been open in her communication with us and very easy to work with. We have had some hurdles to overcome but we have overcome them jointly, for which I am most grateful, and I would also extend my gratitude to the officers who have worked with us. The amendment which Deputy Curtis has lodged includes the request that I made and which she has accommodated. I am therefore supportive of the proposition as amended, which I believe sets a path towards some meaningful and worthwhile change. I will not repeat the contents of the Comments Paper which I have presented, which sets out some of the issues and challenges that we needed to overcome, and have overcome, in respect of this proposition. As the comments state, an existing offence of failing to stop and report an incident is included in Article 52 of the Road Traffic Law and the penalty for such an offence is also set out with a driving disqualification of 2 years for a first offence and 3 years for a second offence committed within 10 years of the first offence. These are sentencing guidelines and of course the court retains the discretion to disqualify a person for longer, should it see that as appropriate. I also note at this stage the provision in Article 52 for a maximum of 6 months' imprisonment where a person fails to stop and report an incident. That is something we can consider as part of this work as to whether that maximum sentence for this offence is appropriate. The issue though was that the original proposition was not necessarily asking us to create an offence that was not already provided for in the law and this caused us difficulty. We understood the intent but Deputy Curtis needed to amend the emphasis of the proposition to ensure that we were being requested to enact tangible change. The amendment has dealt with this issue as it adds in a potential provision for an offence of the failure to provide assistance to any injured persons, something which does not exist in the law at present. If we think of past incidents, the act of failing to provide assistance is a key behaviour which was unfortunately, and tragically, lacking. Of course, we would rather these incidents on our roads did not occur at all and that people behave responsibly, including complying with a requirement to stop and report an incident. Adding to the law a requirement to offer assistance to injured persons following an incident with associated penalties for failure to do so, and reviewing the custodial sentence for failing to stop, in my view, starts to develop the law in a meaningful way to act as a greater deterrent and to hopefully shape people's future accidents in a more positive way. I believe that is what Deputy Curtis has now achieved in her proposition as amended. I am also aware of some concerns around the provision of a lifetime disqualification. I do not wish to tread on the territory of sentencing guidelines and the discretion and independence of the

courts. I recognise the human rights considerations and the need for rehabilitation to always be an option. That is why the amendment now recognises that this would be a maximum, not a mandatory, penalty, but we should also recognise that there will still be some cases where rehabilitation is not evident or where a crime is so appalling that a lifetime ban is appropriate. This proposition sends a signal in that respect and, as I said in the comments, I will write to the Bailiff as Chief Justice requesting him to consider a review of sentencing guidelines in this respect to take place alongside the legislative work. In her amendment, Deputy Curtis also includes a requirement for consultation. This is important because these proposed changes, while in my view worthwhile, will need careful consideration and implementation. We need to consider whether to integrate the proposed new offence into the existing law or to create a specific separate offence. We need to consider some other related legislative changes, one of which I have referenced regarding the custodial sentence for failing to stop and report. We need to engage with the courts and with legal professionals, as well as the community. We may well need to raise public awareness through campaigns and we need to ensure that what we create is enforceable, proportionate and that it works. As always, the best outcome will be the one which is delivered collectively. If a proposition is lodged which fundamentally aligns with a Minister's policy objectives, then I believe a Minister should do everything they can to work with that proposition, and this is what I have sought to do. If we get this right, I believe the outcome will be an improved legislative framework which provides greater protection for road users. This encourages people to act properly following an incident and acts as a further deterrent for those who do not. The easy choice is to do nothing, but that is not an option for Jersey with our record of road safety. This is a proposition which seeks to learn from the past and to make improvements for the future. I am grateful to Deputy Curtis and I ask Members to support the proposition as amended to allow this important work to proceed.

7.1.2 Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:

The question put by Deputy Renouf at the start of this debate underlines, I think, the desirability of bringing forward propositions of this kind in consultation with the Law Officers' Department because the law relating to road traffic is complicated. It was interesting that the Minister's comments revealed that he had not previously been aware that it was already an offence not to stop and report an accident. I agree with Deputy Curtis that failing to stop and report an accident where someone has been injured, perhaps fatally, is a particularly amoral and nasty offence, and I can sympathise with the view that a lifetime driving disqualification might sometimes be appropriate. I am glad that the Deputy has amended her proposition to leave the discretion with the court as to whether such a penalty should be imposed because I would not otherwise have supported it. I hope that the Minister, in writing to the Bailiff in connection with any sentencing guidance, will also recognise that it is important to acknowledge that circumstances differ from case to case, and that it is extremely important not to tie the hands of the court so that an injustice might inadvertently be caused. So what is the effect of the amended proposition? As I say, it is already an offence to fail to stop and report an accident if there is an injury to any person. What is added, or is proposed to be added by this proposition, is a requirement, and I quote: "To provide assistance to any injured person following a serious or fatal injury." Whether that is practical will of course depend upon the circumstances of the case and this may give the legislative drafter some headaches in framing an appropriate form of words.

[15:30]

I certainly agree that providing assistance is what any decent person should do. Whether the injury must be serious or fatal before the duty to assist comes into force is perhaps open to doubt. Any injury, surely, requires a person to offer assistance if he or she has been the cause of it but that no doubt can be something to be ironed out by the legislative drafter in due course.

7.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

During such debates I think it is important that not only the mover of the proposition and the Minister or Ministers in charge of the legislation or that area of responsibility speak but that the Assembly gives its wider considerations about the spirit of the law that is being passed, not least because on occasions courts can look to the intent behind legislation that is brought forward perhaps in its interpretation; that is my understanding. I think we would do well to remind ourselves that these are not just theoretical eventualities that might or might not play out, that there are tangible examples that we know about in our community. I have been, I suppose, watching recently, it seems - and I am not sure for what reason - maybe more than usual reality programmes about crime and punishment. There has been one on quite recently which Members may have seen called "You Be the Judge". It featured recently, I think, last week on Channel 5 and it is "You Be the Judge: Crime and Punishment" with Anne Robinson. It takes a number of case studies from cases throughout the U.K., some of which involve manslaughter, for example, others which might involve climate activists, and it compares the sentences that were handed down in such cases and asks people what they think about them. What is quite clear - not least because you have to add the U.K.'s creaking prison system into that - is that there are very few satisfied people sitting on the armchairs, especially when it comes to the families of victims who may have lost their lives. We would do well to remind ourselves that so often in these high profile cases it is the names of the perpetrators which get all the publicity, but often the names of the victims are forgotten. Not in all case but in some cases that is the case. We know that only recently in Jersey there was a case, and many of us knew the family involved, and I think it is important that we do put a face to the names. When I look at this hole in the legislation as I currently see it - something that Deputy Catherine Curtis has identified - I am very much thinking of somebody that I knew who was called Dean. Many of us might know of him. Dean Lowe, who I counted as a friend, some of us knew him from the music circuit or whatever, and I knew of young Charlie as well. So when I think about the proportionality of somebody who has killed somebody and left the scene of the crime, somebody who has made a conscious decision to get into a car or a van which is a potential murder weapon, or certainly a potential weapon in the wrong hands, and that person then goes on to take 2 innocent lives, but also does not stop at the scene of the crime, drives off and then ... I know where I feel the proportionality should be in that. These are not easy things to say of course but I think sometimes this is the place to say them during such a debate. Of course, the Minister will want to talk about rehabilitation and the fact that there should not be an automatic lifetime ban. What I would say is when an individual comes out of prison having been released, possibly having been rehabilitated but not necessarily, that individual of course will still be free to lead their lives, they will be free to do many things, and it might be that they go back to work, that they can still go to the same pub that they drank at before. The very least is that they should not be able to get back into a vehicle. I think that is not too much to ask and I think the very strong message from this Assembly should be that certainly in a case where there has been a fatal accident which has then gone on to be proven - so it is no longer alleged that you killed somebody or a number of people with your vehicle - and you fail to stop and you fail to report the incident, I would hope very much that while there would be sentencing guidelines it would pretty much be automatically the case that certainly when it involved a fatal accident that person would never be able to get behind a wheel legally again. That should already be the case; it is not. It has been identified by Deputy Curtis, and I think we should overwhelmingly support this. The question I would ask here is where failing to stop and report an accident leads to the death of somebody that is certainly something which should automatically follow for a lifetime disqualification.

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

I know nobody else wants to speak and I would just like to thank the Deputy for bringing forward this amendment and having the courage to bring this to public attention. I think that the comments that have been made about being overly prescriptive have been taken on board by the Deputy and I think that she should be proud that she has brought this forward. I certainly will be supporting the

Deputy and I know other Members will as well, but she deserves our thanks to bring this matter to the Assembly in the right way and in a constructive way.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I call upon Deputy Curtis to reply.

7.1.5 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you to all the Members who have contributed. I will not go over their comments because this is very emotional. My thanks also go to campaigners for change. I was encouraged to read through the Collision and Casualty Reduction Plan. It is a very good report; I am hopeful that this proposition could help to achieve some of the aims of that plan. Just briefly, the plan includes the aim to work towards Vision Zero, and that is a road safety philosophy that originated in Sweden based on the principle that no loss of life or serious injury on the road is acceptable. It assumes that while human errors are inevitable, they should not result in fatalities or severe injuries. I do not think I need to say more except that if Members support this proposition I hope it will bring some comfort to victims, their friends and families. I hope it will encourage safer and more responsible driving, and I call for the appel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been called for and I invite Members to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the chance of casting their votes I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been adopted unanimously:

POUR: 47		CONTRE: 0		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. Helier				
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Connétable of St. Brelade				
Connétable of Trinity				
Connétable of St. Peter				
Connétable of St. Martin				
Connétable of St. John				
Connétable of St. Clement				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of St. Mary				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				

Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

8. Draft Elections (Electoral Registers) (Jersey) Law (P.27/2025)

The Deputy Bailiff:

The next item is the Draft Elections (Electoral Registers) (Jersey) Law, lodged by the chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee. The main respondent is the chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel. I ask the Greffier to read the citation.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Elections (Electoral Registers) (Jersey) Amendment Law 201-. A law to amend the Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 in relation to electoral registers and for connected purposes. The States, subject to the sanction of His Most Excellent Majesty in Council, have adopted the following Law.

8.1 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

I am delighted to say that the changes proposed today by P.P.C. will create an automatic photo registration system, replacing the current paper-based process with a database created from the People Directory - a database which draws upon interactions with Revenue Jersey in relation to social security matters, as an employee or claimant of a benefit or pension, for example - the register of names and addresses and information held by C.Y.P.E.S. for those still in full-time education aged over 16. P.P.C. believes that this system will be more accurate than the existing system, which accepts people's statements on trust and is not verified by the Parishes. The system will also better reflect the position closer to the election date rather than using data gathered over 6 months earlier. The proposed system will allow for a more recent sweep of the data, taking account of change such as people leaving the Island or passing away. The reasons for making these changes are to make it easier for people to vote automatically - including anyone who is entitled on the base electoral register - and increasing the democracy of our electoral process by removing barriers to voting. The main changes within the legislation are removal of the individual's duty to make a declaration of entitlement and removal of public access to the register. Instead of the public having to complete an annual statement to confirm the names of those who live in their home who are eligible to be on the electoral register - those who have been ordinarily resident in Jersey for the last 2 years, or have been ordinarily resident in Jersey for the past 6 months but have a cumulative residency of 5 years or more - people will be included automatically on the register if they are over 16 and meet the relevant residency criteria. The existing system allows Islanders to apply for their name to be omitted from

the register if they are concerned that there is a risk or threat of personal harm to themselves or someone who resides with them if their name and address details were to be made public. As the electorate will not be able to opt-out of this system it is only right that public access to the register is removed. In the new system the register will only be available to electoral administrators and the Judicial Greffe, with a copy provided to the archive on an annual basis as a historic record. Candidates for elections will be provided with a list of properties which fall within their constituency rather than names and addresses of individuals. The rationale for this change is to respect personal data, protect the public's right to anonymity and avoid any adverse impact on those who might feel less safe, such as survivors of domestic violence. The new register will include people who may have previously made a conscious decision not to make a return, either because they have no interest in voting or did not wish to be included on the list for jury duty. It is estimated that only 60 per cent of statement forms are returned to Parishes. By increasing the accuracy of the register we expect that there will be an increase in the total number of people included. I should note that it is people's civic duty to be on the register for jury duty. Islanders will be able to check online to confirm that they are on the register using a specific self-verification app which we are developing. If they are not they can seek to be included by approaching their electoral administrator, provided that residency can be proven. The electoral administrator - the Parish secretaries - will still have a residual power to add a person to or remove a person from the register. The number of potential voters needing to be added in this manner is expected to be minimal but there will be a dedicated app which people can use to check their registration status. The system will be able to identify future voters, those who will be turning 16 on election day, who will have met residency criteria on that date. Again, communication is key and vote.je will target messaging to those who have moved to the Island in the last 2 years, reminding them of the need to check they are included where appropriate on the register. A supplementary register will be available up to 7 working days before the election and this will accommodate Islanders who move home in that period. Anyone who appears at the polling station on the day of the election, but not on the register, will be able to be added to the register by the electoral administrator if they have supporting documentation. The electoral administrators in each Parish will retain overall responsibility for the register. Although there is a risk that a more inclusive electoral register will see fewer people voting percentage-wise, P.P.C. is hopeful that the opposite will happen.

[15:45]

We believe that those who might have been unsure that they were eligible to take part will be encouraged that we value their voice and can be inspired to participate. Through vote.je the Greffe will run a dedicated communications campaign explaining the changes, highlighting that people may now be eligible who previously may not have thought that they could participate, and everyone will be encouraged to exercise their democratic right and use their vote. I urge Members to support the principles.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are the principles seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the principles?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sir, may I ask a question of the S.G. (Solicitor General)?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you may.

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

Part of this change is about data being held by particular individuals or particular representatives of the organisation. Can I ask the S.G. what the consequences are for breaking Data Protection Law in

Jersey or G.D.P.R. (General Data Protection Regulation) and perhaps even an explanation of the difference between the 2, so that we are clear as to what that means if you are a data holder in Jersey?

The Solicitor General:

The Data Protection Law - and I have not turned it up - provides a general rider that where data is provided pursuant to statute it is not, as it were, within the purview of the Data Protection Law. In other words, sharing data for a statutory purpose is perfectly permissible so I do not see a problem in this draft with data that is held by certain agencies being required to be presented to an electoral register.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Solicitor General. I think my question was not worded as clearly as it could have been; I understand that. If you are that data holder that is provided with this information, what are the consequences if that data holder breached that holding of data, i.e. gave that information to somebody they should not. Is that a clearer question?

The Solicitor General:

Again, without turning up the Data Protection Law I think the answer is to be found there, which is that there are either sanctions or criminal sanctions of misusing data.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you, and just one further question if I may. If an individual became a holder of that data, i.e. it was extended to somebody running for election and you had to sign a data agreement to hold that data, would those same rules apply to that individual of potential criminality later on in the process? Just to be clear because it is a question that is running through my head.

The Solicitor General:

Unless you are holding data in an absolute personal capacity, for example, my knowledge of my son's activities, then you are a data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Law. My view is that politicians who come into possession of data of that sort are data controllers within the meaning of the law.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sorry, I do have another question and I ask the Assembly to forgive me for all the questions. What I am asking is in the run-up to an election if you are specifically identified as somebody who is standing for election and sign up for that election and become a data holder of that information, I assume that the same rules apply. So if you misuse that data in that capacity you are committing a possibly criminal offence? Just to be absolutely clear.

The Solicitor General:

I take that to be the general principle provided by the Data Protection Law, yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Any more questions for the Solicitor General now?

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Apologies for another question to the Solicitor General. In his first response to Deputy Rob Ward he highlighted the difference between data collected by statute rather than in other mechanisms and said that would be governed under the statute and not the Data Protection (Jersey) Law. We are just on principles but we will debate the actual regulations or Articles, which I believe the mover said would remove the power for candidates to be data controllers. Is he suggesting that in a different world in which that Article was not removed, if a statute allowed candidates to be data controllers

under statute they would have legitimate right to such personal information because the collection of that data was under statute and, therefore, there would be a world in which, notwithstanding a politician may have concerns now setting the law, there is a legitimate route in a form of law that would allow candidates to have that data?

The Solicitor General:

The Data Protection Law provides a general caveat that data which is processed pursuant to a statutory obligation does not fall within the ordinary purview of the Data Protection Law. I was not aware that this provides some other provision; I will have to have a look in the course of the debate in Second Reading, if I am asked. But generally the principle is the one I have stated; if you are processing data for a statutory purpose then that is a caveat to carve out from the data protection principles, provided you are complying with the principles.

Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:

Could the Solicitor General please clarify; Article 26.9 of the law says: “Nothing in this Article authorises the Authority to order a public authority other than one falling only within paragraph (k) of the definition ... to pay a fine.” So if he could perhaps clarify whether the public authorities that are covered by this amendment would have to pay a fine?

The Solicitor General:

I am not sure which Article the Deputy is referring to.

The Deputy Bailiff:

To which law are you referring when you refer to Article 26.9?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

The Data Protection Authority (Jersey) Law 2018.

The Solicitor General:

Can I have a moment? Could I also ask the Deputy just to repeat the question because I am not sure I followed it?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. Could you possibly repeat the question and the Solicitor will have a think about it and let you know.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I just asked if he would confirm, once he has looked at that provision, whether the advice given about public authorities paying fines ... to just confirm that in the context of that provision, so that is 26.9 of the Data Protection Authority (Jersey) Law 2018.

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

Can I first of all thank the chair of P.P.C. There is no other opportunity to say it, however, on Friday we were talking about democracy and registers, and on Friday we celebrate with our hearts ablaze, we celebrated our 60th year of liberation; a freedom won before courage and democracy, and this is what this debate is about. May I just say, because this is the only opportunity, how absolutely fabulous it was to hear the chair of P.P.C. speaking in Liberation Square [**Approbation**] on our Liberation Day. She really was on form and she really did a brilliant job. I do not need to say anymore because other people have not said it but I have said it so I got it through with that. I understand and absolutely agree with what the chair and the committee is doing. We have had an archaic and problematic issue with electoral registers. I have always been concerned that the actual real voter turnout that we have in our Island is far worse than the statistics give us because, as the

chair so rightly says, there have been such a paucity of ... some Parishes are more difficult than others and that is not to criticise, but in fact having an automatic data registration system is undoubtedly the right thing. Islanders are not having to opt-in, residency rules, all the rest of it; it is certainly a digital spring in the step of democracy and that has got to be good, from St. Helier to St. Ouen, whether there is a Deputorial or Senatorial election. The vote is a seed of liberty, said a poet. I just wonder, however, one question - and I do not think the Solicitor General needs to answer this because it is a political question - I note that the new electoral register is going to be shielded from public view for candidates. I wondered whether or not, as the U.K. does not have that provision, Canada does not have it, we are not going to be out of step with other jurisdictions in not allowing the electoral register. Democracy is a precious thing. I understand the privacy issues but really is it absolutely necessary for us to agree the Article that prohibits effectively from public view the electoral register. I do not underestimate the problem and I thank again the chair for what she is doing for us.

8.1.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I just wanted to thank the Privileges and Procedures Committee for the work that they have done on this. I just had a couple of questions that I would be grateful if the chair could address in her closing speech. Given that the changes extend to election dispute resolution and that the J.E.A. (Jersey Electoral Authority) would be offering a public service in that respect, I wondered if she could just perhaps confirm that the intention of the P.P.C. is to ensure that there will be publication by the Jersey Electoral Authority of its complaints handling process, if the committee has discussed or will discuss the support to be given to them in this respect, and also whether they will be publishing a procedure to enable the review of any decisions by the J.E.A. and by whom.

8.1.3 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

May I first of all endorse the remarks made by Deputy Ozouf about the chair's speech on Liberation Day. I am sorry to have to follow that up by saying that I do not find her reasons for bringing forward this *Projet de Loi* very persuasive. The reasons for making the changes - according to the P.P.C.'s report - are to make it easier for people to vote by automatically including individuals, and increasing the democracy of our electoral process by removing barriers to voting. It seems to me that there are no barriers to voting. If people want to vote there is absolutely no barrier that prevents a person who wishes to vote from voting. So far as making it easier for people to vote, I think the same comment applies. I am not sure why we are wanting to make this change. The Comité des Connétables point out very correctly that there is a real risk that the turnout figure will drop unless more choose to cast their votes. It seems to me pretty obvious that the percentage level of voter participation will be worse than what it was before the enactment of this law. At 42 per cent we are already close to the bottom, if not at the bottom, of the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) table. Why do we want to diminish Jersey's reputation even more by putting us in an even worse position? Another unfortunate consequence of the proposition, and Deputy Ozouf referred to this, is as the P.P.C. explains at page 3 of its report that the register will become in effect a secret document to which candidates for election will not have access. Candidates will no longer be allowed to know the names and addresses of voters. If canvassing, candidates will have to knock on doors without having any idea who is behind that door, nor even whether the person who answers the door has a vote. One of the small courtesies of canvassing is the ability for candidates to address voters by name, and that will go. That seems to me to be a great pity.

[16:00]

I can see only one justification for artificially expanding the register by automatic voter registration and that is the introduction of compulsory voting. If we were to move to compulsory voting, as in Australia, it would obviously be important to know who the voters were so as to ensure that people who were entitled to vote were on the register, otherwise enforceability would be very difficult. But there is no indication from P.P.C. that they are contemplating compulsory voting, and I am going to

assume that is not in prospect at the moment. If there is no compulsory voting what is the point of forcing people on to a register if they do not wish to vote. You can take a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. In my view, and I am sure most Members will share this view, people should vote. It is a civic duty to participate in the voting process. But people also have a democratic right not to vote if they choose not to do so. It seems to me that the efforts of P.P.C. should be concentrating not on swelling the register in this way but in trying to establish exactly why it is that people do not vote and addressing those causes. There are numerous causes, and I think we know many of them for what they are. We have a large number of people who work in the financial services industry who are here perhaps for only a relatively short time and who can find no wish to engage in the process. There are many from minority communities that take a long time to adjust to being in a foreign country and getting used to the idea of what voting in this democracy means and involves. It is not difficult to register to vote in our elections; it is a very simple form which any person can fill out and huge efforts are made by the State Greffe, the Electoral Authority, and indeed the Parishes to encourage people to register and to take part in the electoral process. In summary, I do not believe that automatic voter registration will encourage people to vote and I think that the disadvantages of the scheme outweigh the advantages.

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

I, of course, align myself completely with everything that Deputy Ozouf said in his speech, not just about the proposition itself but of course about the Constable's speech on Liberation Day, which I have to say was the best I have heard in my time as a States Member. I align myself I think perhaps with maybe about 10 per cent of what Deputy Bailhache said, and I will come to that as I elaborate. If I could start on that by saying that I do disagree with him when he suggests that there are no blockages in order for somebody to be able to vote. Bureaucracy by its very nature is a blockage. There are ordinary people out there in our society who are not as engaged in politics day to day as some of us might be, and who may wish to vote but are simply not as familiar with the mechanics of it as the rest of it. I find it time and time again on the doorstep that I meet people who say they did not realise they needed to register to vote, they thought: "Well, I am on the rates list, is that not the same thing?" People, for completely innocent reasons, do not know. So in this instance I support the good conservative principle of reducing red tape, which is why I wholly endorse the principle of this law. Introducing automatic voter registration, I am 100 per cent behind that; it is long overdue and something that we ought to wholeheartedly support. The idea that it will reduce voter turnout I do not think is really true because though it is currently the case that voter turnout statistics are published on the basis of turnout of registered electorate, you can ask for data on turnout of eligible electorate, which is normally one of the first written questions I lodge after an election because turnout of eligible electorate is a much more useful figure than turnout of registered voters. It tends to bump it down by about 10 per cent when you get that, so I do not really think it is that interesting what it will do to the statistics, as we can get them under the current system anyway. I will absolutely wholeheartedly vote in favour of the principles of this law but I align myself with everything Deputy Ozouf said about some of the mechanics of this, and in fact some of what Deputy Bailhache said, and say that I think the structure that is proposed in Article 12 is a grave mistake. I think that it is written from a perspective that does not really get the realities of how you run an election campaign, how you, as candidates, seek to build rapport with voters on the doorstep, and how you as a participant in democracy try to get turnout up as you go around your districts canvassing with people. There are all sorts of uses that having a copy of the electoral register as you are canvassing has. First, it is the icebreaker of being able to say: "Is that Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so?" If there is something not accurate you pick it up and you can go to the authorities and say there might be a mistake here. You can say to people as you knock on the door: "I have other people registered to vote here; that might be your children who are eligible" and you can help spread the word, which is really important. But on top of that is a crucial issue that I do not think has been well addressed in this which is the ability that it gives candidates to safeguard themselves and know where not to go canvassing and what addresses

to avoid. I will say this because it is not a very nice thing to have to say but it is the truth, which is that candidates and politicians among some very small number of people out there in our community do face harassment and abuse, some of which reaches thresholds that are extremely serious. I myself have had to go to the police about members of the public who have spoken in such a way that make me think that they pose a viable threat to me. I know of other politicians who have faced racist abuse, misogynistic abuse. Though of course there is no perfect safeguard against all of that, at least we know when we are out door knocking if you see a name that you recognise of someone you should not be going anywhere near you can avoid doing so. I have nightmares of the idea of one person who I am thinking in particular who I do not want to send candidates out to go knocking on their door because I think they will be in danger if they do so. Being armed with the knowledge of knowing who it is you are going out there to knock on their door enables you to take action to protect yourself. It is a normal thing that happens in other jurisdictions. I have written to the chair of P.P.C. last week to outline some of my concerns. I got responses back from the Greffier on this but in her opening speech the chair did not indicate how she might want to proceed on that basis. My recommendation to her is that she should not proceed with the debate on Article 12 but instead should pause that, do a bit more consultation with Members, and then we can hopefully enthusiastically get behind it when it comes back to the Assembly in a better thought-out way that we can have greater confidence in. She did not address that in her opening speech; I hope she will reference it in her closing speech and I hope it will not be taken that though I have grave concerns about Article 12 it will not in the least bit stop me from voting for the principles of this law because they, in principle, are a good thing for democratic engagement and for assisting people in accessing the vote without going through the bureaucratic process of registering that they did before. But one particular element of this could do with a bit of thought and I would like to know how the chair intends to proceed with that. I reserve my right to then take a position in the debate on the Articles if it is not satisfactory.

8.1.5 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I do not know whether to thank or to be frustrated by Deputy Mézec for taking what I would have said; so this will be far shorter. But I would like to address likewise a few of the points made by previous speakers. Like Deputy Mézec, I fall perhaps between Deputy Ozouf and Deputy Bailhache. I think the debate on the voter turnout is one that continually frustrates me. I think Deputy Bailhache said those who have a right to vote, which is many, have a right and they can choose whether to exercise it as such. If our voter turnout is low that is what it is and I think we deal with the nuance within the systems rather than what it is often felt like, which is up the number. We will be able to compare eligible voters to those who voted, and that will not change. I really put my light on to address that of the public register. It feels like maybe a sledgehammer to crack a nut. In one fell swoop we are not only taking away public access to the register but we are also taking away access to those who ... I remember signing quite solemnly a data controlling agreement as a candidate to destroy the register after having it. It was Article 9 in the Elections Law, I believe, that provides the right for someone to remove their name and be anonymised. Not only is that being deleted, Article 11 is being deleted to provide the public access in the first place. Deputy Mézec said that Article 12 is being largely substituted. I was going to call for exactly the same consideration before we move too far into Second Reading, particularly around what can be done. It sounds like as we are setting out data used within statute that if we are to allow those who are standing to have access to data for a purpose it would not seem a far stretch to extend Article 12 part 4(b), make available free of charge to the candidates a list of all residential addresses and registered eligible occupants. Before we get too deep into the weeds of each Article, maybe in her summing up, as said, the mover will be able to deal with whether we can defer the Second Reading or consider how we can best address that, because I can support the principle but, likewise, I would rather see a solution which enables that access to those who have to discharge their duty under the rules they sign up to, which is to destroy it and not to use it for purposes outside of the election. So I do not see what the reason for withdrawing that was, and I think the slight ruse of data protection is a little excessive.

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

There was a couple of things that I wanted to mention but Members have already mentioned the concerns around Article 12 that I share. Particularly as a woman, and quite often as a lone woman who was going around the Parishes knocking on doors, I would quite like to know who is likely to be behind that door, particularly in this day and age where we are very conscious about violence against women and girls, so I just wanted to raise that issue. The other issue that I wanted to raise that I do not think has been mentioned so far is, to my mind, this is not just about automatic voter registration, it is about automatic jury registration. That is something that is concerning me and I do not know whether the question should be for the Solicitor General or whether it is something that the chair of P.P.C. can follow up, but certainly it is my understanding that under the Criminal Procedure Law 2018 eligibility for jury service says he or she is entitled to have his or her name included on the electoral register in accordance with Article 5 of the Public Elections Law. We are now, in effect, compelling people to have their name on the public elections register; that is my understanding. We do know - not necessarily evidentially but certainly anecdotally - that people say that they do not register to vote because they absolutely do not want to be a member of the jury. Yes, of course, being a member of the jury is a civic duty, as is the requirement to vote, but also in that 2018 law there is a very limited number of exemptions and a very limited number of disqualifications for people who would serve on a jury. Although we do not know evidentially I would suspect that the jury list might expand exponentially and there will be people who absolutely do not want to take part in a jury and who have no grounds for either exemption or disqualification. So I would like perhaps the chair of P.P.C. to address that.

[16:15]

8.1.7 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

It has been a real education, this debate, for me. A real education in unconscious bias, in a strange way, because I must admit I have never worried about who is behind a door when I have gone and knocked on somebody's door, and perhaps that reflects the different threats and different risks that people face without even having any sort of conscious thought about that. It may just be a lack of imagination on my part as well. It also reveals that I realise how amateurish I am at campaigning because I did not go around with the electoral roll looking at names before I knocked on doors; I just knocked on doors and hoped for the best. But I do want to take issue with Deputy Bailhache's comments where he said there was no barrier to voting, and I did want to expand a little bit on this because I do think this is an important point. There are barriers to voting connected to the electoral roll. I suspect in Deputy Bailhache's quite ordered world - and again I may be making an incorrect assumption here - people do know well in advance that they want to vote, they always fill in forms and they know they have to register and they know how to do it. But I do not think that is the situation for many people in our community. People may only decide late that they wish to vote. They may, who knows, be so excited by talking to you as a candidate that they decide they do want to vote and are not able to because they are not on the register. They may have thought that someone else in their family had registered for them and they had not. They may have moved house recently and not have remembered to inform the authorities. So I think that we should be trying to make the process of voting as friction free as possible, and an automatic voter register does that. The idea of being forced on to the electoral roll implies some kind of compulsion on people and I think it is simply an automatic enrolment and there is not much sign of compulsion in the sense of forcing someone. The only other point I think is around this question of turnout. The turnout figure does not change because we change the percentage calculation; the same number of people will have voted and they represent the same percentage of our population. You can calculate that in any way you want but the underlying reality does not change. We cannot say that just for marketing purposes we would rather change the calculation basis so that we do not look quite as bad internationally. The figure is the figure; we should face up to it and I think the electoral roll is a good way of being much more impartial about

that calculation and removing ambiguity around it. I have listened very much to these concerns around Article 12 and I shall listen very carefully to what the chair of P.P.C. has to say on that matter, but in terms of the principles of this I have absolutely no doubt that I can support it.

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

I had a list of things to say and I crossed off most of them because of previous speakers, but there are a couple of things I will mention. I fully support the principles of automatic voter registration and I share the concerns over Article 12, so I will not go into them again. What I will say, I do not think it is impossible to make candidates a data controller so they are under the same laws as everybody else and they face the same sanctions should they misuse the register; so that is something we can do. I would like to reiterate the importance of knowing who is behind that door for candidates. I did have violence against women and girls on my list; Deputy Miles quite rightly mentioned it. I will say that I do share concerns regards who is behind doors, particularly when you are going to lots and lots of flats and you are very isolated when you are knocking on doors. I think it is very important for safety reasons for us to know who is there. But I want to mention a couple of other things. First of all, we have a very progressive system here where you can vote at 16 and of course I would say, as Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, it is important that our young people are educated in voting. Being told: "You are automatically registered, there is nothing for you to do apart from the importance of voting" and I think most people in this Assembly have been to schools to talk about the importance of that from across the Assembly, and that it is such an important thing to do. I am a bit of an election geek; I have observed quite a few elections now and one of the things that stayed with me was I did an interesting experience of observing U.S. (United States) elections and one of the things they did - and it was in Boston's main town hall - was every time somebody voting for the first time arrived to vote the entire hall applauded. I found it quite an emotional experience, and there was a real interest in why you vote and what you are doing. There are subtleties that we need to build into our electoral system to encourage people to vote in that way. I think the automatic voter registration is a key part of that. The rest of it is later in the Articles, but I will also say there is one other issue which is by knowing names you can advise on where people vote as well because I think too frequently ... well, when I say "too frequently", even if it happens once or twice, if somebody goes to a polling station, they are in the wrong place but they cannot be bothered to go to another one for whatever reason because they think: "It is the end of the day, I have to pick my family up, I have to be at work", there are many reasons we should not be removing the franchise from people to vote because of that reason. So we need to be very, very informed as to where they are going to vote as well, and I believe this will help. I support this wholeheartedly. When we come to the Articles there is obviously a growing issue with Article 12 but I think that is something that is solvable, so I think we can move this forward and I urge Members to support the principles in this.

8.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I agree with many of the comments that have been made. The first thing to address I suppose in the principles is whether or not the principles are sound and whether or not we or, more specifically I, can vote for them. I do have some concerns. I understand why changes are being made. Let us start off with the automatic voter registration; that is really the essence of this proposal. I think it is right because with some experience I think P.P.C. have listened to the frustration that has been expressed to Members and candidates, more generally from members of the public, saying: "Why do we have to keep registering? We have already registered once. We have lived in this house for 20 years." Or: "We registered 2 years ago, why are we having to fill in a new form?" So anything that makes the process automatic, if you like, so that they do not have to fill in new paperwork, that should be a good thing so long as it is proportionate. I think there has also been a lot of misunderstanding about whether or not registration is obligatory. I have been told this morning that it is not obligatory, it is not a legal requirement to register to vote, but I think you do need to often return your rates form, and the 2 seem to be linked in many cases. I am not sure if that is always the case, but people do get

fed up with having to fill in forms and send them back. It is this idea of Government saying: “Tell us once” and the Parishes saying: “Tell us once.” I think the Parishes in many ways lead by example when it comes to the automation of information. I think that has got to be a good thing on balance. There is a valid question that has been raised from Deputy Bailhache, should there be an opt-out system. I do not know if that is the case because, if we think about it, while the primary purpose of an electoral roll - it goes without saying - is for election purposes, there are consequential potential obligations that arise from that which you can circumvent by not being on the register. I do not know if it has been mentioned already but jury service of course is selected by those who are on the electoral roll, and if you are not on the electoral roll for whatever reason then you have not got a full pool of people to choose from for the electoral roll. It may well be that there are certain demographics, for whatever reason, that do not find their way on to the electoral roll or fall off the roll more often than others. I would suggest that happens more frequently in urban areas and it happens in areas where people move around a lot as well. Certainly they should not be in some way expunged from both the duty and the responsibility of being on a jury. Similarly for those who maybe avail themselves of the purpose of a jury when facing a trial. But those are not the primary considerations of course that we are talking about today. I am concerned, and I will make this other point first before I get on to the concerns I have. I would tend to agree; we should not be fixated on the percentage and what it looks like. What we should be making sure is that anybody who currently does not vote who wants to vote and who has not found themselves on the register ... if you can get 10 people on the register who would not have been on the register to vote for the first time and continue to vote, that has got to be a good thing in absolute terms. We should be concerned about absolute numbers, not percentage numbers and perceptions. Of course we should be making sure that when we benchmark ourselves with the international community we are looking at making sure that the benchmarks are correct and that it is a level playing field. The analogy I would use is that we should be looking to grow the cake of people who vote, and it is better to get 45 per cent of a 1,000 gram cake than to get 48 per cent of a 900 gram cake. I will let Members do the math, so to speak. The reason I have got concerns about the principles is that from what I can see it is not clear to me whether the principles hang on the Articles that are going to be moved or whether there is a mood within this Assembly to kick out or even refer back some of the Articles. In fact if there is a reference back, which I understand there may well be on the deletion of Article 11, then should it be now or should it be when we get to that Article. I believe that there is a non sequitur that P.P.C. has followed here. By saying that we need an automatic registration system and therefore you cannot opt out, we are not going to let anybody see the electoral roll, it seems to me that at least part of the purpose - and not an insignificant part of the purpose - of having an electoral roll is so that candidates at election time can see who is on the electoral roll. That has been the case for as long as I can remember and to remove it without any consultation ... it only clicked to me that this was happening at our parliamentary meeting yesterday. You could argue that I should have read this before; I think Members were in the same position that they had not realised the potential significance of it. It leads me to think of a potential ... I do not know whether to call it a Kafkaesque situation or Pythonesque situation that candidates could find themselves in when they are knocking on doors. I have certainly knocked on a few doors in my time, not just in St. Brelade I hasten to add, and we have to remember that from the constituent’s point of view they are not living and breathing elections, they do not necessarily know whether they are registered, they do not know if they have been registered in the right place. The number of times I have knocked on a door or spoken to people in their yards and they said: “No, I am not registered to vote” and I say: “Are you not? Okay, let me just check the roll for you. Is this your name?” “Yes, that is us.” “Okay, so it appears that you are registered to vote.” “Well, that is great. We did not think we were registered to vote.” Secretly: “Damn, we wanted to try and get rid of Deputy Tadier but he now knows that we vote so we just have to be polite for now.”

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am not sure that “damn” is parliamentary.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am sure it is not. But the constituents are not always parliamentary in their language.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think you must edit their comments to you accordingly when referring to them.

Deputy M. Tadier:

That is another fine mess they have gotten me into. I take that and I do withdraw that particular word. I think Deputy Bailhache had a nice turn of phrase for it; there is something personal - politeness, I think he called it - about being able to go up to somebody and address their name. Of course we might know some people's names so I might knock on a particular door and say: "Hello, Dennis. Hello, Joan. Hello, Sue. Hello, Charlie. How are you doing today?" "Do not worry, it is fine, we have got all the literature, we are going to vote. Do not worry about it." New candidates do not have that option. We might be looking at this from our point of view. Similarly, somebody might forget a particular name or you might think: "I know that face; I do not know who they are." But I think primarily that candidates - whether incumbent ones or new ones - are also there to give a kind of signposting. You are not just there to sell your manifesto to somebody; you are there to give practical information, especially if you are in a district like ours where you might have more than one polling station, and people say to you: "I am not sure where I go to vote." "Well, you are still in this district so you need to vote down in St. Aubin, you need to vote at Communicare", et cetera. Even if they do not end up voting for you, you are able to be helpful as a candidate. This would be one of the unintended consequences of the deletion of Article 11 would be that that kind of purpose would be removed.

[16:30]

I think it is disproportionate because I do hear the arguments about what happens if somebody does not want to be on the register, but that is already taken care of. We have got a register which is public, we have also got a register where people can put their names on a secret register, if you like, so that it is not available, and there will be good reasons why those individuals do not want to be on the register. We could have a crazy situation where a credit agency ... I have been having conversations with the Minister for Finance, both now and in the past, and we know that credit agencies in Jersey want to have access to the electoral roll and that people want to be on the electoral roll in some cases so that they can have a good credit rating. You can have a very bizarre situation where credit rating agencies are able to know who is on the electoral roll, but candidates for an election are not able to know who is on an electoral roll. That, I would suggest, is where the Kafkaesque bit comes into it. Absolute madness that that should be the situation. So I do not feel that I can vote for the principles knowing that all of these bits hang together collectively, and that they have not been thought through properly, I do not think, in terms of the unintended consequences. I fully believe that we should be going in a direction where we open up the electoral roll much more, because you have got a strange situation where the Constables - because of the nature of their job - do have access to the electoral roll, they need to know who ratepayers are. They and their staff at least need to know that if somebody turns up to a Rates Assembly, a Parish Assembly, they know who is allowed to vote and who is not allowed to vote. I would suggest that politicians, civil society groups, when they are trying to hold their own meetings should be able to go around and canvas not just at election time but all times during the year on different issues which might be important. That is something which is enjoyed by politicians and activists throughout the world in many countries. I would like to ask P.P.C. to look to be going in the opposite direction, not to be closing down access to the electoral roll, because that may be taking the completely opposite direction to what they are intending to do in terms of engagement and wider democracy.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I raise a point of order?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

A number of Members have raised the issue of whether or not they are going to vote for the principles of this Bill. Am I correct, and would you rule, Sir, whether or not we can vote in favour of the principles of it but then ask P.P.C. to do a line by line with other Members' clarification of the actual Articles, that we do not have to carry on with the Articles today if we do not wish?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you can. Under Standing Order 73, once the principles have been adopted, it is possible for the Assembly to determine to continue the debate, so postpone discussion of the Articles for up to 2 meetings. You can effectively postpone the Articles being considered until the end of June to give consideration the matters you have just referred.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful, Sir. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you want point of order?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Yes, it was just point of order or clarification. I would just like to assure the Assembly that I have listened to everything that has been said so I would really like to have the principles voted on today and would like to defer the Articles and bring the Articles back amended where possible to address these concerns no later than 24th June.

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

I will just speak briefly then. I just wanted to give the example around concerns of Article 12; I think it is. During the last elections, a certain individual posted on social media that if I should knock on his door, he would ... and I cannot remember the exact words but there was a threat of violence. Needless to say, he would not welcome me to his door. I have never met this man, but I knew his name and this was a threat that had to be taken seriously. The police went to speak to him. Candidates who are women or of a different ethnic background will be placed at risk because, unfortunately, there is hatred to us just because of what we are. I need to know whose door I will be knocking on to be able to stay safe and, honestly, if I do not know who is behind the door I am about to knock on, I do not know if it is safe for me to actively take part in the election process.

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

I have got very little to add, and I would like to address the very serious point made by Deputy Catherine Curtis there but in a very much more light-hearted way and furthering the speech by Deputy Tadier about non-parliamentary language. A certain afternoon in St. Martin is etched on my memory when a door opened and the person who opened it said to me, and I paraphrase: "You have got a jolly nerve showing your face at my house", and that is a great paraphrase. **[Laughter]** I knew what was coming. I knew the name and I was prepared but I think it is really important to know beforehand if you are getting into difficulty, you can stand back and take 10 seconds to just think about how you are going to address things. I am not one for not knocking on doors and I have been to a number of places where I have been advised I should not go on my own, but I have. Finally, I will just address, Deputy Bailhache mentioned manners and I think it is very important the first thing I do: "Good afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. ...", or whoever and the name. Of course, it is also important to note there

is more than 2 ... one, 2, 3, 5, 6 people living in a property and they all might vote, and I am grateful to my Constable for saying what she has done about her taking the Articles back.

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

I fully support the chair's intention to come back with the Articles, and I am sure we will give, or P.P.C. will give, serious consideration to what Members have raised. I just wanted to touch on barriers because Deputy Bailhache, the thing that made me want to raise to speak was he said: "There are no barriers to voting", and I think many Members speeches have addressed this. We have spoken about, perhaps, more vulnerable or protected characteristics that might make people more vulnerable to harm. Those characteristics also introduce barriers to voting in the population where somebody may have caring responsibilities, disabilities. They could be a victim of domestic abuse and not able to access their own mail to register. They could be an elderly person suffering with arthritis. There are many, many barriers to the step of registering. This, today, is really important to remove just one of those barriers but I think we have all also experienced being at polling stations and people turning up thinking that they can vote at the polling station that we are at and having to turn them away. Sometimes that has happened right at the end of the day and this person has ... and I think, as Deputy Bailhache said: "If you want to vote, you will make the effort." Some people really do. They make that effort, and they come out to a polling station and sometimes they are devastated that they are turned away because they cannot vote at that polling station. A survey as part of the J.O.L.S. (Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey) last year when Islanders were asked what some solutions were to increasing their participation and the second most popular solution was being able to vote at any polling station. What we are doing today - and hopefully will complete when we bring the Articles back - is the step towards allowing that. We cannot have voting at any polling station if we do not have this automatic voter registration. It is the step towards that, so I have been told. Before I sit down, I wanted to talk about safeguarding of candidates, and I think it is really important that we have had so much discussion on this today. I am really pleased that we are airing these issues because they are becoming more and more relevant and certainly ... I have been through 3 elections and it has increasingly becoming a little bit more of an issue, is it not, the political rhetoric? There are some more extreme views out there and as, I think, Deputy Curtis said, there is hatred out there that there can be directed towards candidates. We must take that seriously and we must first of all be role models and conduct our debates with respect for one another, which I think this debate today has been, but we also must put in measures to safeguard. I think when the Articles come back, I am not sure whether the chair or indeed the committee will decide to change Article 12 so that we do have the names of the people whose doors we are knocking on, but either way I would say that the Greffe could perhaps consider a register whereby if someone has made threats against a previous candidate or a States Member, it would be quite helpful to inform candidates that those threats have occurred and where that person is. Because if you are a brand new candidate and you are not part of a party, even if you know that person's name, you might not know that they are a potential danger to you, so even having the name of who is behind that door might not be enough. That is something I would like P.P.C. to consider when we discuss this again. Final point I would like to make, and it is about Deputy Renouf and his speech. This is not the first time I have noted this about Deputy Renouf, and I think other Members are getting there and are on that journey, but what a great ally Deputy Renouf is because what he did today was he reflected on the fact that he was not aware that these problems were a problem for some candidates and Members that are different from him and are not like him. He raised that lack of awareness, and I think that is very powerful. I think that reflection on what is ... essentially that is what privilege is when you do not have those barriers, and you do not have those problems that some categories of people do. Being able to bring that out into the light, to reflect on it and I think, and I hope from Deputy Renouf's example, that he is a great ally and that he will work to try and support those who do face those barriers. I just think that was very powerful and I want to thank Deputy Renouf for that and to encourage other Members to reflect in the same way.

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

Before I get going, I am just wondering if you would not mind taking a look, Sir, at Standing Orders 72(2) just to see whether under that or any other Standing Order it might be possible to ask for the proposal to be referred to Scrutiny. The reason, I feel, is that I have been quite surprised at what I would say seem to be oversights by P.P.C., and to me it seems that a fresh set of eyes would be a very good idea. In that sense I think Scrutiny could play a good role of having a completely fresh set of eyes looking at this legislation and having heard this debate. It has surprised me that P.P.C. had thought it would be okay for us to go knocking on doors and candidates to go knocking on doors without knowing the names and addresses of the people behind them. We have certainly heard the safeguarding issues, and I would have thought that would have been primary in P.P.C.'s mind as a body. Apparently, it was not, but there is also the perspective of the candidates themselves, especially new candidates, but I know that I have undertaken 2 competitive elections and each of them - the first one even more so - that first door or those first few doors it is steel yourself time. It is such a strange thing to do to go knocking on the doors of strangers. You take away the names of the people behind those doors and I think, particularly for new candidates who have never before stood in an election, it is a massive disincentive to go and knock on those doors. That is something, given P.P.C. in their report talk about the 40 per cent rate turning out, that is one of the things that surprises me because I think you are likely to get fewer candidates as a result of that element of this and that in itself is likely to make the electorate less likely to turn out. I will not repeat many of the same concerns that have been mentioned already but I would like to say as well that I am still struggling with the whole concept of automatic registration and the reason for that is simply that I know people do not like having choice removed from them. At its core, really, this is about removing choice. While I know people can ask for their names to be removed, et cetera, so there is an element of choice, but you are subordinating that to the automation, and I think there will be some members of our society who are quite unhappy at the idea that they have had that choice removed from them by this automatic registration. There is a sense of paternalism or maternalism, take your pick, but there is a sense of us telling the electorates what they should do. I do not feel quite happy with that, so I am still personally struggling with the actual principles of this. I am not necessarily against it, but I just wanted to express that I am still struggling with that removal of choice from electors. One other short thing to Deputy Renouf's comment about the 42 per cent ... or to not his comment but he raised the 42 per cent voter turnout and I am struggling with P.P.C.'s use of that statistic whenever they bring forward amendments to the Electoral Law or changes to the electoral process because it suggests every time that somehow this latest change is going to inject a sudden desire among the population to vote.

[16:45]

I do not think this is ever going to happen. We can fiddle with the electoral process all we like; people are not going to vote as a result of changes of process. Personally, I have a view that one of the reasons we have a low electoral turnout is because many, many people who live in Jersey do not necessarily think of Jersey as their permanent home. It is not the only reason. I have got people born in Jersey, lived all their lives in Jersey who do not vote. I have got friends who do not vote but I do believe that we do have a large part of the population who have moved to Jersey during their lives, many of whom I think they may have been here for 10 years but still have that view that they are probably going to move back to where they started or they will move on somewhere else and so have not really engaged with the political side of life in Jersey. That really speaks to us and the need for States Members, whoever the States Members are, to make ourselves relevant to those people and to make ourselves relevant to the people who are born in Jersey, my friends who choose not to vote. That is what will change the electoral turnout, a sense of relevance, a sense of feeling that the choices people make when they come to vote do effect and impact their lives properly. It is our failure to appear relevant to those people that is really suppressing voter turnout, in my view. It was not ... I say it was not that long ago, it was about half a century ago, which to many people it was quite long ago, but in the 1970s and 1980s we still had very healthy voter turnouts, to my understanding, and it

really was during the late 1980s that voter turnout fell significantly. That, I believe, is due to that changing nature of Jersey's population and the fact that we have many more people here who do not see the Island necessarily as a permanent home. What we want to say to those people is: "You may only think you are here for 10 years or 15 years but it is still relevant and you can still make choices which can improve your lives today, but if you choose to end up living here for the rest of your lives, those choices that you make when you vote will have an impact on you." I really wish P.P.C. would stop pretending that changing the electoral process is going to make any significant difference to voting in this Island because I truly think it will not, and it is wrong to keep meddling with the system and believing that that meddling is going to make a difference. We are the ones who will make ourselves relevant to voters. We are the ones who will make voters of the electorate to turnout to vote, not anything to do with process. Back to the 72(2), Sir ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is correct, Deputy Morel. If the principles are adopted in the first instance the draft will be offered to Scrutiny and only if they decline to scrutinise the matter will the Assembly nonetheless have the power to postpone consideration of the Articles in the way that I have described.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I wonder if I may invoke 79(1) of the Standing Orders.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You are proposing that the debate be suspended for the purpose of scrutiny. Under Standing Order 79, a Member is entitled to propose without notice that the debate be suspended for the purpose of scrutiny; 79 says: "Any Member of the States may propose without notice that (a) the debate on any proposition be suspended; and (b) the States request the relevant Scrutiny Panel or relevant review panel to consider having the proposition to it." That is the proposition that you make. Is it seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the proposition that the debate be suspended for the purpose of scrutiny?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the proposer be making a proposal as to why she wants to do that and why it is a good idea?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, do you want to make the proposition, please, in the first instance.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I have not got much to add to what Deputy Morel said, which is basically that we are hearing concerns raised by Members regarding the changes in terms of Articles 11 and 12, regarding the proposal that the electoral register no longer be made public and it would seem that things like safeguarding issues have not been discussed with Members. It sounds to me as though it would be appropriate to have the Scrutiny Panel look at it and rather than us be continuing until we get to the point where the chair of the Scrutiny Panel is asked whether she would like it referred to the panel that this would be a time to just accelerate that process so that Members can move on to other business and have the Scrutiny Panel review it in the meantime.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I will speak against that proposition. I would like to see this matter voted on the principles stage and then I think the **[Approbation]** proper place for Scrutiny would be to examine the Articles as appropriate. I think we have had a good debate on the principles. Some people do not agree with them; that is fine, but we should move to that vote and that will guide the process that Scrutiny will go through. They will have a much clearer sense of what ... a narrower scope of what the work is, so I will vote against this.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Given the response of the States Chamber now, I will withdraw the proposition then.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content for the Deputy to withdraw her proposition without the vote?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

May I make an interjection? I know Deputy Miles, as chair of the Scrutiny Panel, would like to speak on this subject before it is withdrawn.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think we must stick with procedure. You have applied to withdraw. Are Members content to let the Deputy withdraw her proposition without a vote?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, in that case it is withdrawn. Oh, you are not happy with that?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, Sir, because I would like Deputy Miles to speak.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I am happy to.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The debate must be restricted to whether or not you should withdraw your proposition. Who wishes to speak on the proposal that this proposition is to be withdrawn? Yes, Deputy Miles.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade :

I have had my light on for a few minutes, but other people have been ... I had my light on originally to ask what the procedure was ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

It then went off again.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I left it on and I was waiting to be invited to speak and Deputy Scott kind of jumped the gun invoking Article 89 because my question really about procedure was that given the comments of the chair of the P.P.C. ... at the conclusion of the debate on the principles, I was going to say that my panel would call this in and I wanted to know whether that was acceptable being that P.P.C. had already said that they were going to take it back.

The Deputy Bailiff:

It is your right to scrutinise, absolute right.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It is and that is what I wanted to clarify, and I think the confusion with Article 79 is that it stops the debate in its tracks ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

It does.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... and we then do not get an opportunity to hear anybody else who wants to speak and then vote on the principles.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is correct. Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition that Deputy Scott be permitted to withdraw her proposition?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not know whether you have got a new practice that it is only people with their lights on that get called? I just wondered because I have been putting my light on and off and I do not know whether you have got me down or not. If you have got practice that we need to leave our light on ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I had Deputy Miles and then you.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Okay, fine. That is fine because ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

We are now talking ... you put your light on in connection with a different debate. We are now dealing with a debate on the proposition that Deputy Scott be permitted to withdraw her proposition under Standing Order 79.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I wish to simply ask in this, I do not agree with Deputy Scott's proposal. The most orderly way ... and I apologise to Members if I set the cat among the pigeons when I said that I was sowing a seed. I am sorry about that, but I was not aware. I apologise to other Members that I should have read the electoral register issue before and we did not, and we deserve our apologies to the chair of P.P.C., but she has done the magnanimous thing, and she has said she is going to take back the things. But what I would like to ask is I thought that there were checks and balances in this Assembly about issues, and I certainly had some understanding that the Corporate Services did scrutinise legislation. We have spoken about legislation scrutiny so many times and I just wonder whether the chair of P.P.C. could clarify in her concluding remarks whether she did seek that this should be scrutinised because obviously ... and I say that in the context of our next election being on 7th June 2026 and there is now a timeclock ticking ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

You are straying beyond the purpose of this very brief debate. It is whether or not the Assembly will permit Deputy Scott to withdraw her proposition under Article 79.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do agree. I just wanted to know whether or not we are going to be able to get within the 12-month international standard of basically considering re-legislation for our electoral arrangements that we cannot defy our international standard, which is basically you should not change electoral law 12 months before an election.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I did not start this debate incidentally. **[Laughter]** There are a suite of options before us and the starting point that I work from is that we should be in a position ... this is not a criticism because

these things happen, and it is not until something gets to the floor of the Assembly that we realise it is deficient, and this is the case today. What should really happen, I think, is that P.P.C. should be coming back with a proper proposition in all parts that Members can vote for. We have not got that today before us and I think that in an ideal world it should not be going to Scrutiny at all; it should be going back to the committee that brought it forward in the first place because we do not have a dog and bark, I would argue, and P.P.C. is really the last committee that this Assembly has and it is a quasi-scrutiny body already. It does that work through a process of consensus with a joint, mixed membership and this is effectively where the scrutiny has happened during this debate. In the very narrow question as to whether or not Deputy Scott should be allowed to withdraw her proposal to refer this to Scrutiny, I think there is a sense in which it is much more preferable that this Assembly should decide whether it wants to refer this to Scrutiny rather than Scrutiny calling it in against the will of the Assembly because I look at my esteemed colleague who is the chair of not just her Scrutiny panel but of the ... well, she is chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and is very busy. I wonder how she is going to do that work which is effectively work that P.P.C. should be doing. So I would like to ask Members to consider sending a message out that ... because the alternative is that this is referred back to P.P.C. at the in-principle stage. I think that is probably what needs to be done. They need to present it back to us in a coherent way to see if the Articles that they propose are in line with the principles that they are proposing and that is not something that Scrutiny can do for them. I think, of course, we have to let Deputy Scott withdraw this proposal, but I do not think the consequence of that should be that Scrutiny call this in because it is very unusual, I would suggest, for Scrutiny to call in something coming forward from P.P.C. It is not without precedent necessarily, but Scrutiny normally calls in work from Ministers, so with that said, by all means let us let Deputy Scott withdraw this.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this proposal? In that case I close the debate. Those in favour of allowing Deputy Scott to withdraw her proposition kindly show. Has the appel been called for?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Appel, please, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. This is a proposition to permit Deputy Scott to withdraw her proposal under Standing Order 79 to suspend the debate for the purpose of scrutiny. Those in favour, please vote pour and those against, please vote contre. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting and the proposition has been adopted:

POUR: 42		CONTRE: 3		ABSTAIN: 1
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
Connétable of St. Peter				
Connétable of St. Martin				
Connétable of St. John				
Connétable of St. Clement				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy M. Tadier				

Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

8.2 Draft Elections (Electoral Registers) (Jersey) Amendment Law 202- (P.27-2025) - Reference Back

8.2.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Is it in order for me to ask for this whole thing to be referred back under Standing Order 86 to the committee so that they can come back before we vote on the principles?

[17:00]

I firmly believe that unless we know how the principles and the Articles hang together and what is going to be presented in the Articles then I certainly cannot vote for the principles without knowing what I am voting for, and I think the right place for the reconsideration to be done is with P.P.C. That is their job, not to give extra work to Scrutiny who will feel obliged to call this in when they have other ... I cannot speak for that panel. I am sure they would do the work, but I am sure they have got other work they need to concentrate on and therefore P.P.C. will also be in control of the timetable. The information that I would be seeking in the reference back would be for clarification specifically around the access to the electoral roll but perhaps also for consideration about how members of the public who do not want to be on the public list might be able to put themselves on a secret list or indeed whether an opt-out for them would be indeed appropriate or possible.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you mean under Standing Order 83 or 86?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I was looking at 86 but if ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Eighty-three which deals principally with reference backs; 86 is a debate after a reference back.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Eighty-three then, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The further information that you seek, just to repeat it so I have got a note.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is to find out whether it would be possible for P.P.C. to not delete Article 11 and to have an accessible register for candidates but also to see if it would be possible for members of the public who do not want to be on the publicly accessible list to be on a secret list and to consider whether there would be a workable way to allow people to opt out from being on the electoral roll within a process of automatic registration.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right. The 3 issues I have written down, Deputy Tadier, are for P.P.C. to clarify its position in relation to access to the electoral roll, to identify if members of the public could put themselves on a private or secret list and thirdly to clarify whether members of the public could opt out of being included in the electoral roll. Is that right?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right. The proposal is that the matter be referred back for those purposes. Yes, Deputy Morel.

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

Yes, it is a point of order, but it is more about my own ignorance than anything else. I do not quite understand how Deputy Tadier's proposition can take place after Deputy Scott's proposition.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Hers was rejected. This is a different proposal under a different Standing Order. Yes, do you wish to speak to the proposition?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, precisely because we have now referred it to Scrutiny I do not understand how we ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, the proposal under Standing Order 79 to suspend the debate for the purpose of scrutiny was withdrawn so we are now currently still debating the principles until now, when we are now considering reference back under Standing Order 83. Yes, do you want to speak to this proposition, Deputy Tadier?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think I have made the case, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right. Is it seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on this proposal for a reference back?

8.2.2 Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:

I rise only to ask whether the president of P.P.C. might be willing to indicate that she is prepared to accept the reference back because it is very clear that a number of concerns have been articulated in the Assembly and there is something for P.P.C. to think about. Deputy Tadier has put them together in a very composite way in his reference back and if the chair of P.P.C. were willing to accept it, we could all move on to the next matter for debate.

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

I rise to just do a point of principle. I think that this Assembly is often saying that we do not scrutinise legislation. The proper parliamentary process in other places is that you receive a First, Second and a Third reading. The purpose of the First Reading is to receive the purpose of the law and then send it to Scrutiny. I see no reason, with the greatest of respect to the mover of this proposition, for us to do anything else apart from respect our conventions that we take a vote. That is not a vote which automatically agrees the Articles. Members have made their views known but we have basically had a discussion about whether or not we are, as an Assembly, of the view that we need to have this kind of law and then the issue now is to look at the Articles and them to be properly scrutinised. I do not understand why it has not been done but I think it would be against our working practice for us just to simply throw the thing out at this stage. I do say to Members, we do have a lot more electoral law to come. We have got quite a lot of Senators' laws to come, one of which is an amendment to this very law. I think it is the right and proper process for us to give the chair of P.P.C. the purpose of what we always do, which is to assent to the First Reading of it and then to send it off to Scrutiny, which the chair of P.P.C. has already kindly said. The chair of the Scrutiny Panel that, I think, should have looked at this before but maybe they were too busy but they need to do it, they have said yes, so what is the problem? We go to the principles. We know we need to do this. We should go and respect our parliamentary tradition which is a First Reading and then we go to the Articles. That is the way I think we should do it, but I may be wrong.

8.2.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I agree with Deputy Ozouf because I think there are considerable risks here if we refer back on the whole thing to be referred back which are that we have got a reference back on 3 points. We do not know whether they will be exhaustive of all the issues that will need to be considered. Then the risk is that we will come back with new proposals that address those 3 issues, maybe to some Members satisfaction, maybe not, but then other issues will be raised and then the possibility of a referral back to Scrutiny will arise again. Then we will be into the post-summer period and facing a situation where we are making multiple changes to the electoral laws, including Senators, right up against the deadline. I think we have had a debate about the principles. The principles, some people disagree with, that is fine. They can vote against the principles but, as Deputy Ozouf says, we have a debate on the first principles, then we move to consider the Articles. The way we are going to choose to do that because the chair of Corporate Services has indicated what she will do, we will call them in, and they will be looked at by Scrutiny and brought back. I think that is the proper way to approach this thing and will mean that we move forward both at a decent speed and with due respect for process.

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

As the chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel, I would prefer, as Deputy Renouf has said, that we go through to the principles and then our panel gets an opportunity to scrutinise the piece of legislation in its entirety. I would like to say that we have not looked at this at C.S.S.P. (Corporate Service Scrutiny Panel). I have to say I do not know why. I think it is not the normal thing for C.S.S.P. to scrutinise ... I see a Member saying it is. It is nothing that has been put across our table.

If it had of been, we would have done a thorough job. If we have not done the job we should have done, I can only apologise but certainly if it comes to a reference back or it comes to vote upon the principles, C.S.S.P. will call it in, if that is helpful to Members.

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

Very quickly, it might be my parliamentary ignorance or lack of understanding but in agreeing the principles, to what extent are we signalling we agree with the main substance of the report, which included the changes required to legislation are removal of public access to the register, and to what extent are we then agreeing a principle that we know the majority of the Assembly wishes to change? It may be a question to you, Sir. I am genuinely in your hands. I would like to support the moving beyond the principles and into the review of the Articles, but I just want to understand from a parliamentary position and legislative position, if all of us are agreeing to the principles yet do not largely agree to, for example, the removal of public access to the register, is that considered poor practice?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am afraid I cannot answer that question. That would be a political question for me to answer.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Point of order, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you can.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

In your ruling, Sir, you are not being asked to make a political point. Are we not just approving the principles ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, that is right.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

... as in the opening paragraph? That is all we are approving. We are not approving anything else.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is right.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

In fact, the Deputy's concerns can be assuaged because all it is ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Again, that is a political matter. I do not think I can tell Members what they are voting for in terms of the principles they have heard, what has been said by the chair of P.P.C. The next Member to speak in relation to this issue is Deputy Morel.

8.2.7 Deputy K.F. Morel:

A number of things, and picking up from where Deputy Ozouf left off, I think one of the problems - and I believe I have had this sort of conversation with Deputy Ozouf in the past - the States going First Reading, Second Reading, Third Reading all in a half hour gap is that we have lost all real understanding of what it means when we say the principles. Equally, with the Third Reading, I often feel that we do not have a real understanding of that. The only thing I think most of us would feel comfortable defining would be the Articles. We understand that part and so it was interesting, Sir,

as you responded to Deputy Ozouf's question, that point of order just now, if I may be so bold as to talk about you and the Deputy Greffier, you were nodding while the Deputy Greffier was shaking his head and ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I can promise you we were in agreement. **[Laughter]** Not always, but we were that time.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I felt that really summed up exactly, I think, where we all are in the Assembly about understanding what the principles are when we say we are voting on the principles. I understood the reason that Deputy Curtis said, which was if you ignore the reference back and the 3 particular points, when you vote on the principles, there would be nothing on P.P.C. to look at elements such as the one that Deputy Curtis raised because it has not been written into the reference back or, sorry, because we are no longer working the reference back. I am confused (1) I am sure you can tell, but (2) I am concerned because I think there are some serious areas in here that need to be looked at and if P.P.C. did not look at them and they came back saying: "Oh, well, they agreed the principles. We only looked at Article 12 and that was it", I would be incredibly disappointed in P.P.C., to tell the truth. I also just quickly wanted to address the issue about P.P.C. and Scrutiny. My understanding is P.P.C.'s work is rarely scrutinised, if ever, and that is because it is a committee of the Assembly. It has people from Government, it has people not in Government and so the idea - I think somewhat of an idealistic idea, somewhat brought over from the previous pre-Ministerial form of the Assembly - was the committee does its own scrutiny but today I think we have learnt exactly why that does not work. One word and this is deeply unfair of me but ... because it is conjecture but when I was reading through and listening to the objections to the main proposition, I did feel perhaps P.P.C. had suffered from something of group think in this respect and they would just think: "Yes, we need automatic voter registration", and had not really thought through the safeguarding issues and the impact on candidates and things like this. I might be wrong. I might be doing P.P.C. a disservice. That was my speculation, but it shows why I do believe that P.P.C.'s work does need to be scrutinised. I think that would be a useful proposition for future weeks and coming sittings because I think it is wrong that P.P.C.'s work goes unscrutinised.

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

It was just to say with respect to Scrutiny that I have just checked with the Greffe and as far as we are aware, P.P.C. has never been scrutinised by Corporate Services. Oh, it has. I have got another ... all right, sorry. Oh, sorry, I have just got another message to say ... **[Laughter]** I had had one saying it was not but, yes, the Le Fondré panel scrutinised some electoral changes.

[17:15]

Yes, but the whole time I have been in since 2018, it has never been scrutinised. I was not aware that we had a Scrutiny Panel, but I am quite happy to be scrutinised. I would also like to say to Deputy Morel that we are cross-party. We are a very mixed bunch in P.P.C. and we have taken this really, really seriously. We have gone through it quite thoroughly and I did say that we would take back Article 12 to look at but if he sees how long this is, we have not taken it lightly. We have gone through this and if you see how long the Articles are and thankfully only Article 11 and 12 have been mentioned so, yes, we are quite thorough in P.P.C., so I would just like to stand up for my committee.

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

I feel that somehow things have been a bit shambolic, and part of the problem has been a lack of consistency in the way in which things are done. If we look at this, and coming to Deputy Morel's point about the meaning of principles, we have had one example where the P.P.C. has consulted with Assembly Members in terms of what they might wish to have. That is in the case of the amendment of the code of conduct following the proposition that I brought in ethics, which I withdrew to give

P.P.C. an opportunity to do that work. What has happened here is that the P.P.C. has engaged law draftsmen to draft a law that Members are not comfortable with. We do need to learn from this about what exactly has happened to arrive at this point. Perhaps it does make sense that there is more of a process by which P.P.C. brings its propositions so that perhaps it might consult Members beforehand, perhaps it might brief the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel, which is allocated the responsibility for scrutinising it after all. Where do we get to here? Well, we have a bit of a weird dilemma because it sounds like we can refer ... if we do not support Deputy Tadier's proposition, if we respect the chair of the Corporate Scrutiny's Panels request that we move on to principles, approve them and then have the referral to Scrutiny, some of us have a problem with approving all the principles. It therefore would have been helpful, I think, for the chair of the P.P.C. either with consulting with her panel during the course of this debate to withdraw the proposition perhaps and/or at least when proposing the principles - unfortunately it is a bit too late - to be saying: "Not this one or that one." I do not even know whether that can be done now but I do not have any solutions. I will just point out that Members have been left in a very difficult position. If we do not approve Deputy Tadier's proposition right now, then we have this difficulty of approving principles that we do not want to approve.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I wonder whether I might propose the adjournment, Sir, so that we could leave the chair of P.P.C. with other officers to come back and explain because we are going to have 9 minutes where we might make a mistake. I am politely saying to Members there seems to be some confusion, *à tête reposée* overnight. We can come back with the chair of P.P.C. and other Members and also you can give us some rulings about what principles mean because I am confused.

Deputy M. Tadier:

We have a proposal on the table. I do not think another proposal can take precedence in Standing Orders, can it, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, it is a proposal to adjourn which I will put to the vote immediately without debate. It is purely procedural. I will ask the Greffier to open the voting. Those in favour of adjourning now, please vote *pour*. Those against adjourning now, please vote *contre*.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just clarify the time, Sir? We have got 10 minutes left of ordinary work and we ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, so if you want to adjourn, please vote *pour* - immediately - and if you want to continue, then please vote *contre*. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the chance of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting and the proposal to adjourn now has been rejected:

POUR: 12		CONTRE: 31		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Connétable of St. Brelade		
Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Connétable of St. Peter		
Connétable of St. Mary		Connétable of St. Martin		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Connétable of St. John		
Deputy S.G. Luce		Connétable of Grouville		
Deputy I.J. Gorst		Deputy G.P. Southern		
Deputy K.L. Moore		Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
Deputy D.J. Warr		Deputy K.F. Morel		

Deputy K.M. Wilson		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		Deputy R.J. Ward		
		Deputy C.S. Alves		
		Deputy I. Gardiner		
		Deputy L.J. Farnham		
		Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
		Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		
		Deputy T.A. Coles		
		Deputy H.M. Miles		
		Deputy M.R. Scott		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
		Deputy M.E. Millar		
		Deputy A. Howell		
		Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy B. Ward		

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask for the 12 just out of curiosity. **[Laughter]**

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting pour: the Connétables of St. Lawrence, St. Clement, St. Ouen, St. Mary and St. Saviour and Deputies Luce, Gorst, Moore, Ozouf, Warr, Wilson and Andrews.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition?

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

I was going to speak very briefly to say I thought I had this sorted and I could look at the principles. I was unhappy as I spoke earlier - I said it earlier - but I have got to say unfortunately, and I mean this in the nicest possible way, Deputy Tadier has a very good point, and he has exactly used a reference back for the right reason. We are unsure as to what we are going to agree in the principles on. There are 2 very clear areas ... I do not think it is beyond those 2 areas, to be quite frank. There might be mild things in other areas, but it is the 2 key points that he has mentioned and referencing that back would give P.P.C. an opportunity to take control yet again of what we are debating here. We can then come back, agree the principles with the changes that may be necessary and move on. If the principles are agreed, and some people will vote against these principles because they are not in the right position, and then if it fails, the whole thing is lost. If it does not fail, it then goes to the long convoluted - or could be because everyone is very, very busy - process of scrutiny, which could happen. There have already been issues around other areas that were raised, and we will end up going backwards very, very quickly. I think a reference back even to the next sitting, if possible, so we can get some clarity before the next sitting. That would speed the process up. We would all know where we are, then we could agree principles and if people want to bring amendments to that, they can by the next sitting. I would ask those people just to vote for the reference back and we can move forward, if that is not a contradiction.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposal to refer this back? I call upon Deputy Tadier to reply.

8.2.11 Deputy Tadier:

Thank you for that. I think that was helpful, Deputy Ward. I think that is the point, the first thing to say is that if Scrutiny were to call this in, so that is one of the choices here. It is either referred back to Privileges and Procedures Committee where it came from, i.e. come back and do it in a form that is better, or refer it to Scrutiny. The problem is Scrutiny would be scrutinising something which would not normally be on the table if P.P.C. had been allowed to relodge having reconsidered and taken in the comments that they have heard today, so all these comments would be a waste of time. Scrutiny will look at this and they will say: “There is a problem with deleting Article 11 and not giving people access to the electoral roll”, and P.P.C. will say: “We know that because the Assembly already told us that.” Then that would get referred back to P.P.C. so it would be a much longer and drawn-out process, unnecessary work will be taking place, I would suggest, whereas the message here is very clearly to P.P.C.: “There are some fundamental flaws in this. It is a criticism but it is not an undue one, please go back and bring it back to the Assembly.” The point about not waiting to vote for the principles is because I think the Articles and the principles are so intrinsically linked here that they would not necessarily make sense unless we know what is coming back in the Articles. We refer things back all the time. If Ministers bring something forward which does not make sense and has got holes in it, we give it back to them and say: “Do it again. Bring it back to us when you have done the job properly.” Then we will scrutinise it if we need to. That will be the point at which it can automatically be referred to Scrutiny or we can refer it to Scrutiny but I would suggest that once P.P.C. have given this a second thought, they will come back with something which is much better, which will probably get the majority support, if not unanimous support, from the Assembly, which can still be scrutinised, so I do ask to maintain the reference back to P.P.C. It is not a political game in any way. I have been on P.P.C. I think they have got a tough job. I think it just needed a bit more consultation, which clearly was not done on this occasion, but they have had the quite clear feedback from the Assembly initially. That is the Assembly’s job as well, is to give that feedback. I maintain the proposition, Sir, and ask for the appel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been asked for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting on this proposition to refer this matter back. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can now announce that the proposition has been adopted:

POUR: 33		CONTRE: 12		ABSTAINED: 2
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of St. Brelade
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy S.G. Luce		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy I.J. Gorst		
Connétable of St. Peter		Deputy K.L. Moore		
Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
Connétable of St. John		Deputy D.J. Warr		
Connétable of Grouville		Deputy J. Renouf		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Deputy B. Ward		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
Deputy M. Tadier		Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				

Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

Can I propose the adjournment?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to adjourn now? The Assembly is adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:25]