

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

FRIDAY, 29th NOVEMBER 2024

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[9.35]

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

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

May I raise the défaut on Deputy Tadier and Deputy Southern, please?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to raise the défaut on those Members. Défait is raised.

Connétable R.D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Sir, I have a funeral to attend later this morning, if I may, but I will be returning.

PUBLIC BUSINESS - resumption

**1. Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028: second amendment (P.51/2024 Amd.(2))
- West of Island Planning Framework**

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now return to the amendments to the Government Plan. The last amendment to be debated is the second amendment lodged by Deputy Miles. I invite the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Page 4, paragraph (o) - after the words “as set out in Appendix to the accompanying Report” insert the words “, except that on page 59, after the words “in subsequent Budgets subject to affordability.” there should be inserted the following new paragraph - “An allocation of £100,000 will be made within the Funding for Public Realm budget to prioritise work on the West of Island Planning Framework, as referenced in Strategic Proposal 4 in the Bridging Island Plan 2022-2025.”

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

This amendment requests £100,000 from within the public realm budget to prioritise the West of Island Planning Framework as part of the Bridging Island Plan approved in March 2022. The Bridging Island Plan aims to accommodate development within the built-up area and to protect local services in the west of the Island. We are told that the framework will precede specific area-based masterplans and involve significant stakeholder engagement to address strategic issues, development needs, infrastructure, transport and community facilities in the west of the Island. All of these masterplans are to come, which is excellent, but without the framework we cannot even get out of the starting blocks. Over recent years more and more development has taken place in the west of the Island and in the Les Quennevais and La Moye areas of St. Brelade in particular. This has brought with it new opportunities and new challenges as well as compounding existing challenges. The majority of people in St. Brelade are understanding of the new developments that have taken place in our Parish. We are largely a suburban area and in places are now becoming increasingly urban. There are, and should be, associated benefits to new developments for existing residents. Greater urbanisation will not be for everyone, but most St. Brelade residents accept the reality and see the opportunity. We now have the best and most modern secondary school in the Island located in our Parish, situated on a greenfield site, and a new refurbished health centre on a brownfield site. Both are on our doorstep. We have the best bus routes, we have beautiful beaches, parks, play areas. There are benefits as well for our neighbours in other western Parishes. St. Brelade is keeping development pressures off rural areas in the west and parishioners of St. Peter, St. Ouen and St. Mary, for example, all benefit from the facilities we have in St. Brelade. But we are starting to see issues. While we are seeing more and more development being pushed towards St. Brelade, we are not seeing the other side of the deal, the plan for investment and improvement in the wider area, despite a number of growing voices that are calling for it. Putting more homes and services in St. Brelade and the west of the Island can work, but the creaking will become louder and louder if it does not form part of a thought through strategy and framework. Arguably the primary challenge of a western planning

framework will be how to manage and enhance the heart of what has been called our secondary urban centre, Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct. This should be the focal part of the plan for St. Brelade. It should be a retail and community centre for Jersey. Just think how many people, locals and tourists alike, pass through that area every day. Indeed, in 2022 I campaigned on the reinvigoration of this area. Over the years, and I still regret today, there has been a lack of effort to understand the situation in Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct. As we know there is a complex ownership situation of both areas. It has been too easy to do nothing and look at the result. Now I know that people live above the retail units at the Parade and Precinct, it is their home and none of this commentary is aimed at them. Indeed I think they would share my vision for that area. I would also like to reiterate at this point that I am not asking for funds to renovate a privately owned area which is how this funding has been misrepresented in some media. I would however dearly love to see a facelift at Les Quennevais.

[9:45]

The state of the Precinct in particular with so many units is a sorry one indeed. I recommended a community services hub there but there was no appetite for that from within Government. A masterplan will give an opportunity to explore what is and what is not possible. As a Deputy and a long-standing parishioner, I want to see the revitalisation of the Parade in the Precinct. I wonder when the Minister was last out west to see what the issues are for himself. We have lost all but one of the banks, the school uniform shop, the dog groomer, the perfumery, the surf shop and many other small shops that provided essential services used by a lot of Islanders, not just St. Brelade's residents. I want to see some support from the Government, but what is the vision? I have already suggested some small things to help the Parade and Precinct, put in a bike rack, repaint the mushroom bollards, make the area more floral, grow herbs and tomatoes for passers-by to pick and eat. We have got 2 Christmas trees now at the entrance and the exit and we remember to turn the lights on, but that is about it. I have spoken to many businesses in that area and I know they would love to see greater interest from the Government, from anyone, but our attitude always seems to be it is privately owned and therefore there is nothing we can do. There is no effort to work in partnership with the landlord, the Parish and the Government to see what can be done. The area just gradually deteriorates and will continue to do so unless a new business opens up and does what they can to enhance the surroundings. To be honest, trying to get anywhere in respect of the Parade and Precinct has been like pushing water uphill. Could the States of Jersey Development Company play a proactive role in negotiations with the landlord? Are there other options? Surely we can be more proactive, innovative, creative. There is a growing sense that we are being treated as the poor relation when it comes to enhancing and improving the west for the growing number of people who live there and the increasing number of people who are coming out there to receive services. I am asking for £100,000 from a £2.5 million budget to try and drive forward the public realm in the west. Unless we improve Les Quennevais, do Ministers and planning officials really think that their strategy for the west is going to work? The *Beautiful St. Brelade* report surveyed parishioners at the beginning of the year and we know what parishioners need to improve participation in community activities, improve health outcomes. It is heartening to see community activities developing at Communicare again and the St. Brelade Sports and Social Club now that it is under new management with big plans. The Enid Quenault Health Centre appears to be operating successfully as a health hub and has the capacity to deliver more community-based services. As I have said, there are opportunities and I want to be positive but we need some give from Government as well. The Minister for Infrastructure agreed that the Les Quennevais Sports Centre is ageing and needs attention. The pool has been closed several times this year for lengthy periods. Decisions need to be taken about its future and he said that that work will start next year. Again, how can that work be influenced by the community if there is no framework for engagement? The sports centre is a key resource for the whole Island and simply cannot be left to fall into disrepair or to be redeveloped in isolation. We also have Strive across the border in St. Peter, which has the potential for expansion and it is already providing important community activities for private clients and the funded Move More programme. As a St. Brelade Deputy, I share my fellow Deputies' frustration at the postponement of the St. Brelade Bay Improvement Plan. It is

one of our most beautiful areas, a wide sandy beach that is arguably the best on the Island with a number of high-class hotels. Yet a planning application to convert the old La Marquanderie into good quality staff accommodation to support the hospitality industry in the west was rejected and yet an earlier application for it to be a cannabis laboratory was approved. There is no joined-up thinking, no vision, no plan and it would appear that no thought has been given to the other bays in the west and how they might be improved. The opportunities to develop Les Creux as a country park for the west of the Island are huge. Both myself and my fellow Deputy Renouf have a vision for the site but nowhere to channel those ideas. I am sure that Deputy Renouf will elaborate during his speech so I will not steal his thunder. Suffice it to say I am incredibly frustrated at the missed opportunity for community and environmental pilots that could have taken place this year. In terms of road safety, the Route de Noirmont pedestrian safety scheme has been put on hold. This has been needed for literally years. It is a dangerous road and accidents are common. Parents cannot allow their children to walk to school and some residents on that road actually use their cars to drive their dogs to Noirmont for a walk. Residents have been told there are other priorities. How can prioritisation in the west be effective without a planning framework? As I have said, all of this matters for St. Brelade, but also St. Peter, St. Ouen, St. Mary, because parishioners in those Parishes use these areas and facilities as well. In terms of the overall west of Island infrastructure, we heard about the liquid waste strategy. We heard that significant investment is planned to enable the new developments in St. Peter. The Minister for Infrastructure stated that there would be additional capacity in the attenuation tank for potential new housing in St. Peter and a wider area. When asked to what extent the future development had been estimated and modelled, he admitted that work had taken place but, again, in isolation and not part of a broader plan. parishioners in the west have been promised mains drains are coming their way for decades and it has never happened. There does not seem to be a cohesive plan for how it will ever happen. We know that St. Mary's school nursery has closed due to lack of numbers. Needs are changing but we do not have a bigger picture in which to understand those changes. What is the plan for sand extraction in the quarries in St. Peter's Valley? Are we going to continue to produce locally or totally rely on imported materials? The St. Peter's Deputies have already seen off one application for the extension of La Gigoulande quarry. What are the economic development opportunities? There is land opposite the airport that has the potential for light industry or storage. What is the thinking around the connectivity between the Parishes? A hopper bus to the Co-op or Marks in St. Peter and Waitrose in St. Brelade. Bus connectivity between the coast and countryside without having to travel into town? Where is the thinking about the access to bays for tourists and residents alike? There are no buses going to Plémont anymore. If Deputy Stephenson was here she would tell you that we would benefit from village plans or at least updating those that exist. In the past, Government helped Parishes to fund these to provide a vision for the villagers which ultimately helped bring people together about development, road safety and even speed limits. She tells me that in St. Ouen parishioners constantly feel that Government is doing things to their Parish without consulting them or linking up to a joined-up plan. She cites the new bus stop layout in the village as an example. We need some joined-up thinking. Three Parishes could not even agree on the installation of wooden bollards to address problem parking on the Five Mile Road. Development in the west is already piecemeal. The very comprehensive Jersey Pearl application was withdrawn. The refurbishment of the Watersplash did not find favour, although the sale of the strip of land next to it did. I feel for the family that own that particular business and I can understand why they would give up. Look at the current situation with Nude Dunes at La Pulente. However did that get passed as a restaurant? We now know that a business has failed and we heard yesterday that the planning application for holiday lets and a very small café has been rejected. What happens now? I hope that this will not become the La Folie of the west. Where we had a very successful and much-used beach concession that had to close when the restaurant opened, we now have nothing. There is a whole fiasco over the public toilets which again nobody seems able to get to the bottom of, no pun intended. The old La Pulente pub has been recently sold and the very popular family restaurant on the site is currently closed. There are now no refreshment spots on that corner of the Island. What will planning decide to do about that should an application for change of use be made? More holiday

lets or private accommodation that parishioners do not support? I am sure my colleague Deputy Tadier will address the strength of feeling about developments in that corner of our Island. A lot of people turned up and literally formed a line in the sand. The whole point of an Island Plan is that; a plan. In the absence of a cohesive plan, the piecemeal approach which is evolving risks duplication or loss of services and a total lack of understanding of community needs. Earlier this week we saw a classic example of where the framework would have provided some direction, the debacle over the recycling services, which may have been avoided if the department had been better informed of the community reliance on the bring banks, which ended up with a proposition from Deputy Tadier, which I of course support. In the comments presented by the Council of Ministers, it stated that the current focus is to develop part of the water resource management strategy and specifically to consider options for the water supply and any associated requirement for infrastructure enhancements, expansion or provision. How can this be completed for the west of Island without a framework? It is putting the proverbial horse before the cart. What is more concerning is that I believe the Minister admitted at the last hearing of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel that he is actually unable to move forward with the water resources management strategy in this term and so he will bring forward a plan for the strategy. A structured planning framework is essential for effective community development, avoiding overlaps and ensuring resource allocation. It also communicates a commitment to sustainability and growth, attracting investment. Prioritising this framework now will complete a significant part of the evidence base for the next Island Plan, enabling focused decision-making and proactive risk management. The Minister for the Environment notes 11 pieces of work yet to commence before the next Island Plan is delivered and tells me that the west of Island framework is not a priority. It is delay, delay. I feel in some ways that we were being fobbed off. Priority is something that is regarded as more important than other things. It is an item or task that is given precedence and needs to be dealt with or focused on before anything else. Priorities are things that demand our immediate attention and effort due to their urgency or importance. A great deal of investment has flowed into St. Helier for regeneration and public realm and continues to be so and I do not begrudge St. Helier. It is our capital and needs investment but it is not acceptable and simply not good enough for St. Brelade and the west to be ignored, given the commitment made in the Bridging Island Plan. So finally, I consider the West of Island Planning Framework to be more important than some of the other things that are happening and therefore priority. I urge Members to support this amendment, particularly the western Deputies and Connétable whose parishioners deserve a better service from Government. Thank you.

[Approbation]

The Deputy Bailiff:

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

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

Right at the outset can I say that the Government have found the money to do this work and we are accepting this amendment. I did tell the Deputy beforehand, a bit like me, she has been trying to modify her speech while she speaks maybe and I am going to do the same. But I am grateful that she spoke about the Island Plan because I want to start my contribution to this part of the debate by reminding Members, should they be in any doubt, about the significance of the Island Plan and how important it is to make sure that we have it based on sound evidence. Members are going to know that we have a plan-led planning system here in Jersey and that means that planning applications that are in accordance with the policies in the Island Plan should be approved. Similarly those that do not accord with the plan should be refused unless there is a compelling and overriding case not to do so. It is also the key tool by which we assess what development needs we have across the Island over the next plan period and it provides a mechanism as to how we might best meet those needs. It is not therefore, just about regulation, it is also about placemaking and it is about shaping the Island for the future. In this respect doing some work to assess what opportunities might exist in the west of the Island to help meet the Island's future development needs, whether that is for housing or for more

opportunities to support economic development at places like the airport or Les Quennevais and Red Houses is important work. This is perhaps even more significant if we take the long view and consider that successive recent Island Plans, as the Deputy has just highlighted, have generally focused the meeting of the Island's development needs on the town of St. Helier. It is clear Les Quennevais serves as the Island's secondary centre. It has a significant proportion of housing, it is a significant retail centre and it enjoys a range of community facilities including a new secondary school, a leisure centre, country parks at Les Creux and Pont Marquet, and now relocated health services at the site of the former Les Quennevais school. While it has a lot going for it, we all know it also has some challenges, perhaps represented most evidently by a physically tired shopping precinct and issues associated with the closure of local shops and banking services.

[10:00]

So undertaking this work on the west of Island will seek to gain a better understanding of the potential that the west of Island might have to accommodate future development that the Island might need and perhaps provide some relief for St. Helier. It might also allow us to look at what other elements of community infrastructure might be required to support more development there. Undertaking this work by my department next year will inform and support the development of policies and proposals to help realise the opportunity for growth and regeneration in the west of the Island. I am sure that we can all appreciate and recognise that this work, focused on Les Quennevais and the west, will be valuable to undertake. That said, there are of course other areas of the Island that would also benefit from more detailed assessment and consideration of their planning needs, and the Bridging Island Plan also highlights the need for similar work to be undertaken in other places, such as Five Oaks and St. Brelade Bay, which has already been mentioned. There is a list of many things to do in advance of the next Island Plan and to prepare for it. In this respect, much of my current focus has been on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning service. I think there is a widespread recognition that the planning service has been through a rough time and improvements need to and are being made to provide the Island with a better planning service. This is a priority for this Government and the focus of attention in helping me to support the services already bearing some fruit. I had at this point intended to talk about some of my other priorities, including water, which is my number one issue that I want to try to solve as best I can between now and the next election. The Deputy mentioned it. I am actually making a lot more progress than she suggested. I will not be able to do 100 per cent but I will be doing 90 per cent before the next election. I also wanted to mention - and I will do it very much more briefly than I intended to - what strategies we have in place for land use requirements for the Island, how we might be dealing with liquid and solid waste into the future and other issues that we will have to address, like the supply of aggregates and how we might deal with glasshouses. Obviously not all this is going to fall to my planning team and I will need to talk to other Ministers about taking this work forward. In order of brevity and to move the debate forward, I will stop there and say that I am very happy to accept this amendment. It is important work out to the west of the Island to see where we might make improvements and changes. I will leave it there and ask Members to support this amendment.

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

The amendment has been accepted, we therefore do not want a long debate but there are just a couple of things I wanted to say. First of all, I wanted to commend Deputy Miles on an excellent speech. I thought she really set out the case for this work, and as a former resident of St. Aubin, and I still have my boat in the harbour, I welcomed her comments. I just want to say 2 things really. First of all, members may remember in the Bridging Island Plan debate that I expressed some concern about developing Les Quennevais and the idea of a second town and the impact it might have on St. Helier. It is interesting that Deputy Luce, the Minister for Planning, refers to this offering relief to St. Helier. Members may have noticed that in recent years I have become a little less generous in accepting the weight of the Island's housing development in St. Helier because I have begun to say it is time for other Parishes to take a share of that load. You cannot simply carry on increasing the housing load

in St. Helier without town planning. When the Minister of Planning speaks about relief for St. Helier what I would urge him to think about is the big relief that particularly businesses in town and shops in town require. The thing that will concern them about developing Les Quennevais as a shopping destination is that, of course, you can go to Les Quennevais and park for free. I do not want to see a situation where people start choosing to go to Deputy Miles's end of the Island for their shopping trips rather than coming into town. That is why I continue to press for improvements in the parking arrangements in St. Helier so that people who want a bit more choice, a bit more buzz in the street, will continue to come to St. Helier. I acknowledge that Deputy Miles does not want to see any diminution in the public realm in St. Helier and what the Parish offers to the Island. But, my second point, and the one I feel more strongly about, is that for as long as I have been a Member of the States, I have seen Ministers throw money, throw money gaily, at masterplans. The shelves in the former Planning Department must have groaned under the weight of masterplans. I remember one in particular when the then Minister for Planning did not really want to progress the Millennium Town Park, so he commissioned a masterplan for the area by a firm called EDAW. It cost an eye-watering a third of a million pounds. It was a fat document and it ended up proposing that the current Millennium Town Park would be enhanced by building 2 rows of housing blocks down either side of the space. Can you imagine how much town park there would have been left? It is small now, but it would be much smaller if EDAW had had its way. What I urge my fellow Members of the west of the Island is spend this money wisely, spend it on the kind of practical improvements that Deputy Miles was talking about. Get together as elected representatives of the west with our skilled and experienced officers from our Policy Unit and our planners and work out what you want to do. You do not need to spend £100,000 - and that will just be the beginning of it - on a U.K. (United Kingdom) firm of consultants to come in and advise you what to do in your area. The less money you spend on consultants the more money you can spend on improving Les Quennevais and the other areas of the west. That is my advice and I hope that it may be useful.

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

Likewise I fully support this amendment. I recall that just prior to the Bridging Island Plan I was asked by the media for my thoughts and I did fully support it at that time and still do, the creation of a second hub in the west of the Island and the regeneration of certain areas of Les Quennevais. I must, however, correct Deputy Miles on one item in her excellent speech and that was about the wooden bollards on the Five Mile Road. In fact all 3 Parishes were in complete agreement and I went to an on-site meeting representing the 3 Constables, where there were also members of the National Trust. They raised objections to the wooden bollards saying they were far too high and out of keeping for the area. I believe there was also an article in the *Evening Post* along the same lines. We did point out that the wooden bollards are used throughout the Island. There are a number of them in St. Peter's Valley, for instance, and they are quite in keeping there. But it was sad that the views of the National Trust appear to outweigh the views of the Parishes and, therefore, nothing was done about the parking. I would like to revisit it because it is dangerous. It has happened several times where children come out from behind the parked cars, who also park on the footpath. I know all 3 Constables were in agreement to introducing not a complete parking ban but some restrictions to make it safer. We certainly were in favour of the wooden bollards. I do not know where that came from but it certainly was not the Parishes that scuppered that. Thank you very much.

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

I appreciate that Members will not wish to take too much time over this, as we have reached a happy conclusion in the Government's acceptance. However, I would like to make a couple of comments, as representative of a western constituency. Also, I think it is important to ask the Government and remind them that they have a duty of candour to explain to us what has changed overnight. Because just yesterday we heard the Minister speak against this amendment. We heard the Chief Minister mocking it and the requirement for £100,000. His tone was certainly mocking. Of course the comments rejected ...

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

Sir, may I just ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Only if you are prepared to give way.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Sir, no, I do not give way. I stand by what I said. There was a clear mocking of this amendment yesterday from the Chief Minister, which was not very Chief Ministerly, if I could say so. What has changed overnight? What deal has been done behind closed doors? Could the Chief Minister perhaps address that in his speech? I was really pleased to hear the Minister speak in favour of this very simple amendment and Deputy Miles gave an excellent speech. I know the plans are not very popular in this Government and it is an easy line and a popular line to repeat. The Constable of St. Helier has very clearly, I think, stated why plans and masterplans in particular have lost favour among certain sectors of the public because they have not been dealt with properly. However, a good plan can in fact be a boost for business. It can replace the fiscal stimulus that we are not offering businesses by bringing people together, engaging with our public, listening to what they want to see in and around their area and helping businesses to understand that and then respond to it. Businesses spend sometimes millions of pounds going through processes, designs to invest in facilities, such as the plans for the Watersplash that the Deputy spoke of for St. Ouen's Bay. The frustration that those businesses experience after making that significant investment in the planning process, only to be knocked back and carried on for many, many years sometimes. That just simply whittles away any funds that they had set aside for that investment. It delivers nothing or it means that what is delivered is a lesser result than what was originally intended. That is not good for anybody, it is not good for members of our community, it is not good for our tourists and it is not good for our business people who decide to maybe go and make their investments elsewhere, rather than investing in their facilities in the Island, which is what we all want to see. I have many points to make but I simply wanted to add that as a new point, that having a clear plan and enacting a clear plan can be really good for business. I hope that delivering a clear plan for the west of the Island will help to encourage investment in our facilities from both the public sector and the private. I am delighted to hear that the Government has finally decided to accept this amendment.

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

I want to say, first of all, I am delighted that the amendment has been accepted and I was delighted with Deputy Miles's speech. There was barely a word I did not agree with in that speech, except, as I whispered to Deputy Miles, missing out with the Parish of St. Lawrence when it comes to those Parishes which regularly use Les Quennevais. It is not just St. Brelade, St. Ouen, St. Mary, St. Peter, St. Lawrence does too and I have a funny feeling that the residents of St. John may as well. It is the town that never was, in my mind, Les Quennevais. When you go back to the 1950s and 1960s the kind of development of Les Quennevais, I do not know if ever there was a plan. But to me, as an Islander and I speak purely as someone who has lived most of his life in this Island and my view of Les Quennevais is that it is a big suburban area; it is not really a town. It is more, in my mind, suburbia but it should be a town. It needs to be a town but it has never been planned as a town. I think that does need to change. One of the benefits I thought of when I think we are all realising that the Bridging Island Plan is really a failed Island Plan but one of the benefits I did see in that was the idea of beginning to treat Les Quennevais as a town. I think that would be hugely beneficial to the residents of the area because it will create a centre, a gathering point, a point of focus, which, in my mind, just as an Islander, is something that has never been the case. It has never had a point of focus. If any, it is Les Quennevais Parade but what is Les Quennevais Parade when you look at it? It is a very big car park surrounded by a few buildings and a few shops.

[10:15]

I do not say that to demean it, I have used it many, many times but it could be so much more than it is. I appreciate all the issues around private ownership, I do and I know that is difficult. But when Deputy Miles then speaks about issues like private ownership, et cetera and criticises Government for never really wanting to grapple with these issues, I have to agree. I think successive Governments have not wanted to grapple with those issues; they are knotty, they are difficult but we do need to. Because I think the Island would benefit hugely from Les Quennevais becoming more of a town and less of suburbia. But we do have to plan our way out of it to some extent. It is interesting, the Connétable of St. Helier has, to my mind, often called for an all-of-town masterplan, so I know he is not that against masterplans. But I do know that the danger of masterplans is that they happen, they get put on a shelf, they are a paper-based exercise at the end of the day. But I think in Les Quennevais we do need a kind of guiding light, a focal point. There was just one other thing in Deputy Miles' speech which I wanted to highlight because I strongly agree - the Connétable of St. Peter may or may not agree, I do not know - but the Deputy mentioned the surrounding area of the airport potentially being used for economic development and that is something which I strongly agree with. I think that is an area, just on the margins of the airport area basically. I think that is an area we can have some land set aside for economic development. Because one of the failings of the Bridging Island Plan is that it gave us no economic development area. It is a massive problem for the Island and, as a result of that, we have seen commercial prices rising and rising and it becomes more difficult then to start businesses in the Island. I am fully supportive of this and I am delighted that, as a Government, we are able to accept it. Yes, I will call it a day there, to everyone's relief.

1.1.6 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I will join those Members who congratulated Deputy Miles on her speech. I think what I particularly liked about it was there was passion, passion for something that she believes in. I think that that contrasts really. I do not want to be negative about the Government, I am very pleased that the Minister has accepted this amendment and late is better than never. But I do recall we had debates, well not debates, we had a question session in the States where we tried to put this higher up the agenda and it did not find favour then but it is better late than never. I am glad to see it reinstated and I am glad to see the Minister speaking with conviction about the need for it. Several people have picked up there has been a rather negative attitude from this Government, I think, in general about anything that smacks of strategic planning or which has consultation in it and so on. It is portrayed as just talk and the focus is on delivery. I think Deputy Miles's speech made the very strong case, as did Deputy Jeune yesterday in a different context talking about the accounting methods and so on, about the way that strategic thinking, vision and planning are central to effective delivery; that is what gives you effective delivery. I accept that there has been a long record of failure around masterplans and so on but we are not prisoners of the past. We hold our own future in our hands. The key difference about this particular masterplan is that it is part of a process, a process described in legislation to bring forward an Island Plan. It does not just sit on a shelf and vanish because it has to be referenced in the next Island Plan. It is the basis of the next Island Plan. Given that the Island Plan is going to be extended, as the Minister just said, it is doubly important that we have a pipeline of work, consistent, steady pipeline of work that will prepare us for that, so that we do not arrive suddenly with a need to do an Island Plan and a whole backlog of work that needs to be done at record-breaking pace. That is when you end up bringing in lots of consultants and so on because you have suddenly got to do a huge amount in a short space of time. The pipeline of work is important. A couple of points of substance, I think this question of, what do we mean by a second urban centre in Les Quennevais, which Deputy Morel raised in his speech, is fundamental? Nobody knows what it means. Is it a town? Is it just about developing more facilities? Is it to be a commuter belt for a town, for St. Helier, with just a few shops? These are fundamental questions that can be addressed and should be addressed. The closure of the branch bank recently leaving us with just one bank there is a really big issue and it would be seen completely differently, that decision, if there was a planning framework which boosted the notion of Les Quennevais as a centre for these kind of facilities, with sufficient interest from Government that the bank might want to go and talk to Government before

they make a decision like that because they could see that there was commitment to that region. They might want to say: “We could share facilities with you perhaps. Are you interested in a shared facility where other banks or maybe the Government could hold a building?” Those things would be different I think. I do want to talk about Les Creux briefly. It is emblematic to me of the potential of the opportunities that we sometimes miss out on here. There is an extraordinary opportunity at Les Creux because the bowls club which used to occupy it no longer wants to run that site. At the very same time the farmers have given up the tenancy on the fields that make up the Country Park around it. That creates a terrific opportunity to reinvent and reimagine what we do on that site, a huge site, many, many fields and a set of facilities, of community facilities, embryonic I would say of what could be so much more. We have an astronomy facility there, we have the pump track, we have the bowls club building. There is so much that could happen there and there is so much energy from the community to try and get involved in it. All they need is that commitment from Government to do something there, to say: “We will start a process to see what works here.” I think so often that all we ask for is that little extra thing from Government to say: “We are behind this.” I think Les Creux, this amendment allows us to start that process of engagement, the potential for a masterplan for that area. I think all we need to do is release the energy that would come from that. I would echo the comments that there are so many opportunities that will come from this. I think it is a really good piece of work. It has to happen anyway. Let us get on with it and it is great that the Government has seen that. I really am feeling much more optimistic as a result of that.

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

I will be brief. Yes, I do support this amendment and I am delighted it has been accepted. Quennevais, as Deputy Miles has pointed out, is a very rundown area but I appreciate the problems, it is in private ownership. But I am sure arrangements could be made and it is the whole area that certainly needs brightening up. I will make a comment regarding planning, I think mention was made of a public house and the neighbours did not want it converted, if I heard that correctly. But tastes are changing, money is tight and people are not drinking as much as they used to, which could be a good thing. Is it right to compel someone to keep a business open that is no longer economically viable? Talking of which Les Quennevais has recently lost one of its banks, again, more and more people are banking online. Not myself, being an oldie I do not trust banking online and I know many people, including seniors, do not trust banking online. In St. Saviour we had 4 banks; we had one in Georgetown, Miladi Farm and 2 at Five Oaks, which not only serviced the Parish of St. Saviour but also our friends to the north and east of us; 3 of them had car parks, it was very handy. Now if you are dealing in cash in any shape or form you have to come into St. Helier. If they try to close your last bank, please fight like a wild cat because it will go and everything will be central in St. Helier the way things are going. But I will leave it at that. I am delighted that the amendment has been approved and so please spend it wisely.

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

I too am happy to support this amendment and the question was asked, where was the money found? While working with colleagues we found a solution to delay some of our programmes so that we can do this important work. The public realm is not limited to St. Helier. If you go around the Island you can see the great work that was done at St. Aubin, St. Mary, that may be questionable in some people’s eyes but a lot of public realm work was done in St. Mary, St. Lawrence, Trinity more recently and more recently in St. John. I would encourage the Deputy to look at not only this plan but also to work with parishioners. Deputy Renouf spoke about the energy within the Parish. I think it was about 16 years ago I became the vice-chair of the Comité Rurale de St. Jean. That is a committee that is elected at a Parish Assembly for a 3-year term and we have contributed to the last 2 Bridging Island Plans. Looking at, what can we do as a Parish to contribute to the Island? I am really pleased to have been a member of that group that supported rezoning fields for affordable homes and for right-sized properties. I am also proud of that group because now probably 25 years after trying we now have a playing field for the school. Again, that group of parishioners supported

the rezoning of a field for a playing field and also some much needed affordable homes. Members may be interested to know that the Constable is not the chair of that committee. In fact the Connétable is an *ex-officio* member of that committee. I am due to meet with the Deputies to discuss Les Creux next week because there is opportunity there, both for recreational and sporting facilities. Deputy Miles mentioned mains drains, mains drains is not just an issue in the west of the Island. Sadly, mains drains and mains water is an issue right across the Island and something that we are trying to work with. We will see in this Budget the significant investment to try and get that work going further. The Deputy also mentioned about how good it would be to have a bus. I am delighted to tell the Deputy that I have been working since elected as Minister for Infrastructure to get a bus to go from the east to the west, now that we have the Enid Quenault Centre at St. Brelade. Many parishioners would find it much easier to get on one bus, rather than 2 and I hope to be able to bring that to fruition next year. The toilets at La Pulente were also mentioned, we are in a legal process to ensure that those toilets are open. But when you look at Quennevais precinct, 3½ years ago when I became Constable, St. John's precinct had 2 empty shops and a third considering closing. I have worked with those businesses, it is privately owned, the development. I have worked with the business owners and I am delighted to say we have a thriving precinct. I would invite Members to come and look at the facilities there on a Saturday but I warn them they may struggle to park.

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

I will be very, very brief. I absolutely welcome the amendment brought by Deputy Miles and delighted that the Government has accepted it. I think the question that I have, as other Members have, is what has changed overnight? I do think the Minister should speak as to what has changed in terms of priorities of this. I wanted to bring an amendment but I apologise to my constituents and my Constable, I said I was going to bring forward an identical amendment for the Five Oaks masterplan because Five Oaks needs it. We have got money in the Parish from the Connétable Ozouf Fund to make a real and meaningful difference in terms of housing and as a result of some Parish Assembly excellent initiatives that the Constable wants to pursue in terms of community facilities. But I regret that we cannot do that because there is no plan for Five Oaks. Five Oaks at St. Saviour is, like St. Brelade, a densely populated, heavy traffic area. Infrastructure, our public spaces, many of which are looked after by St. Saviour and some of which is done by the States. I understand the importance of planning. I have also some memories for the Constable of St. Helier, the EDAW plan was done in 1995, that was before even I was in this Assembly, 1995, so it was a long time ago. To criticise something that was, I think, is it 30 years, I think is not quite right? I know I ditched the EDAW plan when I was, unfortunately, given president of Environment and Public Services.

[10:30]

This is the last amendment of this Budget that has been happening and I warmly congratulate Deputy Miles and the other Deputies and Deputy Tadier for doing it. Of course I feel rather bad because Five Oaks, I did not manage to get my amendment in because I was trying to get mine in and I did not do it and I am sorry. But I would just like to understand what we have to do to get the Government to prioritise and deliver plans for areas that are equally ... no, it is I want a win/win, I want a win for Les Quennevais and I would like a win for my Constable and our St. Saviour Deputies that are not members of the Executive, to get a plan for our Five Oaks because it really, really matters. What the Constable said was absolutely right.

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

I do appreciate Deputy Miles trying to prioritise a west of Island planning framework. I am sure that the concept will have the support of most political representatives from the west of the Island and others. I too thank her for her brilliant speech, which summed up relevant issues in our Parish and what might be described as her credible wish list. We have all got those and together I am sure we can achieve a better place to live for parishioners. While I agree with some of the challenges the Deputy puts forward, there are some that are easy wins but others that are, regrettably, maybe a bit more difficult and time-consuming to resolve. The principal challenge, in my view, is the condition

of Les Quennevais Parade. This has been alluded to by others, albeit in the full knowledge that it is home to some 38 parishioners, either as tenants or flying freeholders. My research indicated that the complex is owned by a company which purchased it in 2006. The residential apartments, as I mentioned before, people's homes, are in multiple ownerships, those 38 apartments and, in addition, 33 garages. Most of the commercial units are let, save 2 units in the precinct which were sold in 2021. There is inevitably a degree of turnover dictated by the individual circumstances of the commercial tenants. The catchment area, coupled with parking provision, make it very attractive from a commercial point of view but public information indicates that while the owners have a loan on a property the cost is well covered by rental income and with a surplus added would, in my view, give them no incentive to carry out any refurbishment or regeneration. Redevelopment of the whole site would require the buy-out of the numerous owners and result in the rehousing of 38 occupiers. This would be a very complex and costly exercise and the development appraisal just would not stack up, given the acquisition costs, the rebuild costs and the fact that you would be unlikely to achieve higher rentals. I was in fact told that the precinct is performing better than Queen Street in terms of occupancy. Although that sounds negative, while notwithstanding that circumstances may change with the owners, who knows? We just have to wait and see. Improvements to the open spaces and car-parking areas could benefit from some soft landscaping but this would need to be funded by commercial tenants and apartment owners. Surely I do not think it can be for Government or indeed the Parish to be putting funding into a privately-owned complex. Notwithstanding that I would be keen to see improvements to the site but I think we can be sure that it will not be happening soon unless, as I alluded before, there is a change of ownership. We know that the Sports Centre needs an upgrade. We discussed maintenance earlier in this debate and that will, I hope, be factored into future sports budgets. We are quite well off in St. Brelade for cycling and walking provision, apart from La Route de Noirmont. Discussions are underway with the Infrastructure Department on that. We will just have to see what we can achieve. I am grateful for the Infrastructure Department for looking at these areas, although I have to say I do anticipate some revolt, if I can use that word, from the residents at the Noirmont area when the road is resurfaced towards the end of January and the turmoil that will ensue. The St. Brelade's Bay Improvement Plan is advanced but its completion is unfunded. We know that and I am sure Deputy Scott will not allow this situation to persist for much longer. I am aware of Deputy Renouf's ambitions for Les Creux and I am pleased to have heard him outline those. But the harsh reality is they are not funded and there does not seem to be any funding in sight. It is fair to say that residents from St. Brelade are diverse in their needs and we do have to do what we can to evolve towards a changing society. Let us see whether the matters alluded to can be advanced, as the Deputy suggests, without too much further delay.

1.1.11 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

We have had a lot of criticism of Government and I am not one to shy away from that normally but it seems to me that they have done us all a favour, not least the St. Brelade representatives. I think they need to be thanked, rather than criticised for, first of all, accepting this and I do not know who the movers necessarily were behind the scenes. But clearly there was a pragmatic approach taken here. There is a recognition that what is being asked for here for the work at Les Quennevais is not just something that will benefit the immediate residents or even the representatives of that area but it is for everybody in Jersey because it is widely used. Of course I do add my thanks to Deputy Miles and the others who have spoken so far because we do really stand shoulder to shoulder in this proposition. I am also minded of the fact that I am really grateful, as perhaps a longer-serving Deputy for, initially, Les Quennevais and La Moye and then now for St. Brelade. It is really great to have colleagues within the Parish that I can work with constructively and that goes for all of the representatives, from the Constable to the other 3 Deputies. Because there was a time when I very much felt myself as - I am not going to say - the sole Deputy but I considered myself very much and maybe I was considered as the M.P. (Member of Parliament) for Les Quennevais and La Moye for many years. It was very difficult to try and get things done when you had just 2 Deputies, effectively, representing Les Quennevais out of an Assembly of 53 Members. Now of course the people of Les

Quennevais, La Moye and all of St. Brelade can call on 4 Deputies and a Constable out of 49 Members in this Assembly. They are better represented in that respect. But it is not enough and it is great when other Members come on board and share the vision that we all have. It has been a wide-ranging debate so far but I am going to restrict it to what is on the paper today, in particular Les Quennevais because that is what we are discussing. I can remember of course what Les Quennevais used to be like when I grew up there. I remember Pickwicks, I remember Panico's, I remember the fishmonger, I remember Roosters and if you just went a little bit further up the road you had Machon's. Machon's was where I had my first morning paper round at the age of 12. If that sounds outrageous by today's standards I had my *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* paper round when I was still at primary school, so I do not think anyone necessarily believes me. I will not go on in that vein because it will start to sound like a Monty Python sketch if I say how hard it was when we were growing up back in those days. But I also remember we had the big Le Riches and the small Le Riches, I do not know if other people called it that. But the big Le Riches is where Waitrose is now and we would walk up from Don Farm, because that was quite far away, on a Saturday or after school and you would go there and you would look at the C.D.s (compact discs) down below and you would have the main store. Of course the little Le Riches - let us get our teeth in straight - we called it Grand Fare and that is where we would take our bottles back. Just to show how young I am we got 10 full pence for every bottle we returned. It was not anything to do with shillings or anything like that. How the world has changed, how Les Quennevais has very much changed. In some ways it has not all got better. Because in terms of the environmentalism ... and we have had some comments from the Constable of St. Helier about parking and I will get on to that in a moment. That idea of taking your bottle back, that is some great wisdom that we do not have any more but we are not here to talk about recycling or the Battle of Flowers, so let us get back on track. The key thing here is that the money in itself is not going to be a silver bullet, we know that. This is really a starting point to try and vocalise some of the energy and get resources and people thinking. I am also really grateful too with what Deputy Miles has done already in the short term that she has been a St. Brelade representative. She has gathered a lot of support from within the community from different sectors of people who want to work on projects, so I think of the Beautiful St. Brelade project. Lots of people who may not have any kind of political aspirations themselves necessarily but are invested in the community because they have shops there, that they live there and they love the area, which we all do. I think that is a really great thing to do but we do need to think outside the box. It is also sometimes quite easy to think it is all futile or that it is somebody else's fault. If we look at the precinct, that was a great quote I thought from the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, is: "Les Quennevais precinct is basically just a car park with loads of shops and buildings around it." You could probably say the same about St. Helier, it is just one big car park with lots of shops, people living there and parks and everything. Maybe the Island is just one big car park, who knows? When we look at the wider Les Quennevais because I want the message to get out there that this is visionary but Les Quennevais is not completely broken either. Les Quennevais, St. Brelade is a great place to live for so many people for so many reasons; it is really sought after. Because it has got all those facilities on its doorstep, people feel they do not need to leave to go to town but it has also got the green backdrop. It has got the beaches, it has got that beautiful Norman church down in the bay. If we want to talk about coming up to the Liberation, 80 years next year, let us look about how we can also tie in some of the great history that we have got for the area. We know that there is an occupational history at the top of the hill but down the bay where, of course, Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore lived. We know this year we celebrate on 8th December the 70th anniversary of Lucy Schwab, who was Claude Cahun, she died 70 years ago after leaving a massive legacy, not just in Jersey but she was a really inspirational woman, along with her partner, Suzanne Malherbe. That kind of thing needs to be commemorated. Maybe I will look at the Constable and my fellow Deputies, would there be any appetite for maybe renaming a road down there somewhere or code-naming a road after Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore to remember what they did? There is a way, I think, to talk up the area generally and also to invest in it. But will we be open to maybe some imaginative thinking? The first thing I think we can do, now that Government has, I think, come on board with

this, is that in addition to the money ... and I have spoken to the Minister for Social Security, she is keen to maybe get involved with having some kind of C.L.S. (Community and Local Services) offering in Les Quennevais, whether it is on a permanent basis or on a pop-up basis. We have already seen the good work that is going on at Communicare with the library. I know that different Deputies use different areas for their surgeries, for example, and these are facilities which can be enhanced. They are already well loved but sometimes they need a bit of investment and T.L.C. (tender loving care) and sometimes a bit of a different way of doing things. I think we need to be open to that. Let us look specifically at Les Quennevais precinct, it is in multiple ownership, which does not make it an easy solution for anything to be done. But I know that when I was briefly at Culture as an Assistant Minister, I did reach out to, I think, Voisin-Hunter who were the administrators at the time, for that area and then Hightide Investments, as we know, are the ones who own the shops there generally and maybe one or 2 of the apartments, which otherwise are in private ownership. They did say to me that they shared the frustrations because they had been working on plans for the area but they had not found the support for it, so it does work both ways. I think if we are to find a solution to this area it needs to be really a 3-way partnership between possibly Government but definitely the community and also the owners of that area to say, what is it that you would like to do with the area that ties in with the wider vision that we have? I think there is great potential there. We do accept that there needs to be parking because people come from afar and near. A lot of people walk up to the precinct; that is the great thing about that area. You can walk up right from almost the airport and from La Moye to Les Quennevais precinct. But we need to say, what is the vision there? The parking underneath, could that somehow be raised? Could there be a way to landscape it so that that is a lot greener, so that the parking is maybe hidden and more practical and that the top area feels more like a park where you want to sit down, have a coffee, much more European potentially? But it will require some imaginative thinking. One example is that when the old Freedom Surf Shop was up for sale I did think to myself and I did put out some feelers, would there be any appetite for the Parish or for the public to acquire that as a building? I did not get any immediate support for that but it could have been a lost opportunity. We must make sure that when there are other opportunities that come up and it could be something - and I am just throwing this out there - it might be a silly idea but it might be workable, could it be that we look to acquire some of those properties as and when they come up and form some kind of community trust that gets to the point where the rents are kept in moderation?

[10:45]

I always look towards the market because the market in town is a great example. There tend to be very few shops, there are very established businesses there and they are established because they can afford to have the continuity because they have got security of tenure. They know generally that they will be able to afford their rents. They are not multinational stores that we see in the market, they are family-run stores, generational stores that provide those services. In terms of looking back - I know this is about looking forward - but it would be nice if we had some of those basics in Les Quennevais. They do not even necessarily need to be in the precinct. But when we talk about fishmongers, butchers, the Hot Bread Shop which I forgot to mention earlier, those kind of bakeries, those are the basics that I think we always need in any community. I look to the Constable of St. John because I think he has done a great job and St. John has done a great job generally in generating that area and there is so much potential. This is about being positive and I will leave it there; 10 minutes is by far sufficient for this kind of debate where a proposition has been already accepted. But I add my voice to the Members of St. Brelade in asking all Members that this is not the end of the matter, this is the beginning and we will rely on Members' support for the good work that we want to do now and into the future in Les Quennevais.

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

As a Deputy of St. Brelade, I am glad the Minister found some money down the back of the sofa for this particular proposition of my fellow Deputy of St. Brelade. I note the sofa was not in the Cabinet

Office. Also, that the proposed improvements for this Route de Noirmont are still being done on a shoestring that is being strung out. I thank Deputy Miles for bringing this proposition and welcome some planning policy attention now being given to the west of the Island to help bring forward the proposition brought by Deputy Tadier, whose efforts I also thank too. I congratulate Deputy Miles and the Constable of St. Brelade for the actions they have taken to improve enjoyment of our very beautiful St. Brelade and thank Deputy Tadier for his conversations with the Minister for Social Security to look into the provisions of a hub. I do not feel widely celebratory about the funding of this proposition for a number of reasons and I will explain why. In that respect I might well refer back to the speech of the Constable of St. Helier. For many years I have acted as chair of the St. Brelade's Bay Association and before then I was a member of a Parish working group that was looking into the delivery of a development plan that had been proposed for the St. Brelade's Bay. These voluntary roles have obliged me to engage with the planning system more than I ever could have wished in any role or walk of life. The role of the Parish working group was constrained by existing planning policy from day one. Indeed, the Minister for the Environment at the time publicly criticised its Members in this States Assembly for seeking to change that policy. He is the Minister for the Environment now, which makes for an interesting dynamic. In Quennevais one of our elderly constituents struggles with the stairs but she cannot find anywhere in the Parish to move into and she does want to stay within the Parish. The Parish needs some changes of policy, including to enable more sheltered housing to be built. What should come first, the change of policy or the development of the planning framework? The Minister for the Environment may not agree with me but I and many of my constituents, potential developers and a number of planning consultants regard the planning policy system as broken. Rather than continuing with it, I suggest we States Members should be looking to replace or reform it radically. I do not mean twiddling around the sides of the system in accordance with the MacKinnon report and how planning officers review applications or proposals to make them more productive in applying the system. I have seen a number of planning officers cite reports over the years recommending measures to make outcomes from engaging with the system more certain and more productive. I suggest it is the planning policy system itself that is unproductive and that it is seriously damaging our economy. In fact part of the problem is that it refers to a system that is used in the U.K. that also has not been hugely economically productive in recent years. The revitalised St. Brelade needs a revitalised economy. You cannot force private landholders to develop if they do not have money or shop holders to set up shop in an area where people are not benefitting from a vibrant economy. I salute the members of the Planning Committee who have done their best to counter some of the absurdities and injustices produced by our current planning policy system as it is. It has the scope for uncertainty, making developers unwilling to sink more funds in developments when they cannot be reasonably certain that they will be approved. The reason for this is that it is a system that is policy and guidance-based, rather than code-based. Policy officers will argue that the benefits of this is flexibility. It certainly produces plenty of work for planning consultants who do not work that cheaply, so I suppose it has got a contribution to the economy there but it has much more punitive effects. People much more experienced than me in attending Planning Committee meetings will have observed how the same planning consultant can argue for or against support for similar planning applications by selecting different groups of policies and speaking to them and that planning officers can do likewise to an extent. Let us talk about process, how did Les Quennevais become the target for proposals to designate it a secondary urban centre, compared to, say, St. Peter's Village? Was that with the choice of its residents or was that a decision imposed upon them from up high? Meanwhile in the continent and in the Antipodes local communities have worked with local governments to develop codes that enable development within clear spatial and design parameters without requiring planning applications at all. Imagine that. I have emailed the Minister for the Environment requesting that the consultation on the next Island Plan ask about consultees' appetite for neighbourhood plans and codes. I have not yet heard back from him. If it is not to be consulted upon, then I will look into discussing with him a proposition to introduce neighbourhood plans that operate as codes in accordance with my manifesto commitments on which I was elected by constituents in St. Brelade. Although such codes may take more work to develop,

they help to create clear vision and preserve neighbourhood characters and dispense with the need for planning officers to process planning applications that fall within agreed design and spatial parameters. In the meantime I remain aware that the west of Island planning framework, if proceeded with, which, essentially, provides produced guidance within the policy structure many would regard as flawed. It is unclear whether west of Island planning framework will be in the Minister's list of priorities, when he has, as he already has mentioned, many priorities. I would be sorry if the work he has initiated on the protection of trees in response to another proposition of mine becomes deprioritised because this work will affect the beauty of St. Brelade too. If the Bridging Island Plan is replaced in the meantime with another Island Plan with all its glorious flaws and contradictory policies to allow flexibility with the west of Island planning framework undelivered, the proposal for west of Island planning framework will need to be presented afresh I suspect, as a new proposal under new planning policies and new funding propose. I have seen this happen with 2 proposals for development or improvement for St. Brelade's Bay in the last 10 years. Funding agreed for the development of those plans only then poured away and the proposals abandoned. I have been there, thought that there was a plan to be brought forward, seen things developed, even a character appraisal in the case of the St. Brelade's development plan that cost close to £100,000 or so to develop and it has not been proceeded with. Again, I have been there, got the t-shirt and I am fed up with wearing it and I no longer am buying it. The infrastructure of the Island's prime beach resort continues to deteriorate with no plan for it and no supporting tax policies even delivered. I have serious concerns whether Quennevais is going to receive much better. In this respect, I refer back to Deputy Jeune's excellent speech in amendment 17 in respect of Le Squez. We are all victims of an unproductive system that make us like incy wincy spider climbing up the spout only to have our efforts washed away by change of Government, lack of resources or other budgetary demands and that is how developers feel engaging with our planning system. We should be empowering communities, not destroying them. Think about the village Júzcar in southern Spain which famously painted itself blue to attract visitors and proved so successful that visitors voted to keep the colour permanently. Contrast that with Jersey where residents of an area may well be consulted and once the stars collide, a proposal produced, funding and a Ministerial priority made but, again, only after a character study has been commissioned from experts, more or less telling everybody what we know already, with recommendations that may well be ignored. The closure of banks in Les Quennevais and the closure of restaurants nearby are the result of an economy that has been damaged by a lack of investor confidence. That uncertainty has been caused by a planning system and we cannot deliver plans without investment. Let us start changing these plans to be productive and enable Islanders to be more productive. As Assistant Minister for the Economy, I have worked with officers to address some planning loopholes that have led to the west losing some key visitor economy sites to housing. But the Bridging Island Plan, our current planning policy and maybe our tax regime needs to be changed to support economic growth more. I remain willing to assist my fellow Parish representatives in seeking to shape the west of Island planning framework with the benefit of the scars of experience, in that respect the speech given by the Constable of St. Helier resonates again. I will join my fellow Members or the Council of Ministers in supporting this amendment but I do so reluctantly for the reasons I have stated. In the meantime I hope States Members will support my advocacy for the promotion of codes, known as neighbourhood plans. As States Members, we should work together with Government officers to produce a better system for everyone, in which communities can be better involved and the constituents, the economy and the public all better served.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? I call upon Deputy Miles to reply.

1.1.13 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I think, first of all, I need to thank Deputy Luce in particular for accepting the amendment but also the Connétable of St. John for finding the funding for what I think, clearly as a result of the debate, is seen to be a very important part of the preparation work for the next Island Plan. I would also like

to thank Connétable Crowcroft, not only for his kind words but for his advice about the challenges and opportunities that are presented by this funding. I would also acknowledge Connétable Vibert's clarification about the bollards out west. I was not aware that there was any agreement there. I was particularly struck by Deputy Morel's view about the town that never was; I thought that was quite a good description of where we are. Again, I just want to reiterate that this money is for a west of Island planning framework and not specifically to be spent to renovate Les Quennevais Parade and precinct.

[11:00]

Yes, that is the heart of the Parish and it is a very important consideration but this funding is for the west of Island framework. I am not going to say too much more. I am absolutely delighted that the Council of Ministers have found the funding to support this amendment; it will deliver value. Thank you, fellow Deputies of St. Brelade and also representatives of the western Parishes for all their support. Finally, my commitment is to engage with the department to ensure that the planning framework delivers the best value and enhances the west of the Island for all Islanders to enjoy. Thank you very much and I call for the appel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Thank you, Deputy. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members present in the Chamber and remotely have been able to cast their votes, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the amendment has been adopted unanimously [**Approbation**]

POUR: 40		CONTRE: 0		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. Helier				
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. Saviour				
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				

Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

1.2 Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024) - as amended

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now return to the Government Plan as amended, does any Member wish to speak on the Government Plan as amended before we go to a final vote on the plan?

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

It has been 5 years since I last voted for a Government Plan and I am absolutely delighted to be in a position to be supporting one this time. This Budget, it is fair to say it looks fairly different to what a Budget would look like if one were being proposed by a Reform Jersey-led Government. There are lots of things that are high up on our list of priorities and things that we believe are vital for a Government in Jersey to achieve if we are to secure a long-term sustainable future for the Island. Because our party accepts the basic premise that Jersey's tax and spend model is broken. I think that the wrangling there has been over some amendments in this debate is an obvious sign of that, that we have the pressures of an ageing population and the higher quality public services that our population I think rightly expects to have the decent standard of living in a wealthy society like Jersey they ought to expect, are not being fulfilled and have not been adequately fulfilled by successive Governments for years now, which is why so many times in the last few years we have had debates on things like health charges, waste charges, all things that we regard as symptoms of the fact that Jersey needs to raise more money to provide those services but Governments have not grasped the nettle on that properly. But we have taken a position on that that we would not support tax rises based on the rather opaque options that previous Governments have looked at, until and only until we have fixed our regressive social security contributions system, scrapped the upper-earnings cap, which, by the way,

if we had done we would not have needed such a divisive debate on the use of the States grants for funding living wage support packages. We need to equalise our income tax system to make it more progressive across the board and doing so would raise enough money for us to not need to think about regressive health charges and the like, which previous Governments have gone for before. But to the credit of the current Chief Minister and the current Government, this Budget I do not think seeks to make that situation worse and is not doing what I think previous Governments have done, which is to hoodwink the public into increasing taxes on them without saying that that is what they were doing. This Government at the start of its term of office said that it was going to keep charges low, would not add extra costs on to Islanders to protect them during the cost of living crisis. This Budget does exactly that, it does not seek to raise regressive taxes on the population of Jersey. It increases tax allowances, it has frozen duties and, in my view, those are the right measures for this time. It also seeks to focus on some of the priorities that were agreed in the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) at the start of this Government term, in particular things that I am extremely delighted to be supporting are the £1.5 million to begin extending nursery places to 2 year-olds to 3 year-olds, something that is going to be absolutely transformational to the children and the families who benefit from that. The £1.2 million to get the school meals programme into more primary schools is a big priority for Reform Jersey that has been over the years, and something I am delighted to see happening. So £2 million extra for First Step with the door open to more funding in the future and, of course, that £10 million next year for the living wage support package to help this journey to abolishing poverty pay in Jersey. Something that we have been campaigning for, for years, and now is finally a reality because of the work that this Government is doing, that this Budget will be doing. It is a far cry from what I remember witnessing in previous years. I know some Members do not like me bringing up this history, but I make no apologies for it, but we have seen real austerity in previous Government Budgets. I remember that worst day I experienced in this Assembly where a Budget was approved that cut £10 million of support for the most vulnerable people in Jersey. This Budget is putting £10 million in supporting abolishing poverty pay. What a change that has been and a change I am delighted to support and delighted to be a part of. Of course times are tough and there has not been the expansion of projects in this Budget that I might have liked to have seen. There is the moratoria on the hiring of new civil servants on high salaries, which of course does not apply to front line staff so that is a material difference that there has been from previous austerity Budgets, and something that I think is justifiable at this moment in time. While this Budget may not be as radical as a Budget would be if it were being proposed by a Reform Jersey-led Government, it is a Budget that makes really good progress on some key items. That I think at the end of this term we will be able to say to our constituents, forgetting all of the usual political hot air and bluster, there are items in here that will have improved people's lives that we can point to be proud of and say to the public of Jersey that when you do politics properly you can make a difference and you can improve their lives. That is why, for the first time in 5 years, I am delighted to be able to support a Government Budget.

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

My speech is going to be in 2 parts. First, I will briefly touch on the comments paper produced by my panel. Before I go into the detail of that comments paper, I want to extend my thanks to my panel and to the panel's officers. We are very lucky to have excellent Scrutiny officers working for the panel. They have worked very hard on this and produced a comprehensive comments paper. One of the overarching concerns of the panel is the sustainability of funding mechanisms for healthcare services. When the S.L.C. (Scrutiny Liaison Committee) questioned the Chief Minister on the Budget, we discussed the rate of growth in healthcare spending and the fact that it is not sustainable. The Minister for Health and Social Services has spoken to the panel in public hearings about the healthcare inflation, which we heard from the Minister is rising a lot higher than regular inflation. This is a key concern of the panel, and one of our key recommendations is that the Minister for Health and Social Services should produce a plan to reform Jersey's healthcare funding model, and that he should do that before the end of this Government's term of office. I see that as one of the most important things that needs to be done because the health of our Islanders ... without good health then

nothing else can be enjoyed. It is absolutely critical that this is focused on. Secondly, the rationale behind the utilisation of the reserve funds to purchase the government headquarters building. The panel found that this did not align with the fund's intended use. Also that the reduction of the States grant payment into the Social Security Fund, which would support the transition to a living wage scheme, I think we are not disagreeing with the support mechanisms for the living wage scheme but it is separately, and in terms of the responsibility of the panel, we do have a responsibility to look at how that fund is being utilised. We found that we did not agree with the way that was being utilised. Of course, this has been covered in the debate and the States has made its decision on that, but I just raise that so that Members can note that it was a panel finding. We did note that that was a recurring theme within the Budget. For good or bad, I am not sure in each case because there is a level of creativity there, but also perhaps finding creative ways sometimes creates some unforeseen issues and also sets trends which future Governments may be creative in ways that we do not agree with. That is something to watch out for. Also the panel noted that a lack of resource and staffing was a cause for delay in the progression of many workstreams. This needs to be looked at, and sufficient resourcing and future planning should be factored in prior to workstreams and priorities being initiated, with the aim of delivering improvements to services for Islanders. In terms of I.V.F. (in-vitro fertilisation) funding, the panel were pleased of the allocation of £620,000 for this workstream; that is a positive step forward. But we have found, following submissions from several Island organisations, that more work is needed to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for Islanders. We are urging the Minister to review the funding associated with this workstream to reassess the criteria and also, critically - this has been a theme in our scrutiny of Health - the decision to not follow N.I.C.E. (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidelines, we are concerned about that. I am not going to go into too much detail on the comments because I hope that Members have considered them. What I will now do is discuss ... actually, first of all, before I move on to my general views as a States Member, I do want to thank the Minister for Health and Social Services for accepting the panel's amendment around the Termination of Pregnancy Law. There has been some backwards and forwards on this, and I was really pleased at the final stages of lodging this amendment to have some constructive discussions with the Minister for Health and Social Services and his officers. I was aided by my Scrutiny officers on that. We had several iterations of this amendment that we discussed with the Minister, and we were able to get to an agreement. I think also what was pivotal in that is the amount of Islanders who contributed to the consultation on this area which, of course, was initiated by the previous Minister for Health and Social Services. But that public interest is key. Not just for Scrutiny but for any parts of our democracy. Islanders showing an interest in topics that are important to them really does make a difference. The fact that the panel had so much data that members of the public had contributed their views, the panel was able to be very certain about the fact that this was an area of public interest and there was a clear direction that the public wanted to go with it.

[11:15]

Thank you to the Minister for accepting that amendment, and the panel will be asking for regular updates on the progress of that work to reform the termination of pregnancy legislation. I will move to some general points about the Budget. I want to pick up on something that Deputy Mézec said about early years funding. I am very pleased that early years continues to be prioritised. I do still have some questions, however. I wonder if either the Minister for Children and Families or the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, or even perhaps the chair of the relevant Scrutiny Panel, is able to assist me on this, because I have asked the question in the Assembly and I was not able to fully understand this. But the money that is in this Budget for 2 to 3 year-olds, and it is a targeted amount of money, targeted at 2 to 3 year-olds with additional needs. It looks to me like this is a continuation of the funding that was a growth bid in the previous Government Plan, as it were. My question is: is this funding on top of that previous growth bid? Is it an additional amount? Are there additional families being helped? Obviously, the children, the 2 year-olds who were accessing this last year will be a different cohort of 2 year-olds but is it a greater number of 2 year-olds that are

able to access this extra funding? But generally on early years, I am really pleased to see that it is a priority. This is really good and it is not just being made a priority but the values that I had put into that workstream around quality, affordability and accessibility are still there as the golden threads throughout those policies. I see the Minister has also added choice. So there is some kind of growth and development of that thinking around there. In a previous speech in a previous sitting, the Minister mentioned how early years had been increasingly focused on by successive Ministers. I want to thank a previous Senator, Deputy Vallois, because it was her who established the Early Years Policy Development Board and published a report with recommendations. It was Senator Vallois who started the Assembly down this road, urged by, of course, myself and other Members who were interested in early years. I hope the Assembly will continue to focus on this area. I do think that we need to put a lot more investment into this area, and that is something that I believed in the previous Government, and as Assistant Minister, I was aiming to achieve that. Obviously, it needs agreement of Government, but I urge this Government, in next year's Budget, to put a lot more investment into this area, because we need to be offering some universal hours to the 2 to 3 year-olds. I believe that is on the Minister's plan. It must be done in conjunction with both the States and the private settings. I know it is very difficult to take everybody's views and make sure that everybody is listened to, but I encourage and urge the Minister to continue doing that and to continue with those key themes and values of quality, affordability and accessibility. With quality, I think, being the most important and the needs of the children being at the heart of any investment there. I want to touch on the S.L.C. hearing with the Chief Minister. I thought it was a good hearing, it was a really good opportunity for all the Scrutiny chairs to question the Chief Minister on the general themes. We questioned the Chief Minister on his vision for the Island, and one of the questions that I asked and one of the themes which I had suggested was around people and what impact does this Budget have for certain demographic groups for certain types of people living in our Island. I have raised questions about this and I think had some positive responses. The Chief Minister has committed to considering the needs of these groups in the Cost-of-Living Ministerial Group; for example, single parents, elderly people and those living with a disability. There will be other groups that are affected in different ways by this Budget. The Chief Minister, and indeed the Minister for External Relations was also at that hearing, they were able to name some of their policies after some thinking time. They were able to name some policies that help these groups but the feeling that I got was that it was a bit of an afterthought, that these policies had not been targeted specifically at these groups. When Government is developing a vision what I would like to see is that these vulnerable groups are considered seriously from the start and that policies are developed accordingly. Because there are groups of people on our Island that have intersectional ... they have characteristics that mean our policies impact them in different ways, either in positive ways or negative ways, and I think an understanding of that is really important. This is one of the reasons why I was really disappointed that Deputy Miles's amendment, first of all that it was not accepted in full and, secondly, that it was approved only as amended because having that data on what life is like for different types of Islanders is so critical. One message I will send to Government is please, please, please find the money to carry out the Jersey Lifestyle and Opinion Survey every year; that is really important. I have used the data from that survey in so many pieces of work that I have done. It is absolutely critical in helping us understand what Islanders are thinking and what Islanders are going through and what their lives are like. Generally, the social policies within this Budget do mostly align with my values. Again, some of the other amendments that I have lodged beyond the panel amendment were accepted. I think another 2 amendments, and even one amendment that I was preparing to draft after this was brought to my attention by a member of the media, and indeed I spoke out about it in the media, the Chief Minister saw that TV report and resolved to find the funding, and it was for the Move More toddler sessions. The conversation I had with the Chief Minister, I was really heartened by it because he did take that immediate action and resolve to continue the funding. That showed to me that he was listening to Islanders and that he is able to take those decisions to prioritise the things that Islanders want the Budget to go towards because that is ... the money that we are allocating we should be allocating it to things that are important to Islanders. I do have a caveat, so the Move More toddler sessions, I am grateful that the

Chief Minister is finding the funding for that this year but there does need to be a sustainable plan for those sessions going forward. It really concerns me that Jersey Sport feel that it is not in its remit to provide these sessions. I am not actually certain which Minister is responsible for this now, because Sport tends to move around.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, the bell has gone. You have had your 15 minutes.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you, Sir. I could not see the timer. Thank you.

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

I am pleased to follow the chair of my Scrutiny Panel. I look forward to working closely with the panel over the coming year. The passing of this Budget will mark a significant moment for hard-working people on lower incomes in this Island. This Budget will enable me, as Minister for Social Security, to take the steps to raise the minimum wage and work towards the Assembly's aim of a living wage for all Islanders. Despite the tight financial situation, I have been able to make sure that income support uprates are secure and will be made in January at above the cost-of-living rate. The Budget will enable me to continue the work that I am doing in relation to income support, modernising income support, promoting it to people who may apply and also continuing to develop our policies and make them more fit for purpose. I am also intending to look at eligibility for some of our means-tested pensioner benefits as well. I will continue other schemes that the department have been prioritising, such as the WorkWell scheme, which enables people to return to work while they are recovering from illness. Also, of course, the disability and inclusion work, which is so important to me and a real priority. I was pleased to be able to accept Deputy Doublet's amendments to the Government Plan, which provides further support to Connect Me and, of course, the social prescribing programme will continue to develop in 2025 along with Community Connectors. I was also pleased to be able to work closely with the Minister for Health and Social Services and Deputy Gardiner to provide a solution for Cheshire Homes as well. Collaborative working is incredibly important to me as a Minister, and this Budget has been done in collaboration across the Ministerial team. I look forward to working in 2025 to achieve the outcomes across our Ministerial portfolios. I also look forward to moving into the new government building. I think that the decision made yesterday is a win-win for Islanders. The government building will be more accessible, more inclusive, and I make my commitment as the Minister for Social Security to continue to work to make sure that Islanders feel comfortable and confident to come to my department and request the help that they need.

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

Sorry, I was just making an additional note that Deputy Feltham inspired me. But talking of inspiration, there have been many literary quotes and particularly in relation to *Lord of the Rings* during the course of this debate. I have enjoyed the humour and the levity that they have brought. They also helped me to recall that my father - bless him - spent many hours reading *The Hobbit* to my sister and myself. Unfortunately though I did not really enjoy *The Hobbit* and I guess that is why I became a journalist, as I prefer to deal in fact and evidence rather than in fantasy. *Alice in Wonderland* has also been quoted much during the course of this week, and I have to say I do feel a little bit like Alice who has stepped through that keyhole and found a world where all is not quite what it seems. For all the bluster, and frankly some unkind words, we just have to look at the F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel) who reported quite simply on the Budget and gave us the evidence. To quote the F.P.P.: "This Government Plan shows a 3 per cent increase in expenditure of £103 million over 2025 to 2027 compared to the Government Plan of 2024. This is net of a proposed saving programme worth £47 million per annum." We learnt last night in the coverage of the Health Board's meeting that the Health budget is going to end up with a greater overspend than predicted, an extra £3 million. So the outturn will actually be even greater than the F.P.P. had thought. It seems the Minister for

Health and Social Services has not been able to deliver the changes that the financial recovery programme had identified. If the Minister for Health and Social Services, who we all remember claimed in January he had all the answers but has distinctly struggled to answer any when they have been put to him in this Chamber, if he cannot meet the challenge of the job then I think it would be helpful if they could describe why.

[11:30]

Given that there has been public investment in expert support for Health in the form of a turnaround team, what help for the rest of the Ministers? Can we have the confidence that this Government will do what it says. Actions speak louder than words. Yet what action have we seen to date? Not a lot. Minimal communication and a bit of repackaging. To quote another literary great, Oscar Wilde: “I guess I can take some comfort that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” Deputy Mézec earlier referred to the early years work, the school meals and other projects that were brought forward initially by the previous Government. I called it “simplify and stop” because yes, annual growth has to be curbed; we agree. But there is a new name now, “reprioritisation” replacing “simplify and stop” and also the value-for-money programme. But despite this, starting under the previous Government, there is still no clear plan. It is a matter of public record that I asked Ministers and officials to stop and simplify in both 2022 and 2023. This work began, but like many other projects that were on the table, just like the Le Squez Youth Club, they have been left in limbo all year. It is quite frankly inexcusable. There is still no clarity on the plan for delivering this saving programme, simply salami-slicing cuts without a plan. That is perhaps why, rather than reducing expenditure, this Budget proposes a 3 per cent increase on the former Government’s projections. Yesterday’s debate on the Transform project helped perhaps to identify what has happened. A major project that has increased by 50 per cent. It is now costing the public an extra £10 million more than projected last year, but there is no detailed explanation as to why. It seems that it is simply the cost of the delay that this Government itself has caused. How can these examples give confidence that the Government has got spending under control at all? As Deputy Ozouf said earlier, they are both perhaps penny and pound foolish. There is a commitment to remove management layers and to curb growth in the public sector. Again, something we can agree on. But where is the plan? All we have seen so far is that those who want to take voluntary redundancy have left and they tidy up behind them as they walk away. That is no way to transform the public service. Just when they were recovering from the previous Alliance-led Government and the damage they did along with their chief executive - the male one - the Alliance gang return in sheep’s clothing and hang the guillotine above the door again. Transformation needs a plan and it needs leadership. Instead I am afraid Deputy Farnham descends to playing a blame game. He claims he is tidying up a mess but of course what he forgets or perhaps avoids is that until June 2022 he was the Deputy Chief Minister of the former Alliance-led Government; yes, the one that the Reform Party also voted against in previous Budgets. It was my Government who were tidying up the mess that he and his gang had created. It is probably best not to carry on with the blame game because it is unedifying. But the government building that Deputy Feltham just referred to is also perhaps a good example. That was inspired by a former Chief Minister - the one before me - and I think yesterday’s decision was a very sad moment, not only to solidify that unfortunate decision to go ahead with that building in the first place when there was a cheaper alternative available to the public money. But also in this time when there is a different approach to commercial space, I think we have missed out on doing a better deal that could have been struck and therefore had lesser impact on the public purse and delivered a better investment for the Social Security Reserve Fund. But there we are. Change is needed, but effective change needs clear rationale and strategy for it to be delivered. Living under threat does nothing but damage morale and productivity. To provide an example, the first that public servants knew about the decision for the interim chief executive to stay for a further 2 years, I am told, was when they saw it in the news. It is hard not to despair, and forgive me for not being more light-hearted. This year has been difficult, it has been depressing, but this debate confirms to me that this Government is simply a project of folly. The Assembly was told in January that there would be great leadership. To quote a constituent

who visited their Deputies in St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter at a recent surgery, in their view the leadership is invisible. What has this all been about? What did we have the delay and the reversal of direction that the public voted for? The fulfilment of a cosy deal behind the old boys' club is to revert to the status quo. Let me just remind you that all was clearly not what the public voted for in 2022. Times are hard. Is there a fiscal stimulus plan to boost the construction industry? No. Instead we are being asked to vote for public money to be loaned to privately-invested medicinal cannabis businesses, while critical public services have had to slice 20 per cent off their budgets. Unable to explain what their strategy is, unable to find the time to read the documents or to be on top of their brief, unable to fully explain why the budget for an I.T. (information technology) project has increased by 50 per cent. I hear that what the strategy actually is, is to do nothing, say nothing and get re-elected so we can have another 4 years of this. Deputy Tadier asked on Wednesday what will be the legacy of this Government Plan. Well, from what we have heard and not heard this week, the legacy, in my view sounds a bit like this. A Government Plan of increased spending, delay, lack of action, lack of vision, lack of strategy. A Government increasing spending, not decreasing spending. The sense is that there is a poverty of ambition for our Island and its people. I guess that is what defines the difference between conviction politicians and those who merely seek a title. This is, I acknowledge, simply a protest speech. Believing as I do in evidence-based decision-making, I have tried to stick to evidence and facts. I am fully aware that speaking out will incur the wrath of Government Members, but I can hardly be less unpopular. This is why I have kept my own counsel for most of the year. However uncomfortable it is, it is important for the public record, however, to set out clearly what the continuing loyalty of Members to this Government is propping up. In closing, I simply remind Members that there were key themes we consistently heard from the public during the election. The public wanted to see change, they wanted to see compassion, transparency and accountability and an end to the old boys' club. Does this Government deliver on those hopes? In my view, it is sadly lacking and I cannot support it.

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

I raise just to say a few words on behalf of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel. As Members will have seen, the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel published their Budget review last week. It is the first review that has been produced since the new Government formed following the vote of no confidence in 2024. Each Scrutiny Panel individually reviewed their own elements of the Budget and the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel conducted the overarching review. Our report provides some detailed commentary on many of the specific proposals, some of which have been debated over the last few days, and I commend it to Members as a very good read. We have made recommendations and quite a few findings. The Budget debate is an important milestone for the States Assembly to determine the tax and spending priorities for the following year, which we note have changed considerably compared to previous years. I think of particular note, the Budget was lodged earlier than usual to allow detailed scrutiny. In practice we do not feel that this has worked particularly well as insufficient information was provided to fully understand the thinking behind and the impact of many of the proposals. That meant work on this review was challenging due to the delay in receiving responses to the panel's requests for information, and we hope that these delays will not be repeated in future years. Missing updates on 2024 progress, Ministerial priorities and 2025 business plans hindered transparency. In terms of our public engagement, we were quite pleased that Democracy Week coincided with the pre-Budget period. In September, the panel held several pop-up consultation events across the Island and we are grateful to everybody who stopped and spoke to us and spent time expressing their views and concerns about this Budget. Members of the other Scrutiny Panels were also able to attend Island schools during Democracy Week to engage with children and young people. It is a matter of regret to the panel that the Youth Parliament is currently paused and that we were not able to use this very important forum as a means to seek the views of young people on the States spending plans. For the first time though an online video and youth version were prepared, and that change is very welcome. We would suggest that there is still work to do to communicate the Budget to a wider audience, and we have made a number of

recommendations in that regard. But our panel are grateful to all the stakeholders we approached and who provided specific and detailed responses to us, as well as members of the public who gave their feedback. The Budget is heavily based on the priorities in the Common Strategic Policy of this Government and, while that is understandable, there is a lack of clarity around the prioritisation of other projects. The panel makes several findings and recommendations around risk analysis and assessment, governance and monitoring, and perhaps most importantly the impact of reducing budgets on the efficiency of public services. The rationale for the postponement or cancellation of a project should be transparent. We had a long debate yesterday about the future of Le Squez Youth Club. Where budgets increase the reason should be clearly stated so there is assurance that money is well spent and, again, we debated the Transform project, and I am not entirely clear that we understood the rationale for the increase in funding. The stated aim to curb growth in the public sector is not underpinned by evidence or compelling data. Indeed, all the panels reported a lack of data and insufficient detail in financial information presented. Headline figures have been provided, but the lack of availability of departmental plans proved problematic. It is of particular concern that funding for the Cabinet Office has been significantly reduced without a clear rationale. As we debated yesterday, this will impact upon the work of Statistics Jersey who have stated that it will lead to a reduction in output of key statistics. This is particularly problematic for the Health and Social Security Panel. We are equally concerned that this reduction may have unintended consequences more broadly across our community. Close monitoring of the assessment of the impact on service delivery and staff retention as a result of this restructure is absolutely critical. This is the first time that the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel has focused on gender-responsive budgeting and it is an area that we shall be encouraging the Government to develop for future Budgets. This approach will ensure that all sections of our community are considered at an early stage in planning and therefore adequately supported. We also make a recommendation that future Budgets incorporate a more transparent and comprehensive detail on any reprioritisation of funding or proposals, ensuring that all stakeholders understand how and why funding shifts occur. As in previous years, the Fiscal Policy Panel report has been very helpful to us. This report cautions against including speculative savings in the Budget due to the risk it will pose to departmental budgets in future years if those savings are not able to be made. This has not been heeded and £4 million of speculative savings have been included in this Budget. The panel put forward 2 amendments to the Budget. The first amendment is to acknowledge the work continuing in relation to the establishment of a Jersey Public Services Ombudsman. That was accepted and we are very grateful for that. We look forward to the conclusion of the review that is going to be provided and led by Deputy Scott. The second amendment, as we debated yesterday, was to reinstate the growth funding for Statistics Jersey.

[11:45]

The full amount was sadly rejected, but I distinctly remember a commitment from the Chief Minister to see what he could do to fully restore that funding. I think that is probably all I have to say. I know other Members wish to speak. Finally, I would like to thank all the members of my Scrutiny Panel and, indeed, all the members of the other Scrutiny Panels who have contributed to our review for their patience, for their dedication, for their diligence and their skill in producing this report.

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

I have a quick question, not of the speaker. I wonder whether we are likely to break for lunch and come back or whether Members will want to continue. If I am absolutely honest, my daughter has invited me out for lunch and it is quite nice but I want to know whether to say no. It is probably me paying but there you go.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I could ask by indication how many Members wish to speak in relation to this matter, an indication of lights. There are quite a few Members, so I think we will be breaking in the usual way at lunchtime.

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Is it not the case that we also have some subsidiary business?

The Deputy Bailiff:

There is more to follow, yes. It is not it, as it were. So yes, we will be sitting this afternoon, I think.

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

First of all, I just want to thank all the hard work done by officers that went into the production of this Budget. This is a substantial piece of work that takes huge amounts of hours to produce, so I would like to acknowledge that effort. Do I agree with its content? Well, that is a moot point. I think the sheer number of amendments brought and subsequently defeated highlights that I believe the Government has missed many great opportunities to put out a positive message to business. The amendment brought by Deputy Ozouf on a stamp duty holiday to help get the housing market going again was particularly galling. Deputy Tom Binet reminded us of the importance of supporting our economy, yet when the vote was taken he mysteriously missed the vote. What have those involved in the property business got to look forward to? More red tape, the Minister for Housing, as he pushes on with his Residential Tenancy Law. There seems to be no appetite in Government to actually help our economy. On a positive note, I would like to thank the Minister for Infrastructure for continuing to invest in the Havre des Pas pool. I think this will help reinvigorate the historic part of town. I am though deeply disappointed that the monies budgeted for the Le Squez Youth Centre have been lost. I have spoken about investing in our business community, but we need to invest in our young people now. Jam today. I understand the need for a St Helier Youth Centre, but this is jam tomorrow. With a price tag of between £10 million and £15 million, that is a lot of jam. We need solutions today. Our young people are impatient, which is why I want to work with the Constable of St. Helier on the Gas Place site and deliver a meanwhile use in the centre of St. Helier, providing facilities for our young people long before the Ann Street Brewery site, which currently does not even have a change of use permission, is completed. I am really pleased to see the development of a visionary new park on the Parade in which the Parish has invested a significant sum of £750,000. This will provide an exciting new space for the young people of St. Helier. The debate that depressed me the most was the reduction in the budget of monies available to both Jersey Business and Digital Jersey. The feedback to me was swift. Do they not realise how demotivating this is? Why do we keep putting out such negative messaging to those who are looking to invest in our economy? The economy is not a nice to have. Its success is vital if we are to pay the bills of Government. While I am an advocate of a living wage, I am truly concerned about the speed at which wages are increasing. I know personally that we have already seen in excess of a 40 per cent increase in base wage rates over the past 3 years in our business alone. We have seen hospitality businesses close down, not only because wage rates have increased so dramatically, but also because of the impact on increased mortgage rates. Some 18 increases in the past 3 years has shrunk the disposable income of so many. Many simply cannot afford to go out in the way they once did. Even yesterday, a small business in the central market, which only opened their doors months ago, has decided not to renew their lease. Now we have a further increase on the cards, and despite the £20 million support scheme promised, I am still to be convinced as to how many small businesses will actually benefit from such a scheme. To date, we have all had to suck it up. These extraordinary increases in our costs and the consequences are there for all to see. Turning briefly to how the support scheme is being funded, I found it quite extraordinary that hard-won and well-protected savings are being used to support businesses, which inevitably is speculative, are being used to carry out this transition. The latest C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) report has told us that £5 million is still trying to be retrieved from the overspends in the COVID scheme; so trying to get that money back. I was, though, particularly disturbed by the comments of those who made a complete volte-face on their defence of the H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund). Deputy Southern gets, to my mind, the prize for the most incredible U-turn, and I quote: "It is a rare occurrence for me to stand and completely support the words of Deputy Bailhache. Deputy Bailhache, when he gets it right, boy, does he get it right?" Twelve months ago. Only now he votes against the Deputy's amendment because of a change in the

political wind. I am just waiting for the Deputy to tell me that black is the new white, as he now advocates the raiding of the piggy bank. Of course, previous defenders of the H.I.F. include Deputies Tom and Rose Binet, both of whom a year ago were such advocates of Deputy Bailhache's strongly-held view. Such opinions now appear to have turned to so much sand. I absolutely believe that using the H.I.F. is not the way to fund speculative business support. We cannot let the delivery of manifesto pledges override hard-won efforts to ensure that there is a significant safety net for the most vulnerable in our society. No wonder there was such a vigorous defence a year ago. Last night, the loss of the debate over reduced funding of the Stats Unit was particularly galling. Data gives us an evidence base on which to develop policy. As much as Deputy Mézec's inbox appears to be a particularly good source of data for him, I think I would prefer the professional input of the Stats Unit. As was pointed out last night, we will need to understand the impact of moving to a living wage economy, both positive and negative, plus the impact of the support scheme. Once again, I find myself referencing economic impact. Are we really on top of the numbers? I am struggling to find any message that says we are investing in our economy, we are backing business, cutting business-facing service budgets, not being bold and helping the housing market to get moving with a temporary suspension of stamp duty begs the question: how do we think all the nice-to-haves that the Reform Party so eagerly promote are paid for? If the only response is put up taxes, I am afraid I am out. I genuinely want to support this huge body of work, but I feel I cannot. It is the economy, stupid.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Could I just ask for a point of clarification, I think it would be, because the Deputy in his speech, Deputy Warr ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

If you are prepared to accept one.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

No, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, he is not.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

It might be a point of order then, I am not ... because the Deputy made some incorrect statements during his speech.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am afraid to say that that is not a point of order. Those Members who put their lights on generally wishing to speak are Deputies Renouf, Jeune, Southern and Tadier. I put your names under that order; Deputy Renouf does not want to speak now. Do you want to speak now, Deputy Jeune?

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I did not know you get to choose, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You do not get to choose but it was only giving an indication of his wish to speak in due course so I do not necessarily have to hold him to that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could I challenge that? I think that is open to all sorts of potential abuse. I am not sure it is the intention of any Member to do that but you put your light on when you want to speak and you take your position in the queue otherwise there is all sorts of tactical ...

Deputy J. Renouf:

I was responding to a question from the Chair to ask who still wish to speak, not that whether I wish to speak now.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I have not come across this before.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I take that, in that case, there is nothing to answer; it is just a misunderstanding.

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

I am still typing away to make my speech so please forgive me, Members. I want to start my speech talking as the chair of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel. First, I would like to thank my panel and officers for all their hard work in developing the comments paper and in the reviewing of the Budget that we did since August. I am sure Members have read our comments paper but I would quickly like to outline a few of our findings. One of our main concerns and one which is reflected in a number of our findings, is the short-term nature of the Budget. Many workstreams have also been slowed or paused as a result of reprioritisation but mainly to do with the recruitment freeze. In the view of the panel, this lack of long-term strategic thinking means that in some crucial areas of Government work there is little security of funding, a lack of contingency planning and no clear understanding of the legacy, which will be left to the Governments which will follow from 2026 onwards. I think this is something that is also important to reflect on, is understanding that legacy which we left to Governments which will follow from 2026, because we are often hearing that this Government has only got 2 years to the election. They can do things in 2 years, but we do not hear very much about that long-term thinking good-for-the-Island projects that go beyond just one Government but goes on for many Governments because is not really political. One of those things that is not political is our liquid waste strategy. We will have to do something about it. I really do not think it can get apolitical as working out how to sort out our liquid waste. But funding remains unclear for the liquid waste strategy. This will have an impact and potential failure to deliver work around building our new homes and affordable homes. £21.3 million of the necessary £55 million for the implementation of the strategy has been identified in this Budget, but there has been no secure funding for the £33.7 million that will be needed to complete the work. Many of that will then support those affordable homes that have been identified now and potentially needing affordable homes for the for the next Island Plan. One of our panel's main recommendations in the paper is that as a matter of urgency the Government should prioritise the policy work to introduce a waste charge and/or a funding model to ensure that the requirement of the bridging liquid waste strategy is met, and this should be brought towards the Assembly before the end of its term. It has also been striking that Ministers' answers to the limits on available funds was to suggest a constant, ongoing reprofiling of the capital programme. This has meant that it has been very difficult for the panel to determine exactly what capital programme of the States Assembly is being asked to approve, as this always keeps changing. This has happened between the publication of the Budget in August and the November debate. In fact we have all seen today a last-minute change of support for the West of Island Framework. Funds have now been found but we have not heard where those funds come from. What has been deprioritised for that? Has the deprioritisation been the development of introducing a waste charge, for example? We do not know. We do not know. Another example is that in the Budget when it was published in August, St Helier's skatepark was put to 2028, i.e. for another Government.

[12:00]

Therefore will that happen or not? But now with discussions, the Minister in his last hearing said he was able to find money and so St. Helier skatepark will then go ahead. But this panel feels that this decision-making on priority becomes reactive. It is based on urgency or current need or depending

who the Ministers are talking to, and not this long-term overall thinking and strategic thinking. While I still stand here today not entirely sure what around the capital programmes we are actually supporting, because again money has been found for West of Island Framework at the last minute, but what has been deprioritised? This is also highlighted in the Le Squez debate. As I mentioned in my speech there, there is no clarity or detail around the abortive costs of this reprioritisation and something that the panel will continue to request information on in the future going forward. I would like to thank though, on behalf of the panel, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Infrastructure for accepting both our panel's amendments, one being increasing the percentage of vehicle emissions duty charged for the top 2 bands of the most polluting non-commercial vehicles. This money will be used to transfer to the Climate Emergency Fund, something that the panel ensured in their common strategic priorities. Somehow, climate emergency was left off the common strategic priorities back in April. Due to our panel discussions with the Minister, we were able to put climate emergency and work around climate change back on to the priorities. This amendment, with the vehicle emissions duty, helps to cement further funding to go towards the Climate Emergency Fund, funding that has been paused because of the pause in the increase in the fuel duty. The Climate Emergency Fund had not been getting the amount that it had been calculated to get, so this will be able to top that up. We also propose the Council Ministers increase and add Fort Regent redevelopment should be proposed as a separate head of expenditure, and we thank the Minister for Infrastructure for agreeing to this in the Budget. Again, our panel will be following the works that will be happening within 2025 because, as the Minister said, funding is found. By this time next year, we will hopefully be seeing a plan that will see works happening in 2026. Carrying on with my own thoughts, and something I echo with Deputy Doublet, that many individual areas of the Budget align with my values and my manifesto. However, standing back, I am concerned that this Budget is not sitting behind a coherent strategy for the future. It does feel like it is sewn together, depending on which Minister could muscle in and get funding for their own goals and their own areas of work. We have seen last minute agreements, which means it is now hard to work out what is being deprioritised. I know it was late yesterday and we all wanted to go home, but when I went home I did reflect on a decision last night that I really still do not really understand. We heard from a professional in the I.T. world questioning why there was a 50 per cent increase on top of a budget already. There is budget already there but a 50 per cent increase on top. That was a project that was only costed in 2023 for another £10 million and we did not really get much discussion on that, about that extra £10 million, yet we had a very long discussion pitting 2 youth centres against each other with pretty much the same amount of money the day before. Or we had a big discussion about taking money from the Social Security Fund to entice businesses to pay the living wage, again in the first year that is £10 million. I do not understand how no one really questioned this huge increase even though there has been a legacy of waste around technology in the Government in the past. We are talking about very similar sums in 3 different areas where we had 2 big discussions about, and heated debate, but yet when it came to this increase to a technology discussion, and one that a professional questioned, we did not have more of a discussion about it and I feel that we missed something there. We have also given carte blanche for a massive heads of expenditure on a multiple sites hospital that most of us or some of us will know nothing about unless we join the Council of Ministers or we are part of the Scrutiny Panel. How do I know what is going to be happening with money spent within that £710 million for the hospital site? I will not be able to get any information. I really do hope that the Minister will be able to at least brief the whole States Assembly on what he knows, what the Council of Ministers know, and what the Scrutiny Panel know, but a couple of us are not able to know when we know as much as the general public. I ask if that is really the right way of how it should be in the States Assembly when some of us are having to agree on a huge head of expenditure for such a huge amount yet know very little about behind that project beyond of course an acute hospital at Overdale, which of course is very important. But what next? We do not really know. It seems very vague. As the wording says, it does not say that this is all of it. I think it says it is the start of. How big can we go? I think the Minister for Treasury and Resources, when she explained this project, it is one of the biggest infrastructure projects Jersey will ever see. She compared it to

something, I am not sure if I heard it correctly: was it the H.S.2 (High Speed 2) project in the U.K.? Let us just reflect a little bit about what has happened to the H.S.2 project in the U.K. Hugely overrun with costs, massive delays, huge problems with local communities, called many, many times a white elephant project. Why was that? Some of it was because a lot of it was not put to the U.K. Parliament; many costs were kept away. They were unable to have that kind of scrutiny to understand and to see how far it was, how big a project it actually snowballed into. I really, really hope that our hospital, or our hospitals, will not become the H.S.2 project and it will not become a white elephant project. But I will not necessarily know because I am not, again, part of that particular Scrutiny Panel or the Council of Ministers, and I am really concerned about that. Lastly, I would also say that I am also concerned about the amount that Health is getting. Of course we need a healthy society, absolutely, but what I am concerned about and what we are hearing over the last few days in the media as well is that there is still not a grip on this excessive Health spending. How is Health able to have such a black hole? Why is there not being able to get a grip with this. We have seen the Minister for Health and Social Services being the Minister for nearly a year now. Why are we not able to get a grip on our Health financing and understanding what is going on? Why are we again giving even more money, and it is to business as usual. We are being told that we are unable to give more, to be able to expand around especially for women's health or for dementia. I have been pushing for money to support the dementia strategy for a long time now and unfortunately again it has always been said: "Well we cannot because we have to fund business as usual." How, again, are we giving more and more money to business as usual when we need to really see the bigger picture of our ... as a society, our health is changing, dementia is becoming more of a concern, and we need to focus more on prevention to keep us out of the grips of the health community for longer. We need to ensure that we are a healthy society. But what is going to happen next year. I think probably what I want to leave us on is this time next year, will we again be asked to sign off into a black hole of the Health financing? I am sure I could have reflected a bit more but I am nearly at the end, which is the longest speech I have ever made in this Chamber so far.

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

I rise to my feet to thank Deputy Warr for putting a smile on my face during a Budget debate. Oh, he has just left. Missing the best bits. Savaged by a dead sheep springs to mind, I think. I smile because I believe that this Assembly, including myself, has seen the first steps on the road to a Budget led by socialist principles. It is not here yet, but we are on the way. Those socialist principles are based around taking care of the least well-off in our society. Those who are middle earners and not just those who happen to be the wealthiest and the richest. Starting and continuing with those principles is the way forward for Jersey. Many of you refuse to believe that, but I have the faith, and I am sure I will see in my time that develop.

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

I am speaking as chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. There is really good work being done by the Ministers that the C.E.H.A. (Children, Education and Home Affairs) Panel scrutinises; the Minister for Children and Families, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Home Affairs. However, our job as a Scrutiny Panel during this Budget process is to highlight what is not going so well. We brought 2 amendments, which I am pleased to say have been accepted: a review of the apprenticeship scheme and urgent repairs to Highlands College. We really must value our young people more. States Members and the public I think will be interested to hear the panel's recommendations to the Budget which are: number one, about the ambulance, fire and rescue headquarters. There have been changes from a proposed shared development and so we are asking for all the feasibility costs to be published. Secondly, that the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and Minister for Children and Families should share details about how the funding is split between them. Thirdly, and this was something brought up in quite a number of submissions to the panel, that there needs to be more clarity around the funding to the third sector. It does seem like a real problem and so we are asking for detail about how

Government grant funding will be used to support the third sector. Fourthly, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning needs to revise engagements with key stakeholders in the early years sector. We have had many submissions from them to say they feel like they are being ignored, so we hope to see an improvement there. Then we have a recommendation around Mont à L'Abbé School. Mont à L'Abbé School does not have enough places for the children who need to go there so we are asking for contingency plans to be published. Next, we have a recommendation about all post-16 courses.

[12:15]

We would like to see the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning review the accessibility of all post-16 courses to include consideration of flexibility of delivery and financial support because we are hearing of parents who have to get into debt to support their children at university. We hear of young people who cannot get an apprenticeship placement. Lastly, about the project at Le Squez, which personally I would have liked to support except that the amendment was to deprioritise the town youth centre. We ask for the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and Minister for Children and Families to publish the details about the work, the mitigating measures that will go on at Le Squez, and how this will impact the Youth Service and Samarès School. Just to finish, I still say there is a lot of good work that is proceeding, but the panel hopes for a good response from Ministers to our Budget comments.

1.2.10 Deputy M. Tadier:

First of all, I am going to speak with the hat on as chair of the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel. I am not sure for how long on that. Then I have some personal remarks to make as a Back-Bencher, effectively, otherwise. First of all, can I thank the panel and the officers for helping us to do this? We have had various hearings, which have included the usual quarterly hearings, which we have been able to ask questions, anticipating the Budget as proposed, but also specific Budget hearings, which involved the 3 Ministers; so the Minister for External Relations, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and the Minister for International Development. The panel collected and considered evidence from all of these 3 Ministries. I will read some excerpts from our paper because I know that not all Members will necessarily have it present in their mind. Our panel is concerned about the impact of domestic inflation measured by the Retail Price Index on businesses and customers in Jersey. We also have remaining concerns that the Budget shows various different levels of Government support across the different sectors. On the one hand, while we are seeing a lot of investment in agriculture and fisheries to the tune of about £6.8 million, we know that actually other areas of the economy which we have tried to highlight through our amendment earlier - the only amendment that we brought as a panel - was, of course, to show that when it comes to potentially the visitor economy, but particularly digital and other business in investment, that there has actually been a reduction there. I do not want to reopen that debate, but I think when it comes to this Budget we will be continuing to monitor that and see how the additional spend, the additional loans, for example, and support that are going into those sectors are making an impact. But we would also be keeping a close eye on what this Assembly's decision to reject additional funding for Digital Jersey and Business Jersey, what that translates at. We will make sure that if it seems that there is a negative impact, and that includes, of course, with Jersey Finance. We give a pledge to monitor that to make sure, and it is going to be difficult because not all of these consequences will become apparent in the next year. It could be something that we only see in 5 or 10 years' time. But I think we accept the democratic process and we accept the will of this Assembly, but we will still do our job as a Scrutiny Panel to, I think, analyse that as best as we can. I think it is really important at this point that ... I know she is behind me and I feel slightly rude talking to somebody with my back to them, but we are talking through the Chair anyway. I want to acknowledge the good work that goes on in the background often quietly by the Minister for International Development, who has the key remit of overseeing Jersey Overseas Aid. Because it is a relatively small department does not mean that it is not an important one. I do need to put this on record. We acknowledge that the Minister is trying to

make headway to get towards a more sustainable and meaningful allocation that can be made to Jersey Overseas Aid. From the current level of 0.29 of gross value added to what the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average of 0.36 is in terms of gross value added. This is something which is often easy to overlook in the Budget because the Budget looks about internal matters, about how we fund our local economy. But we cannot forget, if we watch the news every night or read the newspapers, that we do live in a globalised world. Jersey has always seen itself as a global player. The way that relatively affluent places like Jersey, because we must not forget that even though a lot of this debate is focused on cost of living, what people cannot afford to do, we recognise that Jersey has it good compared to so many places around the world. Not least because we are a peaceful community, which does not immediately have to deal with the ravages of war or famine, which the Minister for International Development knows only too well about. I think we do have to put to the Minister though, and I am sure this is something she would welcome as a healthy challenge, if you like, the fact that we note that the current funding levels for the United Nations' target is set at 0.7 per cent of G.V.A. (gross value added). While we, I think, welcome or at least acknowledge the work that is being done from the Minister to get to the 0.36 per cent from the current 0.26 per cent of G.V.A. that Jersey has, that in itself is going to take quite a number of years to get to that relatively modest state. It will be of course incumbent on future administrations also committing to do that because we know the Overseas Aid Commission budget is potentially something which is easily cut because it is a populist thing to do perhaps to try and cut that. We do ask the Minister, does she have a vision to get to 0.7 per cent of G.V.A. at some point or to go beyond the 0.36 per cent, given the great work that the Overseas Aid Commission does. If I could just say on a personal level, I did attend at the invitation of the Minister one of the recent presentations at the Art Centre on the good work of that, and there is so much good work that Jersey does in that regard. It is not just about looking inwards, it is about Jersey also looking outwards. At this point I do want to make some personal comments, and I have struggled with this Budget. Members will know that we have a political reality in this Assembly that nobody has a majority, especially the independents in the Assembly, they have a majority of one. If they start working with other people they might have a block vote of 14. As a party we have got 10 members who are very willing and have always shared core value, so in that sense it makes it an easy starting point. If you all share collective values and you want to get things done and you agree and you put it in a manifesto, that is your starting point irrespective of whether you end up collectively in Government or collectively outside of Government or as we find ourselves in, half in, half out. Not quite half of course, it is about 4 to 6 split. That does not mean though that our values as a party are in any way split. I reflected halfway through the week, having had some success but not really much personal success, so I am very pleased with this Budget in the sense that I was able before the Budget ... because the key thing is as a 15 year-old, 16 year-old politician, I was asked the question: "Why did you not put your cultural funding in the Budget as an amendment?" The answer is: "Because I wanted to win, I wanted it to increase." **[Laughter]** Back-Benchers generally, although there have been a couple of exceptions, do not win anything in Budgets because they are in a minority. There is a government machine and it is much easier to make a case, especially when there are other factors involved which are not exclusively related to the Budget to make that case and to win support across the Assembly. Of course I am very happy that this Budget does feature the full 1 per cent for Arts, Culture and Heritage. It should have never been tampered with in the first place and now the onus is of course on Government to come back and find the money for that. I am not here to reopen that debate or to be valedictory because of course we know as a Scrutiny Panel we were on the losing side, and I have also been on the losing side of some votes here. But it led me to think: "What is the greatest thing that is going on in this Budget?" The living wage I think has been talked about and it is a key promise, it is a key manifesto pledge of myself and my Reform colleagues throughout the Island wherever we stood to say that this is something we will do if we get into a position to be able to push it forward, whether it is from the Back Benches or from Government. Of course, I think Deputy Luce summed it up yesterday, that there is a political reality because talk is cheap in politics. It is very easy when you are outside of Government if you want to just be an opposition Member to criticise. If you want

to get things done in politics then you have to make compromises. I think you have to decide what it is that you are willing to do in order to get policies through without compromising your values, that is. The starting point I think for me, the big one in this, is that we talk about what is the long-term impact going to be on the economy? Coffee shops are potentially closing or restaurants are closing. That is not great but if you are one of the working poor in Jersey and you do not get paid a living wage because you are on a minimum wage, that is probably way above your head anyway because you are not going to have any disposable income to go out once you have paid your rents, you are not going to be paying a mortgage if you are below the living wage in Jersey. It is about making sure that more people have more money in their pockets. Not even political compromise. What was the negotiation that needed to take place between people like Deputy Luce who also wanted to see a fair society, who also wanted to make sure that people who can partake in Jersey's society without living in poverty, how did we get to that point? The answer is there needs to be care taken of the low pay economies and those industries which may well be affected if they were to switch overnight to a living wage. As a political realist the Minister for Social Security is willing to take that bull by the horns and say: "Okay, what is it that you want on the other side of the traditional political divide in order to deliver this?" The answer comes back: "We need a package. We need a package for the economy, for agriculture which is going to include productivity", something which Deputy Southern has talked about all of his some 20 years in politics. It is about productivity, it is about making sure that there is the money coming into the economy that people can get paid and that all goes round the system, so there is a need for that political compromise to be made. It is one thing to say: "I support the living wage" but if you only support the living wage in theory but never in any real terms to deliver it your support for the living wage is completely meaningless because those of the poorest people in Jersey's society will continue to remain the poorest. That is before we of course talk about a maximum wage - we are not going to talk about the maximum wage today - but I have said that before, the maximum wage is of course our tax policy, what do you do to try and redistribute in our economy? We do have taxes and that is what Government uses but we have limited levers within the current administration to effect change. I do not mind if this becomes my last term in office. I know that there will have been a train put in place that it sees not just the poorest workers in our society being lifted up but also those sectors which have struggled so long because of political inaction and because of the impasse between left and right, if we can call it that. The living wage of course is not just the domain of the left but we will see the economy being supported in real terms and we will see workers in, if you like, that Fordian model being able to afford to buy products that they can with the wages because they are just about enough to live in what has become an increasingly expensive Island. If I wanted to, I could quite easily find lots of reasons to vote against this Budget. I think that there are elements of it which remain uncertain. I think it is necessarily because Government is trying to do things on an old model but trying to look towards a new kind of community and new solutions that will be needed in the future. Of course, they are going to come into difficulties because they have not fully accepted collectively the political realities which will mean that you either do less or if we are to do more that I think all of our 100,000-plus Islanders are requiring.

[12:30]

It will require proper leadership, it will require things being paid for properly and sustainable. "Sustainable" is probably the word we have heard a lot about, to come back to the Economic International Affairs Scrutiny Panel. The Minister for Economic Development is called the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and that is the key thing we have to get to grips with. Our current economic model of tax and spend is not sustainable and there will be a clear choice at the next election in less than 2 years about whether we elect people who are willing to sign up to realism and tell us what their plans are for running the Island or whether they simply say: "Let us keep everything the same. We will promise you not just jam tomorrow but jam, bread and butter but we have absolutely no idea about how we are going to pay for that." You can have jam tomorrow but if you are going to have it, you are going to pay for it. Not the best ending to the speech **[Laughter]**

but I think an important one that I am certainly willing to play my part in a collective to make sure that we deliver things, not just take a purist point of view to say it is all or nothing. I prefer to see real change, real money being put in people's pockets and the economy being sorted. That is what I think we have got overall in this somewhat curate's egg of a Budget. I am willing to certainly take the good parts because there are so many good parts in it to build for the future.

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

Now I could repeat points and Members would rightly call me out on Standing Orders, so I will try not to in my comments on the Budget. Firstly, we could talk about the areas of contention, the hospital being one, and I will touch on that. The wins we have seen in this, some accountability for Fort Regent, but ultimately I want to look at this a little differently and as always look forward with optimism, although with genuine sadness, it feels like naïve optimism. Maybe Members can change that. As 2025 unfolds and the Government will get on with delivering their work, hopefully in line with this Budget, I will be asking how will the public follow them in that journey, how will this Assembly? We have heard platitudes paid to the Scrutiny process in here and how vital it is. Of course, frankly, that feels like it holds little water following our debate on the healthcare facilities heads of expenditure amendment, but Scrutiny by this Assembly is not enough. Will the public know whether a capital programme is on track proactively through communication by Government or only retrospectively by Members asking questions in the Assembly? Just like this year, how would they have known that Le Squez with a £3.5 million budget was sidelined for later? How will the public know what investment is being made in I.T.? How will the experts in industry challenge or champion the design and strategic decisions that are being made as they evolve and play a part to ensure value for money? Will they get to take part in early access programmes or contribute to the most important priorities? Will the public know who the recipients are of the productivity support scheme? Will case studies be published by businesses in receipt of public money as to the impact taxpayers' money has had on improving the Island's economy and wider society helping inspire others yet hold these businesses to account? Will the public follow along with exciting plans on capital programmes such as Fort Regent or those in education through new blog posts or drop-in sessions with government experts, noting that this year has seen a reduction in blogs by the Government to 2023. Will we ever find out what Project Breakwater is? Will the public have to continue to submit freedom of information requests to access the same data over and over again or will departments take each request as a change and a chance to open another slice of government to the public to build trust and efficiency? The Government have a budget of yet again over £1 billion and I do not disagree with that quantum. What remains in this Budget so far is a failure, in my view, to justify what that expenditure achieves, the vision for its purpose and, as Deputy Miles said on Transform yesterday, the why? We will be back in 12 months and I hope the next Budget can explain itself better. Ideally, we will not have to wait. It is on the Government and Ministers to improve how the civil service runs, not just the responsibility for officers. Let us hope they make some progress.

1.2.12 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will speak now, I have got 10 minutes before lunch, I should get everything sorted by then. A couple of things, I just say to Deputy Miles when she mentioned ... I do not quite know why I am saying this to Deputy Miles, there was something the Deputy said about communication. I point everyone to the child-friendly budget that was produced by the Children's Department, it was a really, really good document, and I think a few adults may have used it as well, to be quite frank. There were some other things about it, if you have not seen it, and if you have not if the Deputy can let me know because obviously it was not communicated quite enough, but they really have worked hard on that. This is the first Government Plan that I have been involved with directly and since taking over the role of Minister a number of priorities have been made for me through propositions brought to the Assembly and significant work has been undertaken to address them. That work is ongoing and the monies allocated in some areas of this Government Plan assist me in bringing forward the work from my amendments to those propositions and to the key priorities I have for Education and

Lifelong Learning. Prioritising is the key to leadership and my approach to this is to be realistic, first of all, to set some clear and achievable goals, prioritise on what truly moves the needle and aligns with the fine objections. These were agreed and voted on in the C.S.P. I believe there were 2 contre and one abstention from the C.S.P., everyone else voted for it. It is important though to limit priorities and keep the number of priorities manageable. Too many priorities will certainly stretch the capacity and reduce effectiveness and I give some examples of this. Previous Government Plans routinely had around £150 million in capital projects. This might look good on paper and some might even describe it as ambitious but the reality was that half the money could not be spent, it was simply not possible to do so much in a year. In my own department in 2023, £17.5 million of capital was allocated but only £5.5 million was spent. £12 million was unspent at the end of the year, and that is just an observation of the reality of what was happening. In terms of priorities not being met, I am going to mention again that the youth facility was prioritised in central St. Helier for central St. Helier children, was prioritised in 2018 in the C.S.P. then, as was a new school in central St. Helier replacing Springfield and St. Luke's that are desperately in need of that with Springfield becoming a park. Not a question of both but neither both - if that is good English - materialised and we have not moved forward. The land for the school, and I will say to one of the St. Helier Deputies who voted to not support that in part, is still not owned by government so nothing can happen. Subsequently, whatever is on there, even the old gas site, could not be used in the way that it was suggested and when we do get that land we might as well build the school as quickly as we can, which is really important for that area. We have to look at priorities and the way we can do them. I have been working trying to push this as quickly as we can so that the first thing we do is to get ownership of that land and then we can move into planning permission. We might, and my ambition is before the next election, have a definite and clear timetable for when that school will be built because everything will be in place. It has not been since 2018. Anyway, let us get back to the speech. We have a real chance of moving the needle on these projects. My genuine issue with the amendment was the removal of the reference to St. Helier. That did pit one area against another, watering down the more conflicted priorities, but I will say to the Deputy and to the Scrutiny Panel, absolutely we will work as hard as we can to try and get money if it is possible. It was mentioned earlier about projects and moving. I think what we need in the capital project is some reality that you have to prioritise, and these are really essential things for the central of St. Helier with the buildings. I have made that clear, I am not going to go over that again. But if other things are in place and cannot move but some can then I have no problem with saying to the Scrutiny Panel: "Yes, that one was not happening so we are going to move on and this one can be done." I am quite happy to take the criticism in here. I will give you another reason why I am happy to take criticism in here in a moment. I have also prioritised La Passerelle Secondary School, which is desperately needed; over 60 children who do not have somewhere to go to school because of their specific needs and because of their specific situations. I thank the officers who have worked to enable this to happen. It will directly impact over 60 children's lives and their families. I am very hopeful - and I will touch wood, I do not know if that is parliamentary - that can be in place by October next year. That is a real project happening, prioritised with money allocated so it can be done and we can see the impact. If that happens I invite States Members to come up and see the school itself. Nurseries are being prioritised with pilot projects. I have to say to the panel, I do believe we have engaged over the last 2 years with all of the sectors and we will continue to do that with the sectors. I have meetings with certain sectors coming up in the next few weeks, both the childminders, Jersey Early Years, Best Start Partnership, and officers have been engaging with them constantly. I will give you a little bit of feedback. You take a lot of criticism in this job but sometimes you get nice things. One of the nice things, I received a card the other day to say about one of the projects that we have set up as a nursery and it said in this card, there was a quote from a parent, and I found this quite moving, I have got to say. The parent had said they never thought that their child would be playing with another child. I say to Deputy Doublet and to Deputy Gardiner that I have continued that project, and I have said this before, that it is a continuation but we want to build on it. We are not throwing away the things that have gone before us and I have recognised the work that has gone before. I absolutely do but we are getting on with it as well, something we have done in

Government from all the way back, from all of the round tables that the Deputies know about and all of the work that has gone with that, and all of the individuals involved, for that parent to say: "This has had an impact", well that is worth for me standing here and taking all the stick, particularly over the last few days. That is okay, I feel a lot better about it when I get something like that, and it washes off. We will continue to work across the sector to pilot and that is the way in which we can work with every single sector to see what works. I ask them to come on board and see what we are doing. It is not a threat, it is about developing as we go along. Deputy Doublet asked me a question. I have to apologise to Deputy Doublet, I wrote down, and I cannot read my own handwriting, there is new money for the continuation of the nursery pilots, is my answer. Yes, I do want to go through a N.E.F., 15 hours is the plan at the moment for 2 to 3 year-olds because it will help families, but that is dependent upon nursery places being available, as we know. I think we can work towards that rapidly and I am hoping it will grow as we get those things in place. One of the other things about prioritising is to be able to evaluate and adapt, and that is exactly the approach that we are taking with nursery provisions and the pilots that will be in place. I will say if the pilots do not work we will do it differently. I am quite happy to take criticism: "So you did something that did not work." I will say: "Yes, but we are aware it did not work and so we have changed it." That is exactly what you have to do and I am happy to delegate tasks. There are lots of professionals and the previous Ministers will know the Best Start Partnership, for example, they do a lot of work across the piece, and there are a lot of specialists there. I have met with somebody very high up - I do not know if I can say names - and discussed ideas there and there is a lot of information. As we reorganise the department, and people will be aware there are some changes in the department that have been announced, there will be more clarity and delegated roles in the outcomes that will be addressed and the structure of that department. I think that is a good thing and I will say I am very pleased that the children's part and the education part was separated; that gives a focus in a way. If you agree that or not, I do believe that has been successful. The 3 areas of the main priorities are extending nursery provision, the school meals and the lifelong learning. I am pleased to say that I believe that the school meals rollout will be complete. I do recognise the work that has gone before, and I do recognise I brought propositions ages ago and I lost, and then they won, and then people got on with it.

[12:45]

Then I pestered the previous Minister, because I met him recently, he said: "You pestered me." But we have come to a point now where we can all sit down hopefully in a room and say: "This Christmas the final school", and the name of it has gone out of my head, and I do apologise, "their first meal is Christmas lunch" and I think that is a very fitting time to do it. It is a very successful project across Assemblies and being driven at the moment, which is what I want to do. I will say that the nursery provision requires the funding from the Government Plan and the additional work will be done via the development and the development of apprenticeships. Sorry, bad wording of what I have written here. The nursery work does require that partly for training and partly because of the extra cost that will be involved. As for apprenticeships, and I talk to the panel and others here, I am absolutely aware the money going towards developing those apprenticeships is there. I was pleased to accept the amendment of the panel. Work was in train and subject to the approval for Government debate; however, within the Education and Lifelong Learning branch I will be allocating an additional £500,000 for apprenticeship funding. I have also accepted amendment 5 which aligns with my ambition to improve locally-available training opportunities. In doing so we will broaden the career pathways available for our young people and strengthen local industries. Work in this area has already begun, starting with analysis of hard-to-fill roles and skills and qualifications needed for them. Sorry, this is a bit long I am afraid but it is important I speak. Also, pending the States approval, it will be complemented by the £2 million skills grant that was announced by the Better Business Support Package. The concerns over businesses of the living wage and apprenticeships can be addressed with that but it needs supporting, it needs that money. If we are going to train we need to do it, the time is now. That is a song, I think. This brings together the wider priority of the transition to a living wage and the support for training that our economy needs. The other night I

attended the Skills Awards night. A huge success to celebrate the success across-Island. I spoke to some of the businesspeople there, I spoke to some of the winners, the trainers, those who are trainees. I have to give a shout-out to the winner of the Battle of the Bands who put on a fantastic performance. They were extremely tight as a band I thought, they were really, really good. I will finish quickly. In 1895 there was a cartoon in *Punch* referred to as the “curate’s egg”. You probably know about this. Basically it has got a Bishop who says: “I am afraid, Sir, you have a bad egg” and the curate says: “Oh no, my lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent.” I have looked back and, to be quite frank, I cannot find a single Government Plan that does not have an element of the curate’s egg to it and, I have to throw in, we need a Reform Jersey majority to get the perfect Government Plan. I can see Deputy Ward nodding.

Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

I just thought it was repetition because Deputy Tadier said this joke yesterday or the day before.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I must say I was not here ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

This is a full story though. **[Laughter]** This a historical lesson, we are all enjoying this.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I did not hear Deputy Tadier at that point, I am sorry. Do I get extra time, Sir? The time we have as a Government and in this iteration of the Assembly is limited, and it was mentioned, but that is true before the next election, so we have to prioritise. We must find ways to work together. In terms of long-term impacts, the building of schools, the building of new, much-needed, not existing at the moment youth facilities, the living wage, affordable housing, changes to affordable housing and people’s rights, changes to the way social security payments work, those are long-term things that will affect our Island. If they are not supported now they are never going to be there and so that is what we need to do. I will finish with this, we must not be fearful of change when it happens. To use another film quote: “Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate and hate leads to suffering.” I hope that the Government Plan is the next step towards making some change. I hope it can be supported, I want to get on with the work. I will mention one thing again to finish, when I launched the Nursery Report I presented it and I made a statement to this Assembly so that you could ask questions for 15 minutes. I did that for transparency, I commit to continuing that transparency.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There is a point of clarification from Deputy Doublet. Are you content to accept that?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just talk to Deputy Doublet separately because everybody wants to go, they have been sat here for a long time. I will not accept her this time, not because I simply do not want to do it, but I am quite honestly going to be open. I can put it in a letter to her publicly if she wants.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to adjourn until 2.15 p.m.? The Assembly is adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:50]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:16]

The Deputy Bailiff:

We resume the debate on the Government Plan as amended. Deputy Gardiner.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Before Deputy Gardiner speaks, may I request that the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning respond on the point of clarification I raised? I did send him an email with the details of the question.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sorry, I have only just got to open my email.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am afraid to say that the time for that has passed because he indicated that he was not prepared to respond to your clarification at the end of his speech but would do so subsequently and privately by email.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will do that.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Understood. Could I seek your ... sorry, was the Minister about to respond?

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, he was not. No, because it is too late for that now.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Okay, I think it might be a point of order then because the answer to the question if what is in the Budget is not factually correct, it could potentially be misleading to the Assembly.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, have you spoken yet in this debate?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I have, yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You have spoken?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I reassure her that I can answer the Deputy's email and she can always put it ... I will put it in the public domain. I just want to be absolutely certain it was a ... I am not trying to hide anything. Honestly, I will answer the question in full but we were just at lunch and time has gone, so there we go.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Perhaps can I suggest that one of the Assistant Ministers answers the question in their speech because I think it is important the Assembly has the answer before we vote.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well you can email a Minister and if they are speaking they could ... the Minister herself will wind up the debate in due course. If you wanted to send her an email, she might respond to it. But you wanted Deputy Rob Ward to give way and he declined to do so at the end of his speech, so we now move on to the next speaker which is Deputy Gardiner. Deputy Renouf, you want to make a point?

Deputy J. Renouf:

No, I am just putting my light on to speak. **[Laughter]** This time it is for real.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am pleased to hear that.

1.2.13 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

I hope third time lucky. I had really mixed feelings when preparing this speech for the final stage of this Budget debate. However, there are things that I must say from a personal point of view as a Deputy, as a representative of my constituents in this Assembly, and the point of view as the president of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee. I hope I will be within my 15 minutes but I ask Members to bear with me. Personally, in my role as Deputy, as I proposed 3 amendments that were successful, I feel I have stood by my manifesto commitments and stood by my constituents. We have official recognition finally, probably the first time, and commitment from the Government for actual money, not the promise of money. I hope the money will come, £500,000 for the duration of this Budget on a matching basis from the Parish to support neighbourhood improvements in areas in St. Helier. I am grateful to the Minister for Infrastructure for finding a solution, even though personally I think the money should come from the States of Jersey Development Company, but as long as we have the money, we will not complain and we will continue to speak about the contribution of the States of Jersey Development Company. The second amendment, the play strategy, will be delivered - yes - and funds were found after all and developers, private enterprise, third sector and A.L.O.s (arm's length organisations) will have clarity on what is expected to create children's play areas that are needed across the whole Island and it is extremely important. Yesterday, as we have heard, a solution was found to provide the requested £200,000 for the Cheshire Homes and I think lots of Members approached me, and I am very happy with this result. The Budget by definition looking forward but what about here and now that could be resolved outside of the Budget amendments, and we have seen the engagements through the debate. I think Cheshire Homes, I did not have a chance to speak, I will do some very, very quick snapshots about Cheshire Homes, because I do think it is important to talk about, has been a really good example what needs to change during 2025. Cheshire Homes got in touch and had several meetings with different Ministers and officials through 2024 and a month before the amendment was lodged. It was via an email on 11th October emailed to the Minister for Health and Social Services saying: "Please respond, this is urgent. We do need to know how we operate in 2025." I know that the Minister apologised and we all accepted his apology that he did not have time to sort it out. Is it good enough? I have to ask myself, is it just the tip of the iceberg how this sector is treated by this Government? Likely not. I have heard from many other charities that they do not get proper engagement from the Government. We all know, and it was a quote from the Jersey Community Foundation report that was research conducted by PwC, that the third sector is essential to the fabric of the Island life. This report clearly showed that the third sector brings £230 million to the Island life. For example, agriculture, forestry and fishing contributes £39.7 million. It is important - agriculture, fishing and forestry - but I would suggest that Government support for the third sector that brings £230 million contribution into the Island life will be treated proportionally: not more, not less, just fair and proportionally. There was no debate here. Think about how many hours we have debated agriculture. It was extremely important, I am not saying that it is not, but how much time of this debate did we devote to the third sector? Almost none. There was no debate about hardship of the third sector when a third of the organisations have fewer than 3 months or worse of financial reserve. While at the same time the third sector organisations are currently cross-subsidising government essential services, services the Government needs to deliver, they are covering the shortfalls in our Budget. It was very clearly mentioned in the C. and A.G.'s report that we have a lack of clear commissioning framework to address this challenge, commissioning of the public service for people maybe who were not aware about this. I was not aware before becoming a States Member. It is to provide resources, finance, facilities, capacity, skills to make sure that the public services that need to be delivered will be delivered by the third party. What is interesting and what we have, they have the charities that run between different departments and with each department they have a different person to contact. We also understood that each department has different terms and conditions and different payments for the same service. Charities need to do their

work, not to run between the government departments. If Government will not put it right in 2025, we are likely to see more amendments, like mine, coming to the Budget debate and I will not be excusing myself: “Oh, sorry” why I brought it to the table. Engage with the charities, address their concern, and pay for the services that charities are providing. It is really important that it will be real engagement and listening. I think it was interesting to see how different views are viewed differently. Unfortunately, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Deputy Rob Ward, is not in the Chamber, because from his perspective he is engaging really well with the private childcare providers. We need to remember that private childcare providers provide 75 per cent of the childcare brought to 5; 75 per cent. Now, again, from the submission, and I am talking about it as a person from Scrutiny, that was submitted to the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, it looks completely different. It looks like it is a broken communication. To be honest, I believe that the Chief Minister and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development need to join this engagement because the childcare that was one of the top Common Strategic Policy priorities ... by the way, I am really grateful that it was put in the Common Strategic Policy and I am really grateful to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning for continuing the work that was started and it was recognised. I just urge the Government again for proper engagement and listening for Jersey Early Years Association and childminders and private care providers. Now, the second concern that you probably heard from all chairs of the Scrutiny Panels is around the numbers and reprioritisation. It is really nice headlines: “We have curbed the growth. Reprioritise. Reprofile. Reprofile” and I completely accept each Government should have their own priorities. In respect to their own priorities, we all voted, and this is the Common Strategic Policy, but the Common Strategic Policy has certain priorities and the Budget is £1.3 billion. Constantly on a Scrutiny level, myself personally, I ask repeatedly in the Assembly, in the written questions, the Chief Minister confirming: “Yes, it will be supplied. No, it will not be supplied” how this reprioritisation works, what is in, what is out. Now, on Friday personally I received an email from the secretary of the Chief Minister and I think it was at least an attempt to give something that does exist because I do understand that it existed and I appreciated it. I received links to the letters for the 3 Ministers that we did not have the letters, and for all other Ministers we did have the letters. I am grateful at least I received from that something. I did go through each and every Scrutiny submission and I must congratulate 2 Ministers that, when I read their submission, I had full clarity what is in, what is out, how it was prioritised and what is the effect. These 2 Ministers are the Minister for the Environment, Deputy Steve Luce, and the Minister for Infrastructure, Constable Jehan. There are a couple of submissions that look better, the Minister for Housing gave at least some numbers. I have lots of questions around what is behind these numbers but at least I got numbers. The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs stated there was no change in priorities, and I am accepting it. But at the end of the day we hear so much of the time about reprioritisation, and if anyone in this Assembly knows what is in and what is out, I would welcome to have a conversation with me and explain it because I could not. Saying this, I am pleased that some of the previous Government priorities continue to work and Deputy Ward did definitely mention also the school meals, and I am happy. The only minor comment for the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Minister for Treasury and Resources presenting the Budget said this is “new funding”. It is not new funding. I will just remind all Members that £1.6 million was voted last December and this is why Deputy Ward was able to deliver school meals to all schools by this Christmas. I am really grateful to Deputy Ward because I think it was a lot of work to deliver it but it was all put in place in advance. It is good that it is happening and I am happy for the children. The matter of truth also, the Budget has not been reduced, it has grown by 3 per cent.

[14:30]

One of the things, it is about the numbers presentations. There is some confusion where £10 million to support business was coming from and not immediately clear. During the Corporate Services public hearing the Treasury officials admitted that it was an error and it has been rectified, so we did agree the £10 million had grown. As Deputy Warr mentioned just yesterday, the Comptroller and Auditor General’s report has been published and found that COVID business support that was

administered by Jersey businesses was overclaimed of £12.6 million. Now we also do not have data how £6.7 million was distributed this year for agricultural grants, so we do not have a good history of distributing these grants, and £5 million still not being recovered. I have a huge question mark how our £10 million will be allocated, and we will need to look into this. I am looking at the time. Cabinet Office: completely right, as the chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Panel said, the Cabinet Office budget has been reduced, but if you start to look into the numbers, what is the Cabinet Office? You bring together Cabinet Office, technology and digital services, People Services, and also not including the Communication Department - kind of it has gone into the department - so all these 3 together, it is £80 million, when the budget for the Cabinet Office previously in 2024 was £77 million. Again, to be fair, I need to acknowledge the reduction of the cost of these 3 areas over the next 4 years, and I hope we will see the reduction without the outcomes to the public. Here coming to the other part, it is the Common Strategic Policy role accepted. One of the amendments that I put forward, it was to enable designing homes for the ageing population and this also was addressing demographic provision. It might be there in the Budget, it might be somewhere hidden under, but when we ask what is for pensioners, the Chief Minister during this public hearing: "We found a way to retrofit" but I do not think there is much for the elderly in this Budget, unless it was again hidden somewhere, but it needs to be very clear and transparently presented. This is the problem all along with this Budget. As Scrutiny, we found it really, really challenging to understand the numbers that will match. Especially we have huge growth in Health, but we have been told: "Do not worry, we will produce to you the plan." We are asking how £1.1 million for the lifelong learning will be spent during the public hearing. They said: "Do not worry, the programme is under development." We ask: "Where is the prioritisation list for I.T. programmes which was promised to P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) some time ago?" and we have been told: "Do not worry, we will do it." When you will do it? As the president of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee, I would like to say thank you to all members of Scrutiny and officers supporting Scrutiny through this Budget. It was a difficult programme and input is really received and not always accepted. Jersey needs much more than ever Scrutiny working in 2025 to deliver for the public of Jersey.

1.2.14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I realise this is a bit of a graveyard slot. I think there are only 4 Ministers in the Chamber. I shall crack on anyway. Any Budget is a huge beast and it is difficult to work out at the end of a long week exactly where we have arrived. I beg your pardon, 5 and 6, thank you. He is just in time to hear me say something nice about his party. **[Laughter]** Any Budget is a huge beast and it is difficult to work out where we have got to. Let us say first of all who are the winners. Well, I would say Reform Jersey are winners. They have a clear plan: get a focused programme of delivery of some key manifesto commitments through and then campaign on the basis of the next election of: "Look what we can achieve with 3 Ministers. Think what you could do if you put us in charge." Whether you look on that with excitement or terror **[Laughter]** will be emotions equally shared within the Council of Ministers. Deputy Tom Binet is a big winner, bailed out on Health spending every time he asks and given carte blanche to pursue the hospital project without political restraint, and I will return to that. Deputy Farnham is a winner. He has shepherded a Budget through this Assembly with great success. We do spend our time talking about the bits with which we disagree. That is the nature of a debate focused on amendments, but there is a huge amount on which we do agree. The Budget gets on with lots of things that need progress. Progress on the living wage is great, continuing the work of the last Government in raising tax allowances and uprating benefits is very welcome. The closer matching of the capital programme to the available capacity in government and in construction is sensible in principle, although many doubts have been expressed around the actual decisions made. It is right that we should be looking to curb the growth in government and in public spending. In many ways, it is a necessary exercise, but there should be an intelligent examination of what Government have done and that is not what I think we have had. The frustration I have is in the execution. It has been done blind, without much thought and planning and vision, which is what has led to a string of amendments that in many ways tried to gain greater alignment between supposed

Government objectives and their actual actions. We have had rather a sad litany from this Government during the debate on many of these amendments, which were basically “computer says no.” Even when there an obvious contradiction between government cuts and their supposed ambitions, they pushed back. The Chief Minister said when he took on the job that he wanted to engage more with Back-Benchers. This was a new type of Government that wanted to work with the Assembly. I do not think we have noticed that. There was an engagement with amendments when the Government feared losing, I think, but that is not exactly a new beginning. Having seen this thing from both sides, I can say that the Budget process does mitigate against engagement with Back-Benchers. Ministers spend months trying to wrangle the Budget. They arrive at a carefully balanced compromise and then annoying Back-Benchers start destabilising the carefully constructed edifice. That is the system we have and I think that the way it has gone through has been very similar to every other year. This is a Government that have made a fetish out of doing less. There is a saying from a book I read when I was a kid that stayed with me all my life, which is: “Argue for your limitations and sure enough, they are yours.” That is this Government’s big idea. They have not just been making savings, they have been deliberately cutting their own capacity to do things. Cutting consultants: a great slogan, but what an own goal in execution. It has led to delays in developing the wind farm, in doing work on gas security and numerous other things behind the scenes. Then you know what, it all gets quietly put back in after 6 months, when a process has been gone through and a bit of bureaucracy has been gone through and everybody has applied for the job again and all the rest of it. That is what happens when you have Government by populist slogan. This is a Budget where the ability to get things done was sacrificed for a cheap headline: “Cut bureaucracy, cut red tape”, arguments that were shredded by Deputy Jeune and Deputy Miles in the debate on outcome-based accounting yesterday. It plays well with a *J.E.P.* editorial, but it does not help Government deliver. What was needed was a clear analysis of where consultants were being used inappropriately and then to set the use of consultants against political realities, political goals. That did not happen. There has been a complete lack of clarity with the cuts. The cuts in the Comms Department, or were they, or were they simply redeployed? It has been impossible to track. Similarly, the freeze on senior appointments. The chief officer resigns and the Government trumpets that they are making savings, but will they? When the question is asked: “Will you replace the chief officer?” as we did with the renamed C.L.S., we were told: “Yes, of course.” So where is the saving? Is this a redundancy programme? In which case you should be closing posts. You make a post redundant, not a person. If it is not, on what basis are you letting people go? The Government’s programme is, as we know, deliberately unambitious because there is so little on which all Ministers agree. The Budget represents a postponement of the deep reckoning which this Island needs to face over issues like productivity and ageing population, Health spending that is spiralling out of control, climate change, over a vision, in fact, for where this Island is going. The reason is of course it simply is not possible to produce a long-term vision that puts Reform Jersey’s manifesto alongside Deputy Tom Binet’s vision for the Island. It is a marriage of convenience, but as sometimes happens with arranged marriages, they can work, at least for a while. I do not want to be harsh. The chief people might think I have got a downer on this Government. The Chief Minister has played the hand he has been dealt with, with considerable political skill. He had to make a Government that bound together all those Members whose main point in common was they voted for the vote of no confidence, and doing that was an achievement. Holding it together is also an achievement, but the price has been to put tackling most of the Island’s long-term issues on hold. It will be the next election that will be the battleground for that. It is worth mentioning in that context the great big hole in the Budget discussion, which is Pillar Two, still hiding in the shadows, but I think destined to play a very big role in political discussion going forward. The problem with such a limited ambition and vision is it finds expression in the chaotic and contradictory cuts the Government has made, which amendments tried unsuccessfully to reverse. Numerous amendments showed up the contradiction between what Government said their goals were and what they were doing in the Budget, Stats Jersey, Digital Jersey, Jersey Business, the Government won those votes, and indeed, my abiding memory of this debate I think will be seeing the Reform Ministers all racing into the Chamber when a vote is called,

perhaps taking time off from their social media feeds to cast votes against a succession of amendments, which everyone in the Assembly knows had they not been in Government, they would have been supporting. I think it was a bit of a pyrrhic victory in that it exposed the lack of strategic thinking and vision at the heart of the Government. I want to say a few words about the purchase of the Social Security building with the Social Security Fund. I welcome the Minister's commitment to work with the Social Security Panel, and that will certainly be an issue that we will be talking about. I think the fundamental point that Social Security Fund should not be deployed in pursuit of wider goals because money is tight elsewhere is one that is now going to become a battleground. As the debate on the living wage support scheme went on, my alarm rose, in that we went from reluctant taking of money to some speeches apparently being quite proud of taking the money because it would deliver on wider social goals, and that is of course exactly the slippery slope that was feared. I wonder when Project Breakwater comes along whether or not the Social Security Fund might again be in the firing line for some creative investments. It makes me think of what has happened in the U.K., where when money was tight, local councils invested in various schemes with public money that were considered to be sure-fire investments, property investments and so on, that have ended up bankrupting a string of councils. I think we are nowhere near that place at the moment, but that is the potential danger. But my main point about why I cannot support this Budget is this: I am sure it will count for very little from this Government's point of view, but I would have been prepared to support the Budget and swallow my disagreement with a number of items on it, but I cannot do that because of the Health budget and in particular because of the attitude to the new health facilities. I want to say, by the way, that despite what some people say, this is not personal. I have no personal animosity to the Minister for Health and Social Services, and I am not bitter, not with him, the Chief Minister or any other Minister. I simply have a fundamental political difference about the way the Minister for Health and Social Services is approaching his portfolio. That is why I have to say it is, frankly, a disgrace that this Government have essentially said to the Minister for Health and Social Services: "You go ahead and spend the money however you want without political check" and I say that because I repeat what the Minister for Treasury and Resources said when we had her in for a Scrutiny hearing about the new hospital facilities, and I am afraid she did not know very much about the non-Overdale parts at all. I think it is a grave abdication of responsibility. I do not want to criticise the Minister for Treasury and Resources too much. I think she is an excellent Minister. I think the problem is a political one. The Minister for Health and Social Services, it seems, cannot be challenged. It is not enough to say that because we need to get spades in the ground at Overdale we will give the Minister for Health and Social Services free rein. Let me spell out the budgetary implications of that health facilities budget.

[14:45]

We are committing tens of millions of pounds - although the Minister will not say exactly how much - to facilities with no business case, no clear rationale, no idea of what the money will deliver or what else will be required to finish the job. We will potentially end up with 4 hospital sites, where in the U.K. and pretty well everywhere else in the world, one hospital would serve a population of several million people. Who would not want lots of hospitals? Love it, but they have to be paid for, and I agree with the Constable of St. Clement, we may well end up on the hook for over £1 billion to be spent on healthcare facilities and we are sleepwalking into that. On top of that, we have a budget overspend in Health. It went up from £18 million in April, £20 million in May, £28 million by October and now I think we have confirmed another £3 million on top, all within the space of 9 months. You might think that it was time to question a few of the supposed fundamental assumptions around spending on Health, but we are not. I cannot give a vote for a Budget that gives the Minister for Health and Social Services free rein to spend on health facilities in secret. His idea of scrutiny is that he tells a Scrutiny in private what he is up to, but there is no Assembly or public comment possible. It is scandalous. It may be politically necessary for peace in the Council of Ministers to not challenge the Minister for Health and Social Services, but I say to Ministers that in this regard, you are weak and you are complicit. The Assembly may endorse the Government's approach, but I

am not prepared to put my name to it. I will not be told in a few months' time: "Oh, you voted for this" as people have said in terms of the Common Strategic Policy here. I will not endorse that approach. I will not have it in my name. I am afraid I will be voting against.

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

I rise simply to provide some clarity on something that Deputy Renouf just mentioned in his speech in relation to payroll savings, particularly from C.L.S. So the payroll savings that have been made at C.L.S. from the departure of the Chief Executive will be taken from that department's budget. If one of the group directors is appointed substantively to their post, then that post within that department will not be further replaced. If a Chief Officer is appointed from outside, then posts will still need to be lost within that department so that those savings are maintained. So there are real-term savings going forward, and this will be the case for whatever posts are removed, so that there is always a mechanism to make sure that those savings are made today and they are maintained into the future. I just thought it was important that I provided some clarity around that point.

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

Before this debate closes and the Minister for Treasury and Resources sums up, I would like to thank Members for their contributions over the past 4 days. We have had some robust debates on the amendments presented this week, as well as on the substance of the Budget. I believe we, as Ministers, have clearly articulated the rationale for each position we have taken to deliver a fair, funded and balanced budget. Where it has been possible for us to agree or work with amendments, we have done so. That is the approach I will always take. That is the approach Council of Ministers will always take. The focus of the Council of Ministers in bringing this Budget is to ensure that we maintain the quality and level of public services that all Islanders expect, while at the same time stemming unsustainable growth in the public sector. This Budget, as amended, will deliver clear, affordable and sustainable plans for the remainder of our time in office and beyond. It provides the funding needed to deliver our 13 C.S.P. commitments, as agreed and approved by this Assembly. It invests in our front line services and our staff. It right-sizes the public sector, it right-sizes our capital programme to an achievable level, while also reducing consultancy spending. Now, we all know that as an Island nation, a Government of our size, we cannot have a huge public sector in the context of bigger towns and cities and countries. It will always be necessary to utilise consultancy and expertise where possible, but we had got a little out of hand on that and we are pulling it back in line. This Budget delivers the savings necessary to replenish our financial reserves and it minimises government fees and charges, in essence keeping more money in Islanders' pockets. When this Council of Ministers brought our C.S.P. proposal to the States Assembly for debate in June of this year, we were clear that our objectives for the next 2 years should be focused on delivering the best outcomes for Islanders in the short, medium and long term. Ministers and their chief officers have had to make difficult decisions in the preparation of this Budget about the services and programmes they wish to prioritise and, where appropriate, where the savings could be made. This Budget invests in public assets, new healthcare facilities, technology and the public realm. It takes steps to safeguard and grow our Island's financial reserves, which is essential to our long-term financial security. Members will know, they will remember that the Fiscal Policy Panel were crystal clear in their advice published earlier this year about the economic challenges Jersey faces and the steps we should take as a responsible Government and as a responsible Assembly. We must focus on improving productivity across all sectors. We must replenish our reserves and we must reduce unnecessary spending. It is that advice that has been critical in shaping the Budget we have before us today. While we have seen a positive downward movement in terms of inflationary pressures and the reduction in the R.P.I. (retail price index), many Islanders are still struggling to meet their day-to-day costs. The provisions we vote on today will provide the funding essential to support our local employers as we transition to a higher-wage economy, and in supporting business and supporting Islanders with their day-to-day costs. I am also pleased that the Minister for Treasury and Resources has identified and applied freezes to duties on alcohol and fuel for 2025, as well as increasing income

tax thresholds and allowances, but this Budget delivers more than the short-term cost-of-living support. After years of debate, we can finally begin construction of the new hospital at Overdale in spring 2025. This, I hope, being an optimist, will end the uncertainty that has impacted patients and staff and clinicians for far too long. Coupled with the additional investment in healthcare contained within this Budget, we are making a concerted commitment to improve how we deliver care in Jersey, and this is not siloed thinking. This is a holistic approach to ensure, in a short timeframe, that we have the staff, we have the skills and we have the facilities to deliver the quality of healthcare that Islanders expect and it is matched by the commitment of the Minister for Health and Social Services, the Assistant Ministers for Health and Social Services, the Council of Ministers and within the department to bring the department's long-term funding and costs in order. Nobody has a blank cheque, no Minister has a blank cheque, and this Council of Ministers is working in a consensual way, in a collective way, to ensure that we bring the health costs back under control. That will be helped considerably by the arrival of new healthcare facilities, not least the hospital and the associated facilities that will follow. In line with F.P.P. guidance, I know we need to think more critically about our plans for long-term infrastructure investment and work is ongoing to develop a long-term plan to address these issues, which we will bring to this Assembly. This Budget provides the foundation for that work, where Islanders will see notable improvements in the coming 2 years. As all Members will know, we cannot live outside our means, and yet over the last 5 years, government departmental expenditure has grown exponentially, from £780 million in 2019 to an estimated £1.3 billion in 2025, according to this Budget. In all good conscience, we cannot continue the trend of increasing Government spending at the rate we have seen in recent years. This Budget begins to address that. It begins to address that by curbing the growth, by putting our financials on a solid footing and focusing on replenishing our strategic funds. This Budget, in short, sets strong foundations for our medium and long-term economic planning and a clear pathway to improve finances for the longer term. Turning to Scrutiny, and I thank Scrutiny for their efforts, but this Council of Ministers strongly refute the claims in relation to lack of detail. The Budget, probably slightly a thicker Budget Book than recently, together with the Budget annex, has been presented in the same format that it has done for many years. We have worked with and provided comprehensive and detailed responses, probably amounting to many hundreds of pages of additional detail, in response to a very many very good questions from Scrutiny. I make no criticism of Scrutiny for really drilling down into the Budget, and of course we will continue to work closely with Scrutiny in the year ahead. Departmental plans will be produced reflecting the results of the Budget and any amendments - the business plans have to be amended to reflect that - and published in January along with the Ministerial priorities. Some Members have talked about ... maybe, I am not sure, they were looking to find a division in the Council of Ministers, but for the first time I think in a long time - certainly in my time in the States Assembly - I believe we have a Council of Ministers that is truly reflective of the make-up of this Assembly. I would describe it as I would describe the Budget, as socially responsible and economically conservative. Deputy Southern has the same expression on his face as I did when he said it was a socialist Budget, but it is a balanced Budget that represents society, and does not shy away from helping those in our society, in our community that need help the most, especially at these difficult times. I know it is not popular for many that we are moving to a higher-wage economy, but it is necessary. This Government believes it is necessary and will ultimately benefit Islanders. I think it will benefit the economy. It will take some time to settle in and that is why it is important we have the mechanisms in place to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. In closing, may I just provide some thanks?

[15:00]

I would like to thank the very many who have played a part in creating, debating and delivering this budget: to the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Treasurer and the Treasury team for their unstinting work and commitment, to the Scrutiny members, their staff, especially their staff and officials, who - judging by the amount of correspondence we have received - have been extremely busy. I would like to make sure they get properly recognised. To the Ministerial Support Unit and

for all the private secretaries and the officials who have helped us put the budget together and deal with the Scrutiny, [Approbation] to all of the staff across the public sector, who have rallied behind the new Government, notwithstanding the uncertainty in the senior management levels that has been created by our drive to right size, to resize and to reorganise. I want to thank them, and respect them, because they have remained unfazed and their attention and dedication to duty is unquestionable. Last but not least, to the Greffe staff for all of the work they have done, an exceptionally brave move to put the new website live a week before the Budget, and it seems to have worked reasonably well thus far. In finishing, I just wanted to restate that delivering a Budget is never an easy task where funding for essential services must be carefully balanced against the need to protect the Island's long-term financial interests and the very legitimate challenges by States Members, who all have their own priorities. We are all working for our Island; we are all working for our constituencies. It is absolutely right we challenge in this Assembly on their behalf. I believe this Budget manages to successfully achieve the balance. It is a Budget that reprioritises growth, seeks to curb expenditure and provide investment in our reserves for the future, and I hope Members will join me in supporting this proposition. Thank you.

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

We are now being asked whether we should support this Government Plan for 2025 or whether we are of the opinion that it does not meet the needs and requirements of the people of Jersey. This is the first Budget being proposed by the Reform Jersey coalition Government and I am sure that many people will be hoping that it is the last, although we may have to endure a further iteration next year, prior to the election in 2026. This is not something which many of us will look forward to, as it seems clear to me that the Council of Ministers is treading water, trying to muddle through to what will be a very eventful general election. What does this proposition bring to the people of Jersey? What hope is there for the future? Where is the forward planning, where is the vision? It seems that all thought of long-term planning has been sidelined to try to appeal to the already disgruntled electorate. I believe that they deserve better. I have many concerns about this Budget, including around the vehicle testing centre, which has been dropped yet again. This is one of many projects that will not be progressed, as well as a replacement abattoir and the vital requirement of building our sea defences at Havre des Pas and at other vulnerable sites around the Island. Statistics Jersey are having their budget cut and therefore we will see the Business Tendency Survey discontinued and the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey may also be suspended. What sort of message are we sending to our local business community if we cannot even afford to find out what our local businesses think of the economy? We should be building our relationships with the business community. We also see the reduction of the grant to Jersey Finance and the budget cuts to Digital Jersey and Jersey Business. This collectively sends the wrong message to our budding entrepreneurs and will not encourage others to come to Jersey to set up their businesses. There is of course the £20 million to subsidise the rise in the minimum wage, but it is difficult to tell who exactly will benefit from this subsidy, and even then, what happens after 2 years when the entire cost will fall on to all business owners, large and small. This will lead to inflationary pressure, as stated by the Government's own chief economist. Meanwhile, we see the annual increase in public sector jobs up 440 to June this year, and over the last 5 years it has risen by 1,890, which is a huge increase of 24.2 per cent, which requires massive financing, and all this on the back of an 8 per cent increase across the board for all civil servants, which the Minister for Treasury and Resources described only on Wednesday as being "slightly higher." With the prospect of above inflation rises for the next 2 years, we can expect to see more of the same if there is another Reform Jersey Government in 2026. Within this Budget, there seems to be little hope for the construction industry, which has seen a decrease of 160 jobs in the last year alone and also no encouragement has been given to hotels and restaurants, who have had a decline of 100 jobs in the last year. Why do we continually try to destroy all of our local industries rather than encourage them? All of these shortcomings come at the time of the failed tendering process for the ferries. How can such a monumental failure have occurred when there was so much available information about those who were offering to run the service? Our Council of

Ministers, like the wreck of the Medusa, has been cast adrift on a raft of indecision, floating aimlessly on a sea of ineptitude. We need to build our relationship with the business sector; we need to build our relationship with the hospitality sector; we need to build our tourism industry; we need to build our fintech industry; but above all, we need to build. I can see no hope for the construction industry within this Budget, and without the prospect of an Island Plan within the next 2 to 3 years, I expect to see further decline and more empty building sites around the Island. What message does this send to young Jersey families, desperate to get on to the housing ladder to enable them to raise the next generation of Islanders? These are only some of the shortcomings of this Government Plan, but I am sure that others will highlight the many concerns. Because of these concerns, I am unable to support this proposition today.

Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

I will be brief. It has been a long week for everyone and first I too would also like to ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

There is something making a noise in your area again. I do not know what it is.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I have got nothing ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

It will distract you and others, I think. It is always in that zone of the Chamber. I am not quite sure what it is. I am not saying it is you, Deputy Wilson, but it ...

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

It might be me, my such electric personality, I do not know, but ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

It may be that.

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

It may be an air tag, something that identifies ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you want to stand up when you are ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry. It may be an air tag. That sounds like the signal of an air tag, which identifies things that you or may not lose.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you want to try from there?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

It will be me. Shall I talk through Deputy Andrews's microphone?

The Deputy Bailiff:

It is better.

1.2.18 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Okay, thank you. Sorry about that. I would just like to say thank you to Members who have contributed to the debate and particularly to the debate on Le Squez. There are things in the Budget that promise a lot and it will no doubt be a priority for all of us to track that delivery. I want to ask the Chief Minister to deliver on the intentions and to move ahead with the plans that we want to

develop for Le Squez. Being accountable for me is about giving a satisfactory reason for what you are doing and this Budget may be well-intentioned, but the reasons given for some of the decisions we have accepted this week have been a bit more than opaque. I am really disappointed that we have not had any real plan to address the economic realities of what we face, particularly when it comes to frailty, particularly when it comes to providing opportunity for young people and particularly taking into account that if we are not careful, we are going to be really behind the curve when it comes to innovation and technology and development. Personally, I think had there been more engagement with Members, we might have been able to add some value to some of the propositions that were coming forward and maybe just add a little bit more of a dimension to that. For me, there have been too many backroom deals done at the last minute. It has been difficult keeping track of Government's intentions, and I hope that as a result of some of the comments that have been received from Members that the Ministerial team and Government will take that back and do something about that to give some more confidence to the fact that we all have a voice, we all have something to say, we all want to contribute. I think when the Chief Minister took up his tenure, he said that he wanted to see a more collaborative and more inclusive Assembly. Sadly, I do not feel that that has been the case. I just want to address Deputy Ward's comments about Le Squez and the removal of the reference to St. Helier. I do that because I think it is important to constituents in both communities to know what options were open. Deputy Ward could have come and made another amendment to my amendment, but he did not. My question to him is why did he not, because I think we might have been able to find a solution. I think what has been helpful is in expressing those frustrations and those concerns about young people and Le Squez; the Chief Minister has listened to that. I am pleased that he has agreed to meet with myself and the Connétable in January to take forward some of the things that we want. As a member of a Scrutiny Panel - 3 actually - we have really been working hard to develop our role as a critical friend, but in doing so we need to have openness, transparency and a really helpful exchange between Ministers and scrutineers to be able to really account to the public. Again, I would ask the Chief Minister, in terms of accounting for the plan, accounting for the delivery, that this is a discussion with Ministers about how and in what way Scrutiny can be supported in its process just as much as we are trying to support Ministers deliver on their objectives through that critical friend role. Finally, I just want to come to the health service. Over the last 9, 10 months, I have chosen not to make any real comment as previous Minister for Health and Social Services because I wanted to see the new Minister for Health and Social Services succeed or at least move forward with some of his ambitions. It is sad to say that we have never had an exchange on this and I would have liked an opportunity to be able, with both him and his Ministerial team, to see if there was anything I could have offered to them, but sadly that engagement has not been there. I do not want to stay silent on this anymore because what we have seen over the last couple of months is a financial recovery programme that is now out of control. Health spending is out of control, not only on a revenue basis, but also on a capital basis, and I agree with my fellow panel chair, Deputy Renouf, that trying to get into the detail of how much money is allocated to each element of the scheme is really, really difficult. Building a new hospital is not going to solve the healthcare crisis.

[15:15]

The financing of whatever comes next I would urge Members to be really on top of because you need to know that when you are recreating and transforming services it costs even more money, so I would hope at some point in the year we may see more detail around the hospital spending that Ministers feel they can share or they must share, and that Members will feel more confidence about the quality and the detail of the information that is coming forward. We are spending nearly £710 million. We had a short debate on that yesterday. It took us 2½ hours to talk about £2.5 million for a youth club. The proportions and the priorities around that are completely misguided. For me, the issues around the Island facing the biggest economic challenge, particularly around frailty, particularly around young people and the opportunities that digital could have given, I do not really see or get a feel for this in this plan. I would have liked to have seen that. It is on that basis that I think it lacks a bit of vision. It is very transactional and therefore I cannot support it.

1.2.19 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I rise with some sense of concern and disappointment about the fact that we are being asked to pass a Budget, the most important decision of any parliamentary calendar. There are confidence motions and there are supply motions and this is a bill of supply, and when a Government does not get its bill of supply through, it fails. I know the Government will succeed because they have succeeded in every, I think, amendment that they wished to have and it is almost ... I hope Government Members will understand, and I have been on the other side. I do not think I have ever been leading a Budget where a Budget that I have proposed has not meant that amendments have had to be made to the Finance (Jersey) Law because Members have had the right and won the arguments. It seems that we have, if I may say, raised some valid points and I wish that there would have been some opportunity to find solutions, but those have not been given to us. I have never found it so difficult to advance Budget amendments, and I am hugely grateful for the Greffe staff, but it was a feeling as though I am being spiked at every turn. I do not mean that in a derogatory way, it is just barriers that have just been lifted. I am sorry that I did not get my amendments through. I accept the will of the Assembly, but it took me so long to make sure that it could be translated into law and then I was faced with the situation where the Government had accepted a halfway house on 2 of my amendments, but I have lost everything. I just do not understand how that has happened. I have never been a Member of this Assembly and seen a Budget which the Government have got their way. I just think that is a really odd and uncomfortable situation. This Budget has been hailed by some as progressive, the first socialist Budget, but let us call it what it is. It is, at best, a consensus patchwork and an explicable one at that. It concerns me that members also of Reform think that they are the only Members that care about low pay; they are not. I care about low pay. My approach may be somewhat different. I believe that the cake needs to be grown. I believe that everybody will benefit and we can have discussions - respectful discussions - about tax, but everything I hear about the Reform future is about taxing more wealthy people and redistributing it. I can see the chairman of Reform and that horrifies me. I am not sure that that is what the electorate that I serve in St. Saviour want. I am not sure that they want that. I think they want economic growth as well and they want fairness in terms of the way their social services are delivered. I am uncomfortable about the £20 million fund that was. I mean no criticism to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. I know he has been under enormous pressure, but I have to say to Members, I asked him whether they think that the package of measures that we have approved from the Social Security Fund, which I accept is coming from it, has been scrutinised. It was lodged on the Friday before the deadline of amendments. I do not think there has been any scrutiny about that money whatsoever and I am very, very concerned about that. I am supportive of the move to the living wage, but I want it done properly, I want it done openly and I want it done with Scrutiny and I do not believe - and I am looking to the relevant Scrutiny Panel chairs - that they have been briefed and considered those package of measures. It is a very, very large amount of money. I am just looking to the relevant Scrutiny chairs. I do not think they have scrutinised it and that worries me, £20 million unscrutinised. I am pleased that the chair of the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel raised the issue of inflation. I am very, very concerned and have been from the start about the rising level of domestic inflation. That is self-inflicted inflation. I am very, very concerned about the issues of competition in Jersey. I am very concerned about the rising cost of living. There is something wrong when I hear so many people talking about the cost of living and seeing the R.P.I. and being told that the R.P.I. is coming down when it is not. I repeat again and say to the Assistant Minister for Sustainable Economic Development about statistics, it is not good enough to say that a statistic is better. A statistic must be comparable and it is not comparable. We do not have an R.P.I. figure or a conflation figure that is in line with international standards and it is shocking, I say shocking that we have got statistics that we ... as Deputy Gorst has done the job and Deputy Bailhache is not here today. I have done the job as Minister for External Relations and I know how important statistics are, credible statistics are, in getting the message across. I have heard nothing about the importance of international standards in statistics and we have denuded Statistics Jersey as a result. I think it is better than it was, but it is nowhere good enough. There are issues affecting every household, yet they are barely acknowledged

in the Budget. The Fiscal Policy Panel has been clear: inflation is one of our biggest threats to the economy. I think they say that in words, and that affects the livelihood. It is the silent killer of every pound in every wage packet or every income that a retired person gets and it is rising. It is incomparable and we all know it. We all know it. It is rising and this Budget I do not think does anything to address that. It is just not good enough to say we are going to give people greater tax allowances. I have been part of that. That is what you do in the urgency phase, but then you get the actual issue of the cost of living. What is this Budget doing to do anything about it? Well, I do not think there is a single measure about cost of living, not one. If I am wrong, the Minister for Treasury and Resources can tell me, but I do not think there is one meaningful measure. It has been very difficult. I have asked the Minister for Treasury and Resources, with the greatest of respect. I have done lots of Budgets. The opacity of the Budget ... and Scrutiny Panels, the Chief Minister loves the fact, he says, that he has had so many interactions, but the interactions have been trying to find the numbers. The numbers are not there. They are buckets of money. They are just buckets of money that I would not have ever been allowed, as the Minister for Treasury and Resources, to bring forward. There has to be absolute transparency and accountability in terms of where money is. Scrutiny Panels, I think - of which I am not a member of any - have struggled to find out what it is, and I have to say, in terms of savings, having been beaten up and told that there is an austerity Budget, I respectfully say to the leader of Reform, on the budget measures that were made, I did not make the one that he is talking about, but I made £50 million of efficiency savings twice and maintained public services. I do not think I cut benefits for the 2 that I did - maybe if it is a successor - but we made the public service more efficient. Frankly, the savings targets that are being put, but are unknown in terms of their delivery, are but a drop in the ocean compared to what I was asked to do and my colleagues on the Finance and Economics Committee and subsequent Treasury. They are a drop in the ocean and are not even being ... I was given a hard time in Budgets, rightly so, if I did not explain where the savings were coming from. I will repeat another refrain, the abolition of the 3-year approach - Deputy Tadier - and I was pleased to support him in relation to the arts funding because that gave certainty. I was absolutely horrified to hear that even in November the A.L.O.s did not know what money they were getting. How can you plan if you do not know what your budget is going to be? Think about those individuals, not civil servants, but those people who work in these agencies. How can they plan? They are worried about their jobs and they should not be in this situation. I believe in long-term planning and I urge, I plead with the Minister for Treasury and Resources ... I am going to meet her finally, I hope, on 13th December. I have not been able to meet with her before. I understand she is busy, but there are other Assistant Ministers and I could have met other people. I wanted genuinely to find solutions. As a Minister for Treasury and Resources of the past, I met with every Member, if they wanted to, to discuss an amendment and to try and find the least worst way of funding it. I have seen amendments effectively being in the worst possible position, almost a threatening position, not threatening in a violent way or anything like that, but in a way that meant the alternative was completely unpalatable. I believe there are solutions. We are an Island that has strong public finances and I am worried about the future. I am worried that it is going to be the reality, as Deputy Ahier so wisely said, and Deputy Warr wisely said. I do not understand why Members of the Government are not aware that there is an unfolding crisis in construction. The order books are thin; they are non-existent. That is a combination of factors, a lack of planning, lack of actual projects, but there is nothing. I am really worried, if it is true what I am hearing on the doorsteps of my constituents, that there are no capital projects and it is all the subcontractors that are going to be affected. I am really worried. We have already seen 3 construction firms fail. That means they are slow in their capacity, and if I was Government, I would be getting on and moving some of that capacity and I would be getting great value for 2 youth centres, both Le Squez and St. Helier, and I would be doing like we did in the fiscal stimulus. I am not saying everything we did was perfect, but we got on and we delivered, and we delivered projects at good value. There is a lot to do. This Budget fails in dealing with the high cost of living. The £20 million, I just do not know what to say about how that should be scrutinised. It has not been scrutinised and that fails the accountability. I am afraid to say that this is a Budget of missed opportunities. It is

maybe a consensus which keeps the Chief Minister happy, but it does not keep the people that I represent happy. It is neither one way nor the other and it is a mix of things, and it is an unholy socialist Budget by a Minister who has been a Minister for Economic Development, who is a neoliberal apparently, a pro-business person. There are some awful things going on in our Island, I cite cannabis. I brought an amendment and I lost it because of a procedural issue. I do not think that was my fault. Islanders deserve better. I have never, ever voted against a Budget, but I cannot bring my heart or my soul or my brain to vote for this Budget. It breaks my heart to say that this Budget, after listening to the debate ... and I am being looked at in dagger looks from the Chief Minister. I am sorry, I cannot support a Budget after the farce that I have seen, after the deals that I have been seeing, after the failure to get Le Squez, after the failure to get a plan for Five Oaks, after a failure of all sorts of amendments failed. Every single one of the amendments has failed, so effectively we have got Back-Benchers who will go home, Scrutiny members who will have said: "Well, what have we achieved?" I know that we have achieved the public that have been listening and I have had some very interesting calls; very interesting.

[15:30]

I sought no publicity for my stamp duty amendments, but I have been inundated by people that said that could have made a difference, and I do not think we have heard the end of it. I hope that in the next 12 months, as the year turns, we can commit to doing better. This Government came into office saying that they were going to be transparent, open, more collaborative, more collegiate. They have certainly been collegiate among themselves but I do not quite know how, with rabbits being brought out of the hat and deals being done, but they have certainly not been - as far as this Member is concerned and as members of Scrutiny - collaborative. There has been no attempt to find a middle way. There has been no attempt even to understand the concerns that a Member might have and I am not used to that. I always met with an amendment, whether the Government agreed with it or not, and found the least worst option so that there could be a debate and this Assembly was a debating Chamber where the arguments could be heard and debates would be made and votes would be taken, not on a whip but because it was the right thing to do. I feel very uncomfortable that we have got for the first time, I think - the Greffe will tell me if I am wrong - ever a Budget that is going to be proposed unamended, except that where the Government wanted it. There were some accepted amendments, that is one thing but the Government accepted them. But the Government has succeeded in defeating everything, and I am sorry.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Ozouf, will you accept a point of clarification from Deputy Doublet?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

If I am allowed.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you are ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, can I raise a point of order? It is a point of order, it seems that there is a 15-minute time limit on the speeches and if points of clarification are taken after a speech it means that a Member has a longer than 15-minute speech and it is not question time, so it does raise a problem, I think, about procedure if one is taking points of clarification after you have finished your 15 minutes. It is not Deputy Ozouf's fault but it is a procedural problem.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, I will consider that. But Members are encouraged to ask points of clarification towards the end of speeches and one would not want to curtail Members from using the 15 minutes. But I will consider your point with regard to Standing Orders.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I did not want to interrupt the Deputy during his speech. He mentioned the living wage scheme not being scrutinised and I would ask if he could clarify whether he had been able to read the comments papers of Deputy Tadier's panel and my panel, and each of those includes several pages of scrutiny and findings and recommendations on that scheme? Had he had a chance to read those?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I had not and I apologise if I have not. There has been an awful lot of paper and all I know is I attended a briefing on the Friday before the Budget was done. If the Scrutiny Panels have done it and if they have scrutinised the £20 million then fine but I have not had a chance to read it because I have been so seized upon my own amendments, which I have failed all of them.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, your point, Deputy Tadier. Sorry, forgive me. Under Standing Order 104A: "The length of a Member's speech shall not be taken to include any time during which the Member is speaking has agreed to give way in accordance with Standing Order 101."

Deputy M. Tadier:

That is fine, Sir. Could I just point out that there could easily be 9 points of clarification from my 9 party members after a 15-minute speech that I give and we could be here all day, in which it could be an abuse of power? Not to mention the other 9 interventions you get from Members making, effectively ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that a point of order you are raising or is it something else?

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is a point of order, Sir, because I think it needs consideration from the Chair about how it is applied in future.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, all right.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Sir, would it be appropriate to remind you to remind us that 15 minutes is not a target? **[Laughter]**

The Deputy Bailiff:

I endorse your observation.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Sir, can I just make a point which might assist Members? I wanted to let Members know that I will be asking for amendment 2 to P.72 to be debated, that is the one that relates to a distiller's relief. I just thought I should let people know that now in terms of planning ahead.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We will reach that in due course.

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

I will not trouble the clock, I do not think. We have heard today about a lack of action. I do not recognise that and in fact I do not believe it is a true reflection of the very hard efforts of so many people across the public service and across this House. Each and every day I see many people going above and beyond. I have enjoyed working with my Scrutiny Panel for the last 10 months and I am pleased that they have accepted a number of invitations and opportunities to see work that is done by

the department. We still have lots of work to do. I do not want to reopen the debates about Le Squez but we have had it mentioned a couple of times today. I would remind people that project was not shovel-ready, as was described yesterday. I would happily join the Chief Minister when he goes back to Le Squez to have a look and see the Constables, a promise I made to him this morning. I would like to remind Members that we are currently working on an over £8 million investment at Oakfield, that is a sporting facility that is in the east of the Island and that work is underway, so a much-needed facility for both young and old alike. In terms of liquid waste that was mentioned by the chair of the Scrutiny Panel, as I have said at panel hearings, I look forward to working with the panel and other Members to bring both a liquid and solid waste strategy to the Assembly. The skatepark monies were mentioned. At no time have I agreed to delay the skatepark and Treasury assure me that the money is there. We were asked about the public realm budget. We have accepted the amendment for £100,000 to be used on the West of Island Plan. I think that is a good use of money and it is a very small proportion of our £2.5 million and I think that is an example of us trying to work with Members to achieve something for the greater good. I had requests for 140 per cent of my public realm budget, so I was pleased to do a small amount. I share the enthusiasm of the chair and her members of the Scrutiny Panel for the redevelopment of Fort Regent. We have all had many tough decisions to make and I just wanted to give Deputy Renouf some assurance that the Council of Ministers does challenge the Minister for Health and Social Services, just like all other Ministers are challenged and held to account. There is robust debate, discussion, it tends to happen around the table, and I can assure people that it still happens. I would also say that last year we voted extra money for Health and there were concerns then about transparency. I am very happy with where we are. Deputy Ahier mentioned about vehicle testing and sea defences. It is my decision to kick vehicle testing down the road; we have got other priorities. We are working on road safety and there is some good progress being made there, including a tyre safety report which will be out in a couple of weeks' time, and I am pleased with the progress the team are making. In terms of sea defences, a lot of work is being done on sea defences and that work continues and included in that is widespread consultation with stakeholders. Only last week I attended a briefing by the team to the local engineers on this subject. On page 59 of the report of the Budget: "Shoreline management plan for Havre des Pas. For the first time this Budget includes estimated costs for the implementation of the coastal flood alleviation project at Havre des Pas." That work is underway, it is going ahead and we have around £1.35 million for this year in the rolling vote to make sure that work is done. Deputy Ozouf spoke about the construction industry. It is another area that I have been involved in and there is some terrific work being done about co-ordinating the programmes of not only the Government but also the arm's length organisations. There is a thing called the I.C.E. (Island Construction and Engineering) Programme, which has been shared with my panel and the industry and it looks at where we have got peaks and troughs within the construction industry. I will remind Members of the significant investment in drainage, for example. Earlier this week we heard about the need to support the construction industry and only yesterday we had people arguing against us buying a property. Buying a property will see money go back into development companies which they can reinvest into other programmes, so I would say that was a good very move. In terms of Five Oaks, which we have just heard about, again earlier this week Deputy Ozouf - earlier today I think - apologised for his failure with Five Oaks. I do not think that is a Government failure.

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

I thank all Members for speaking and it has been very interesting listening to the speeches. I wanted to address really quite directly the economic elements of the plan, particularly with regard to my department and also their interaction with Health. I will start with the Health side of it, it is a fact - and I said this in a previous speech this week - that we have a changing demographic, which is going to lead to greater healthcare costs. We also know as a fact that for the last few years the Health budget has repeatedly been overspent but because I am not the Minister for Health and Social Services, I am not the Chief Minister, I have not delved into these matters deeply myself. But on the surface it, to me, seems that what we are seeing, as I said the other day, is the ageing population; the

results or the impacts of an ageing population is hitting home. We have said in the Future Economy Programme that as the population balance changes and becomes older there will be higher healthcare costs. This Budget, no question about it, does allocate greater funding to that healthcare situation. That to me should open all of our eyes to the impact of the ageing population; dealing with it is the right thing to do. We need to provide the funding, we also obviously need to restructure the health system to make sure that it can deliver as efficiently and as effectively as possible. It seems to me that that is what the Minister for Health and Social Services is attempting to do. He has drawn up a plan, he had publicised that plan and he is acting on it, and that is the right thing to do. Of course as a result of that we have seen other departments find it tougher in terms of growth. The Economy Department is one of those. But, that said - and I am very pleased - we are equally supporting the economy in different ways. The living wage will provide support for the economy, both in the actual greater amount of money into Islanders' pockets, which will help them deal with the cost of living and will help them live in Jersey in a dignified manner, which is absolutely right. But also the support that we are providing to businesses, which I am convinced will help us move to that more resilient and robust economy that we do need for the future. I think it is really important that when we look at the way that £10 million a year is being spent, it is being spent on matters that help businesses invest in themselves, help businesses focus on productivity, focus on making themselves absolutely more resilient for the future so they can be better businesses in the future. It is not just businesses - and I must correct myself sometimes - this is all organisations, this includes charities and other third-sector organisations. They are all able to partake of this £10 million per year funding, and that is absolutely right. From that perspective, I think it is wrong to look at this Government Plan as being inappropriate for the economy. It is different in its way of dealing with the economy. It is not funding the Economy Department directly in the way that it perhaps would have in the past but it is doing so in a more indirect manner. But we are purposing that money for absolutely the right things. I know Deputy Ahier was concerned about the visitor economy and he is right; I am pleased that Deputy Ahier is concerned about the visitor economy because I am concerned about the visitor economy. But we have £2 million a year extra for promoting the Island, particularly in the shoulder in the winter months. On top of that we have £1 million a year extra for developing new air routes and new links to bring people to these islands. Both of those matters are significant contributions, given that Visit Jersey's funding has been £5 million a year for 10 years. In other words, it has been in decline for 10 years because it is not being adjusted for inflation. Visit Jersey is now going to have an extra £2 million a year to spend on publicising the Island and bringing new visitors to the Island, and that is absolutely a shot in the arm for the visitor economy. It is a really good thing, it is direct support for the visitor economy and it is something I am really proud of. I appreciate the many reasons Deputy Bailhache brought his amendment. From my perspective I did not want that amendment to succeed because I wanted to be able to deliver that money to the visitor economy. The comments and the messages I received back from people, who work in the visitor economy, yesterday were hugely relieved that that amendment did not pass. Because they understand that this money is going to be transformative for the visitor economy. This Budget really helps our tourism industry; there is no question about it and that is a superb move forward. We are also at the same time helping the agriculture and fishing industries deal with the living wage; that is incredibly important. Because, again, we have done so much work since 2018 on rebuilding the agriculture and the support for agriculture and fisheries, delivering for the first time ever support for fisheries, that it would have been awful if this increase in the minimum wage was to threaten that.

[15:45]

But I am delighted that working with the Minister for Social Security we have made sure that that is not a threat anymore and that is really, really important. I am pleased that the Minister for Social Security has worked diligently with me to make sure that it is not a threat. The reason I have spoken is because I want people to understand that while it is not direct perhaps in the way previously you would have seen growth in the Economy Department's budget, et cetera, the support is there for the economy. The support is there for the visitor economy, it is also there for apprenticeships and

training; that is absolutely vital. We have got, I think, £2 million a year for training over 2 years to support apprenticeships. I have been speaking to the construction sector, they were really concerned about apprenticeships after us removing the trainee rate from the minimum wage. It is something that I still will see as a mistake because I know that young people are losing opportunities as a result of there no longer being a trainee rate. But we are helping to mitigate that - because that was a decision of the Assembly and so it stands - by providing £2 million each year over the next 2 years to support apprenticeships. That is going to be hugely important to encourage businesses to take on trainees and apprentices in a way that they were worried about and they are no longer worried about. I want to give this Budget, this Government Plan, a vote of confidence from my perspective in the Economy Department. We are using it in a way that will support the economy and I believe, as a result of this, we are going to have a much fitter economy for the future and dealing with those big problems that we identify in the Future Economy Programme, which principally centre around the ageing population and that demographic change. We are dealing with that and I think that is absolutely the right thing to do.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this proposition as amended? In that case, I call on the Minister to reply.

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

This is the first Budget of this Government serving as a financial plan of action to deliver on the ambitions set out in the Common Strategic Policy over the next 2 years. It also lays the groundwork for additional measures to strengthen our long-term financial stability. It is a balanced, actionable plan that prioritises delivery, sustainability and resilience for the people of Jersey. Sorry, I see that some of the people that I would have liked to respond to are not in the Assembly. I would like to thank all Members for their contributions not only to this debate but for their dedicated efforts to review, understand and scrutinise the plan since it was launched in August. In particular, I would like to thank all of those who have submitted amendments. I also thank officials in the Executive, in Scrutiny and in the Greffe for the support of all Members in the compilation, scrutiny and debate of the Budget. A couple of Members have talked about collaboration and have suggested Ministers failing to engage with them. I have said several times that if a Member wishes to bring a proposition, I am very happy to discuss it in advance, so that we can discuss it before it is lodged and agree a proposition that the Council of Ministers can accept from the outset. That offer remains. I am very happy to discuss it with anybody who is bringing an amendment, whether to a future Budget or to a general amendment in future, because it would be quite nice to bring forward proposals and propositions that we can accept. Scrutiny chairs have covered some of the content of their reports in speeches, and we will now consider the recommendations in those reports. It is important that the democratic process works well, and we will reflect on the views of Scrutiny when planning for next year's debate. It is vital that we heed F.P.P. advice to curtail the growth in day-to-day spending. I have previously called on Members to do their part, and I am pleased that that has been delivered through our decisions over the past few days. While the debate has at times been passionate, we have, through our democratic process, adopted 12 amendments from Scrutiny and Back-Benchers into the Budget. Those cover further increases to vehicle emissions duties to support our carbon neutral objectives, additional support for the Connect Me programme, to progress with the play strategy and transparency around Fort Regent, about digital services and an ombudsperson, about Pillar Two and sustainable finance commitments, enhanced support for apprenticeships and resources for the termination of pregnancy workstream, matched funding with the Parish of St Helier for neighbourhood improvement programmes, additional funding for Statistics Jersey to continue the Business Tendency Survey and, just this morning, the West of Island Masterplan. These initiatives strengthen our Budget and demonstrate the collective commitment of this Assembly to improving Islanders' lives. The Budget demonstrates our commitment to financial prudence and sustainable public finance, with a strong focus on delivering results. Deputy Renouf, at lunchtime today I spoke

to someone in Broad Street who came to speak to me to say goodbye, having been made redundant from their job in communications. There is nothing now for them in the public service, and they will be very shortly unemployed. I hope that gives you some comfort, because it breaks my heart. This Budget does not include unfunded proposals. While it is tight, it balances the books while allowing the necessary investments to progress the common strategic priorities of the Assembly and address the financial challenges facing our healthcare service. Deputy Jeune has raised concerns around the short-term focus of the Budget, but I am afraid that I cannot agree. Looking to the future, this Budget sets a path to grow our Strategic Reserve and Stabilisation Funds, ensuring that we have robust protection against economic uncertainty. We have been clear about Pillar Two, about the benefits and risks that arise as a result of that. Importantly, we remain committed to not choosing Pillar Two receipts for ongoing departmental spending, preserving them for longer-term investments in the Island's infrastructure, economy and stability. The Budget puts in place the approvals to start building our new healthcare facilities with a pragmatic funding strategy that does not place an undue burden on future generations. We must start building to deliver the hospital that Islanders need, deserve and want. When I mentioned H.S.2 this morning, it was to try to clarify for Members the scale of the spend in terms of Jersey's finance. I think the white elephant would be in not doing anything and allowing our current hospital to deteriorate further to the point where it becomes absolutely unfit for purpose. The notion that the spend is uncontrolled or unrestrained is entirely incorrect, and the review panel has been given extensive details of our procurement strategies and controls. Our capital programme takes a pragmatic, deliverable approach, in line with the recommendations of the F.P.P. Despite what some Members may fear, money has not been lost. While timings have changed, money is still available at the same levels or indeed in some cases, like Mont à L'Abbé increased to ensure the successful delivery of the project. I understand that some Members may not agree with this reprioritisation, but hopefully Members will recognise that the overall programme is designed to deliver investment in our estate, infrastructure and other assets that Islanders expect and, indeed, need. Previous plans introduced mechanisms that allowed more flexibility to ensure that capital projects were progressed quickly in a more agile way. We will continue to use these to maximise delivery for Islanders. In response to Deputy Ozouf, although I think others have already commented in their speeches, the cost of living was very much at the forefront of the Council of Ministers' minds in settling this Budget. We have increased tax thresholds. We have increased tax allowances. We are introducing a living wage. We have kept our promise to try to keep duties and charges as low as possible. Income support and pensions, while not part of this Budget, will be uprated as normal. Benefits are all being maintained. There is an ample safety net in Jersey for people who are struggling. As the Minister said earlier, if people are struggling, please go and see C.L.S. and seek advice and help. We have now had several debates regarding the Social Security Fund. Deputy Warr was not willing to stand aside for a point of clarification, so if I can clarify the concern now. Deputy Warr's speech indicated that we were taking money from the H.I.F., which is a Health Insurance Fund. We are not taking money from the Health Insurance Fund. That is an entirely separate fund, and the £10 million that we have discussed is coming from the Social Security Fund. I do recognise and sympathise with the strong views of Members, and some will be disappointed with the outcome of this year's debate. While I know not all Members agree, the forecasts in the Budget and the results of the actuarial review show that the fund is in good health and that pensions are not at risk. We have heard of the wise actions of previous Assemblies to build the fund and the Social Security Reserve Fund, and we are indeed in an enviable position compared with other jurisdictions. That is one of the reasons why I find it intensely disappointing when a Member suggests that the Island is anywhere near bankruptcy. Deputy Renouf is not the first person to use that word in the Assembly about the Island's finances, and it is deeply unfortunate. We are a globally well-regarded international finance centre. We are an AA-rated jurisdiction, and it is unhelpful.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Will the Minister give way?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I will.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Thank you, I appreciate that. Can the Minister remind me exactly when I did say that this Island was bankrupt? I do not believe I ever said it.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I believed I very clearly heard Deputy Renouf describe the Island's finances being close to bankruptcy. I thought I heard that word, perhaps I missed it, in which case I apologise. But we are very far from bankrupt, and it is unhelpful to use that word in the context of our finances.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am not trying to interrupt the Minister, but would she give way on another issue; it would just be helpful. The point that I was trying to make to the Minister, which is not answered by her answers, is the cost of living is not about just giving more people money by tax relief. It is lowering the cost of goods and services in Jersey. That is the point I am trying to make; it is lowering the cost of goods and services, that that is what is not in this Budget.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am sure that the former Minister for Treasury and Resources, who is of much greater experience than I, will have ideas as to how the Government can lower prices. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development has spoken about what we are doing with economic development. We have tried, within our scope, to keep duties ... we have frozen duties on alcohol and petrol. I am sorry if that is not sufficient in terms of if you want me to reduce the cost of a price of a loaf of bread. I am not quite sure how we do that. Finally, I find it surprising that people have any concern that the Social Security Reserve Fund, which has over £2 billion and a very expertly-managed portfolio, should not buy the new government building. The building is already worth more than the purchase price, and it is like saying to someone: "No, of course, you cannot buy a house, just stay and pay rent." Why on earth would we want the Government to pay rent to a private sector landlord when we could pay rent to a publicly-owned fund and keep the money within the public purse? I simply cannot understand why that is at all troubling. The fund has the investment, we are not taking money out, we are swapping one asset class with the other, as I said yesterday. As I said yesterday, it is a complete no-brainer. This Budget demonstrates a clear commitment to delivering on our C.S.P. objectives, maintaining sustainable public finances and building a stronger future for Jersey. Once again, I thank Members of the Assembly for their engagement and dedication in shaping this important plan. We have laid a solid foundation of the challenges ahead, and I look forward to working with all of you to deliver on the ambition that we have set out this week. Creating a Government Plan, a Budget such as this, is a complex and difficult job. Whatever Members may think, it is a huge piece of work. I would like to thank Ministers for their efforts. It was not easy reaching some of the decisions that we had to reach. I thank Ministers for all their forbearance in that effort. I thank all the Scrutiny Panels again and all those who submitted amendments. I thank all officers, Scrutiny and in all departments.

[16:00]

But particularly I would like to thank the Treasury team, who have worked exceptionally hard to bring this together over the summer to deal with the amendments, to deal with all the comments. We are fortunate in having very capable, experienced and, crucially, very competent people advising us. I am grateful for all their hard work, and they have my endless gratitude. I move the proposition and ask for the appeal.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members present in the Chamber and present remotely have had the chance to cast their votes then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce the Plan has been adopted.

POUR: 31		CONTRE: 13		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Lawrence		
Connétable of St. Brelade		Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
Connétable of St. Peter		Deputy I. Gardiner		
Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy K.L. Moore		
Connétable of St. John		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
Connétable of Grouville		Deputy D.J. Warr		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Deputy H.M. Miles		
Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy J. Renouf		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Deputy C.F. Labey		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
Deputy M. Tadier		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting contre: the Connétables of St. Lawrence and St Clement, Deputies Ahier, Gardiner, Moore, Ozouf, Warr, Miles, Renouf, Jeune, Alex Curtis, Wilson and Andrews.

2. Draft Finance (2025 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.72/2024)

The Deputy Bailiff:

Now I move on to the Draft Finance (2025 Budget) (Jersey) Law, lodged by the Minister for Treasury and Resources. 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 Finance (2025 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202-. A law to set the standard rate of income tax for 2025 and to implement parts of the Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028 by amending the Income Tax (Jersey) Law 1961, the Customs and Excise (Jersey) Law 1999, the Goods and Services Tax (Jersey) Law 2007, the Revenue Administration (Jersey) Law 2019, the Stamp Duties and Fees (Jersey) Law 1998, the Taxation (Land Transactions) (Jersey) Law 2009, and to make amendments to secondary legislation.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, do you wish to propose the principles?

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

Yes, thank you. This legislation enacts the changes agreed by the Assembly in the Budget, including the new thresholds and allowances for income tax, amendments to G.S.T. (goods and services tax) and stamp duty, and the excise duties, including vehicle emissions duties as amended. In addition, the Council of Ministers are proposing an amendment to the Finance Law that was not included in the Budget. This is to bring in changes regarding the Commissioners of Appeal by order. As the majority of these measures have already been discussed, I do not wish to take up any unnecessary time and I commend the changes in the Finance Law to the Assembly in principles. I move the principles.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are the principles seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the principles? Those Members in favour of adopting the principles kindly show. Thank you. The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats and I invite the Greffier to open the voting on adopting or rejecting, as the case may be, the principles of the Draft Finance Law. If all Members present and attending remotely have had the chance of casting their votes then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The principles have been adopted.

POUR: 36		CONTRE: 6		ABSTAIN: 2
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy J. Renouf
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy S.M. Ahier		Deputy A.F. Curtis
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy K.L. Moore		
Connétable of St. Peter		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
Connétable of St. John		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Connétable of St. Clement				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Ouen				

Connétable of St. Mary				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				

Minister, how do you wish to propose the Articles in Second Reading? There are amendments to the law. As you know, there is an amendment to Article 22 and 23 in order to implement amendment 29 of the Government Plan in relation to small distillers. There is another amendment to Article 25, which implements the agreement in relation to vehicle excise duty, which was part of the plan adopted. Finally, there is a third amendment which is not consequential to amendments on the Government Plan. Do you wish to first invite the Assembly to consider the first 21 Articles not affected by any amendment?

2.2 Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, please, Sir. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, proposed Articles 1 to 21, inclusive, in Second Reading?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, Sir. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak in relation to the first 21 Articles in Second Reading? Those in favour of adopting Articles 1 to 21, kindly show. Thank you very much. Articles 1 to 21 are adopted in Second Reading. Minister, moving on to Articles 22 and 23, do you wish to propose them now?

2.3. Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, Sir. Articles 22 and 23 are interconnected in the law and need to be taken together, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There is a second amendment in relation to this and this is the amendment in relation to the small distillers; is that right?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is right. We discussed this yesterday. We discussed in particular in the Budget that there was an amendment which changes the figure of £40,000 to £20,000.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Before you address it, I need to invite the ... first of all, do you wish to read Articles 22 and 23 as amended by your amendment?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any Member object to that course of action?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Deputy Renouf indicated he wished to debate these changes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

He wishes to debate the amendment. Do you? In that case, I invite the Greffier to read the amendment.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Sir, I will also, once again, recuse myself on the grounds stated yesterday.

2.4 Draft Finance (2025 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.72/2024): second amendment (P.72/2024 Amd.(2))

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. This is the second amendment. It is the amendment to Articles 22 and 23. I invite the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

1. Page 22, – (1) After paragraph (1) insert – “(2) After the definition “customs duty” insert – “distilled spirits Article 22” means spirits that are produced or manufactured by a person by – (a) distilling, with a still, fermented agricultural products; or (b) distilling, with a still, other spirits that are obtained but not produced by that person;”.”, and renumber the subsequent paragraphs accordingly. (2) Delete paragraphs (4) and (5) (renumbered as paragraphs (5) and (6)), and renumber the subsequent paragraphs accordingly. 2. Page 23, Article 23 – (1) In paragraph (2) – (a) in substituted clause (a), delete “primary”; and (b) delete substituted clause (aa). (2) After paragraph

(2), insert – “(3) In paragraph 1(b), after “other spirits” insert “(including other distilled spirits)”.”, and renumber the subsequent paragraphs and cross-references accordingly. (3) In paragraph (3) (renumbered as paragraph (4)), in inserted sub-paragraph (2) – (a) in the opening words, for “in relation to spirits” substitute “in relation to distilled spirits”; and (b) in clause (b) – (i) for “spirits” substitute “distilled and other spirits”, and (ii) for “40,000 litres” substitute “20,000 litres”.

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

This was discussed to some extent yesterday afternoon in the context of amendment 29 to the Budget. I explained that initially our proposal had been ... we have historically had a reduced rate for small distillers. Those are distillers who, in the original definition, distilled directly from agricultural products, such as apples or wheat. They have a discount of 50 per cent of a standard rate. What we intended to do originally was to then create a second category for distillers who bought in ready-distilled spirits and then rectified it or compounded it in some way to create a new form of gin or rum, for example. That second category of distiller was going to pay 75 per cent of the rate, which is a 25 per cent discount. This is intended to support the small craft distilling industry. We initially intended to increase the volume of production to 40,000 litres of pure alcohol. Following some further discussions and other developments locally, we decided to give all small distillers the rate of 50 per cent, but that we would then reduce the level of production to 20,000 litres. The reduced rate of 50 per cent would be available to any small producer that meets the volume criteria of less than 20,000 litres of pure alcohol. We have one reduced rate of 50 per cent, which applies to any distiller, whether they distil from first principles, if you like, or from imported spirit. That is the gist of the amendment.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

2.4.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I find myself in at least 3 disadvantages here. First of all I was not here last night for the debate on amendment 29; second, I am tired; and thirdly, I am speaking to an Assembly that is also pretty tired, on a complex amendment. I would ask a point of clarification initially before I go further, which is: is it possible to take the vote in parts, which would include taking all the parts, up to the very final part, the 40,000 litres substitute 20,000 litres, so that we would take separately the first 95 per cent of the amendment and then a separate vote on the 40,000 to substitute 20,000 litres? The reason being that the Assembly did vote yesterday to make that 40,000 litres and 20,000 litres exchange, so voting for that bit would cement the decision of last night, as I understand it. It is the bits before that are problematic.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Which part do you want to take separately, again, Deputy Renouf?

Deputy J. Renouf:

All the parts up to the very final part of page 23, Article 23, all the way down to part b(i) and then just the very final part “40,000 litres substitute 20,000 litres” taken separately. Just that very final clause.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, that is possible. That can be done, yes. There can be 2 separate votes.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Thank you for that. I wanted to stand on this because I do think this is a backwards step. I think this is a mistake. It is a mistake because it is founded on, first, principles that are wrong. It does seem to me that there must have been some heavy last minute lobbying on this, because the Government had

initially, over a very long period of time, arrived at a separate position on this and put forward into the Budget a compromise position that seemed to be sensible and acceptable. It had clearly been consulted on over a long period of time. However, now, at the very last minute ... and it really was the last minute, it was the 29th amendment, was it not? It was the last minute that this proposal came through. It has not been thought through or considered properly by the Government and certainly not by the Assembly yet.

[16:15]

The reason why I say there is a category error here is it categorises 2 things together that are clearly not the same. It categorises together distilling that is based on distilling from raw products and rectifying, as it is known, the addition of material to produce industrially-produced alcohol. Those are clearly 2 very different things and very different business models are built on those 2 things. Therefore, it seems to me, to be wrong in principle, to have a categorisation in duty that treats them as if they are the same. They are clearly not the same. That has significance, because businesses have been built on those differential rates of duty. We heard from La Robeline, I believe, yesterday. We have heard from them. They have built business models on these. We should think very hard about pulling the rug from underneath established businesses that have built themselves up over many years based on a certain level of duty. It is something we should be exceptionally cautious about. The risks are that we kill at birth a nascent craft industry in the Island. It is not fair competition to have the same duty rate for producers who buy in alcohol in bulk and then add things to it and producers who make alcohol on a craft basis. We should, as an Island, as part of that whole genuine Jersey thing, in the way that we want to support new products in the rural sector and so on, be trying to build up that use of local products to create alcohol which then goes on to become a product. The original proposals did offer some relief to the bulk buyers in of alcohol, the 75 per cent rate, 25 per cent reduction. That was sensible. That offered something to those people. However, it kept a 50 per cent discount rate for the people who start with the base product. That was a sensible compromise. It recognised, essentially, 3 different categories. Normal alcohol duty for people who are bringing in alcohol and selling it; a rate for the rectifiers, the people who bring in bulk alcohol and convert it into a product; and a rate for people who start from scratch. That seemed to me to be very clear. I note that the J.H.A. (Justice and Home Affairs) submission to the Scrutiny Panel said: "We are pleased that the Treasury has recognised the contribution the small but growing sector is making to the economy and this measure is welcomed." There is a slight smokescreen in the original proposal which was talking about harmonisation across the Channel Islands. I cannot see how that applies. Distillers in Jersey are not going to benefit particularly from harmonisation of their rates with Guernsey. It does not seem to make much sense, to the extent that it might apply. It might reinforce the sense in which this works best for big-bulk producers, because they might be bringing in the alcohol from outside to both Islands and find it convenient to have the same rate. If anything, that argument, to me, goes against the principle. The final point I would make is, I do not think there is any risk in rejecting this amendment because the original proposals in the Budget, which is what we will default to if this amendment is rejected, had been thought through. They were, until about a week ago, the settled position of the Government. It cannot have been that bad. Why can we not go back to those proposals, reject the proposals as they are now, go back to the original set of proposals that Government brought forward, which were well thought through. Then, if that is still a problem, we can always next year come back with a change that brings in this harmonisation that is claimed to be so useful. I do not buy it myself. There is no risk because the original proposals, unamended, are reasonable, good, thought through, well consulted on, and so on. What we have had is a last-minute lobbying operation, it seems to me, to try and change them. The reason why I wanted to take it in parts is because I do think the reduction to 20,000 litres for these reliefs is a good idea. Members may not, but that is fine, but it would cement that. That combination, for me, is the best one. That we reject the amended proposals, which have been put through very fast without any opportunities for us to think them all through, but stick with the reduction to 20,000. It does not make sense to treat 2 very different products with the same duty. Thank you very much.

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

I thank the Deputy for raising this issue, but what I am going to say is probably going to come as something of a surprise, having listened to the arguments there, which I completely understand, because that is probably where I understood things to be until relatively recently. I will start from a very different place. It is a place that most Members will not expect me to start at. I will start with the World Trade Organization. The World Trade Organization, understandably, as most Members will understand, is about free trade between countries and, therefore, does not allow protectionism of particular goods, unless, when Jersey joined the W.T.O. (World Trade Organization) 4 years ago, we did get derogations around milk in order to make sure that we could still protect the Jersey herd. Those derogations had to be in at the time of joining. After that, we have to maintain open markets to goods from around the world. We are not allowed to protect particular areas at the expense of international trade. That really is the cause of this change. I can understand Members wondering why on earth that is in any way relevant. The initial ask ... so we had this 50 per cent distillers' rate. However, the 50 per cent distillers' rate was on the grain to glass element, as Deputy Renouf has explained, taking your grain and turning that, ultimately, into a spirit to be consumed; from the very raw material all the way through to the finished product. That is a laborious and costly process; there is no question. However, I believe we also had a limit on the amount of production in order to be able to access that rate. The limit, I believe, was 2,000 litres a year, which is not a great deal. That limit stopped our producers exporting, because they were not basically able to produce enough to export. So the request was could we increase the limit. That is where the 40,000 litres came from; that is plenty to enable an export industry. As Deputy Renouf quite rightly said, we thought because it is a different process, for those who import base alcohol, distil it once to bring through flavourings, et cetera, because that is a less laborious process, we will put that on a differential rate for duty, the 25 per cent. I agree, I thought everything was fine at that point. But then it was brought to our attention that ... because we are not allowed to set one duty rate for that produced in the Island and a different duty rate for that produced outside the Island and imported. But for small produces outside the Island ... and there were named brands that apparently do target the Island in this particular way. For small producers outside the Island who do grain to glass, they then have a competitive advantage over producers who do not do grain to glass. Quite simply, having increased the limit from 2,000 to 40,000 or even 20,000 litres produced, any British or European producer of grain to glass alcohol that produced up to 20,000 litres would absolutely be able to bring their goods here to Jersey, get the 50 per cent duty discount. For those local businesses that were importing base alcohol and turning that into flavoured gin or flavoured vodka, et cetera, they would get less of a duty discount than those being imported. That there is where the issue lies, because what the first system did, and I was not fully appreciative of this at first, was it provided a competitive advantage for importation over local production. That is the problem. This change has been made. Yes, it sets both grain to glass distillers and importers, distillers and flavourers in Jersey on the same basis, which was not quite the case before. Having increased the amount of production that that duty reduction could be applied to we are opening the market up locally as well to competition from outside. We are in danger with that first system, of the 25 per cent and 50 per cent duty rate, of putting a much larger section of the industry in peril from imports than we would be helping by maintaining the way it was before. I know this is relatively technical and I do apologise for that, but there are good reasons. What we are trying to do with this flat rate across the board is make sure that Jersey businesses, whether they are grain to glass or importers and flavourers - I will call them for want of a better term - we are making sure that they are able to compete against external competition across the board. That means we are supporting the whole of the industry, rather than just one very small part of that industry. I believe those companies which have been emailing us about this, they are obviously and understandably thinking about internal local competition with each other, but what we are thinking about is that wider external competition that could have a big impact on all of them, regardless of whether they are grain to glass or not. That is what this change does. May I give way? I am looking Deputy Renouf.

Deputy J. Renouf:

The Minister has given way and I am very grateful to him. He saw me looking poised ready to go. Could he explain how confident he is and whether this is a theoretical possibility or whether he believes that there is indeed a stream of people waiting to bring alcohol in under this duty relief?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for that clarification. We believe this is a very real possibility. We know of at least one company in a European country which has targeted the Island purposefully in this way in the past and is set up as a grain to glass distillery and operates at a level small enough to be able to import to the Island, and has done so in the past. We believe they would be ready to go and take advantage of this differential. I am also seeing Deputy Moore looking like she might want a clarification. If so, I am willing to give way.

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

I was not intending to make this a question and answer session. I was going to merely speak and assume that perhaps an Assistant Minister might be able to clarify further questions if the Minister has already spoken.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Thank you. Yes, we do believe at least one company, but possibly more are set up to exploit this differential. That is the case and they have a Jersey connection, but they operate outside of the Island and they do their distilling outside the Island. They have done in the past. They are a named brand and they do do that. I have been asked why this reduction advantages external importers. Let me explain again from the beginning, and I apologise I have to repeat myself. By increasing the amount of production that is eligible for this discount, we are opening the Island up to enable production that can be exported. We are trying to grow an industry in Jersey that wants to export and sell. That is where the Guernsey bit comes in. The Guernsey market is part of one of the markets we believe Jersey producers want to move into, as well as potentially the U.K. or Europe. We have increased the amount of alcohol that can be produced and be eligible for this duty. By doing that, that makes it possible, because we are not able to protect Jersey's market, for external producers who produce, in this case, 20,000 or less to import into Jersey for them to export into Jersey and take advantage of exactly the same duty discount. When there was a differential discount, 25 per cent and 50 per cent, that would mean that those external companies importing to Jersey would be able to take advantage of a 50 per cent discount, while Jersey companies would be stuck on the 25 per cent discount.

[16:30]

That is where the problem lay. By harmonising the discounts across both grain to glass and importer flavourers, yes, it harmonises that and it puts them on an equal footing. What it does is it means that no Jersey businesses are at a disadvantage to people who import into the Island. When this was raised, I did ask ... they are still going to be able to import and compete. But the local producers did feel that because of local brand strength and awareness that they would be able to compete with them on even footing or they would not be able to compete with those importers on a footing where the importer gets a greater duty reduction than the local producer. From my perspective, I thought if your belief in your brand and the local desire to buy local is so strong then I am willing to go with that, and they strongly do believe that their brands are strong enough locally to mean that they can keep that external competition out, so to speak, just purely in competitive terms. If we were to give them only a 25 per cent tax duty discount but the imported spirit is getting a 50 per cent duty discount then there would be a real problem, because it would not be a level playing field. That is the end of my speech. If there are any requests for clarification, now would be a good time to do it. While it is not meant to be a question and answer session, I can understand why there might be some requests for clarification.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Morel, you did speak last night on this proposition, did you not? You spoke yesterday on this proposition?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, on the part in the Budget, but this is a different proposition. That was in the Budget debate, this is in the Finance Act debate.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, I follow that, but it was a similar issues, was it not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, except that the 50 per cent and 25 per cent duty discount was not in the Budget debate, it was only the 40,000 litres and 20, 000 litres, which is why yesterday I said that we were debating something yesterday which was not pertinent to yesterdays' debate.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I was going to ask a point of clarification?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, Deputy Renouf, your point of clarification, yes.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am very grateful to the Minister for giving way a second time. The question I have is this: you have talked about a possible company that could come and import into the Island and compete, would it be fair to characterise that as a theoretical possibility, that you could wait and see for a year to see whether it materialises before bringing in a change to regulations?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Anything in the future is theoretical, so in that sense, literally, yes; but, no, I do not believe so. The information that is provided to me is that this company has absolutely focused on the Jersey market in the past, but because of the limits did not. It has sold in the Jersey market and we believe it is ready to step in immediately, not in a year's time. This is a belief. It is about a hypothetical situation, so I could be wrong, but I do not believe so and certainly the case was made strongly to me that it would be ready to go.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any more points of clarification for Deputy Morel?

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

The Minister was talking about the W.T.O. and the reason for this. I was wondering if there has been any analysis of those who are potentially going to come into the Island and benefit from the relief that they themselves in their own countries are given a relief as well, and so therefore are given an advantage where they make their products.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I cannot say that I am aware of any analysis. That would be better asked of the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The next person who wanted to speak was Deputy Moore. Do you want to speak next? Yes and then Deputy Miles.

2.4.4 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Duty has been a big part of our economy in centuries past. In fact, it probably was one of the reasons why we developed such a strong economy many years ago. Therefore, it is right and proper that we look at this carefully. Perhaps the Minister for External Relations will be able to assist the Assembly further in raising the W.T.O. perspective and the rationale behind this change. It seems a great shame, while I understand and am grateful to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development for providing us with his detailed explanation and fully appreciate the ability to attract a new market to the Island, we do also want to protect our local brands. Given the disappointing information that was circulated last week from the Minister for External Relations in relation to the decision of the United Kingdom with the C.P.T.P.P. (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) Agreement on world trade that the Island will only be included for goods, rather than services. Surely it appears logical that if we are going to push back in some way then not being bound by this agreement or standing up for ourselves in relation to these agreements would be a necessary battleground. I feel deeply for our local producers. I understand absolutely why they would want us to protect their industry particularly, as we are all aware, that the cost base of doing so in our Island economy is high. Therefore, we all naturally want to protect ourselves from outside competition, which can easily develop from a lower cost base. I would be grateful if we could have some further clarification on that point of competing in the global market and an explanation as to why Ministers are not prepared to properly protect our local markets against this international agreement.

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

I have a couple of questions. One of them is related to the questions that Deputy Moore has asked. My first question is: why was this not explained yesterday when we were debating the amendment about the reduction from the 40,000 to the 20,000? It seems to have been dropped on us today in the Finance Law. The second one, a rather blunt question: why is the World Trade Organization dictating policy to Jersey?

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

Given that we received communications from the cider producers only on Tuesday, could the Minister confirm there has been consultation with the local industry? On the basis of that communication, will there be any consideration to taking on their views in due course, if not now?

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

I am desperately trying to follow the Minister's explanation. I wanted to know if I could ask him to explain or confirm that in this proposal is he saying that ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

May I ask the Deputy to give way very quickly.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Yes, sure.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Maybe the Deputy would like to clarify that I am not the Minister responsible for this. It is the Minister for Treasury and Resources. I have had my speech, I cannot respond.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, it is not question time.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I will raise a comment there to whoever it is directed to. Thank you, to the Minister for that clarification. Is this proposal about an offer to discount trade to distillers both on and off Island and that the same amount of discount will be applied to both sets of distillers if they want to trade in

Jersey ... I am very tired and am trying to get my head around this to give it some justice. Is the proposal that there are distillers who are wanting to trade by bringing product into the Island, and there are people who have already got product in the Island that they want to trade with, and that the discount rate that is being applied to their produce is going to be the same? If so, is the discount that is being applied to them anti-competitive because the volumes that we are talking about cannot be produced by local producers in the way that perhaps those companies who are interested to come into Jersey will bring their produce into the Island?

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

Could the Minister for External Relations explain, because I do not understand and am uncomfortable, what the issue is in relation to the W.T.O. I can explain Deputy Miles's answer that you are not allowed to, under W.T.O. rules, unfairly put tariffs on. The theory is we are trying to advantage a local business, but we are allowed to do that under the W.T.O. because it is exceptional circumstances. However, what I am hearing from Deputy Renouf and Deputy Moore is that it is not achieving the objective that they want. I may have that wrong. The Minister for External Relations was doing the job that I was and I am forgetful of the W.T.O. obligations, but if this is not working, can he please explain and assuage our concerns that it is going to work?

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

Shall I speak first and then the Attorney General can step in when I get it wrong? It is a little late to be starting to delve into the W.T.O., but Members know that the U.K.'s membership has been extended to Jersey. At the crux of the matter, the Deputy is right, it is about a non-discriminatory approach. The issue is as soon as you have raised from the 2,000 to what was the 40,000 and now it is coming back down to 20,000 litres, to try and manage some of the concern that the 2 grain to glass distillers locally have written to States Members saying what troubles them is that they want to move from 2,000 because they want to produce more than 2,000 so that they can export, but as soon as they start to export then we have to make sure that there is a non-discriminatory regime. As the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development says, the reason we are changing is to protect local companies against the importation of a type of alcohol which is then brought here and distilled here for a second time or, as the Deputy said, flavoured. It is 2 different approaches to distilling. This is where we have the slight mismatch. It is important that if we do not make this change then local distillers are disadvantaged in a way that everyone in the industry yet realises. That is the problem that we are trying to solve on the surface. We would say, okay, the grain to glass, let us not make this change because we think it is going to help them. The reality is that once you have moved to 2,000 to 20,000 litres that is what is creating the problem. We do have to help local distillers export. If we do not want them to export, we want to say: "No, you are just producing here for the local market," then we would not have changed the amount of litres that can be distilled under this regime. Of course, we remind ourselves that 20,000 litres of pure alcohol is something like 70,000 bottles. There is a multiplying effect, in effect.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Could I just ask clarification of the Minister? Does this work or not? That is what Members are trying to find out. Does this work and is it going to stand up to meeting the expectations of our local people, of our local companies that want to export their product or not? I do not understand what he is saying.

[16:45]

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I can give a clarification, which might not be clarificatory, because it is quite technical. Yes, it does work. Yes, it does work if they want to export and they want to export more than the 2,000, because now they can produce up to 20,000 and export. The problem that we have been contacted about is those distillers who are from grain to glass who are concerned that they think that some other smaller

producers, so within the 20,000, who do the importation, they are saying they do not think that bit is quite fair. They are concerned about the unfairness between 2,000 and 20,000 litres. The reality is that in order to be able to export, and you are capping that export at 20,000, it has to be a level, non-discriminatory, playing field; a non-discriminatory approach.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I ask a question of the Attorney General?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you may.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am sorry to be doing this at such a late hour. I do think it is a consequence of the Government not getting its act together, frankly, on this beforehand. Can the Attorney General say whether if we vote down the amendment that we are currently discussing, which would return the situation to how the Government had originally put it in the Budget before they tried to amend it, if we take that action and at least wait a year before we do anything, will the Government be liable under any trade laws or anything that we have signed up to? Will we be taking an illegal stance?

Mr. M.H. Temple K.C., H.M. Attorney General:

In terms of the W.T.O. and G.A.T.T. (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) rules, the consequences would be primarily diplomatic, rather than hard legal consequences. The answer is probably, no, it would not have the consequence that the Deputy suggests. However, the Government's proposed amendment reducing the small distiller requirement from 40,000 litres to 20,000 litres, in my view, from a legal perspective, is a prudent one. It reduces the scope for small local distillers being seen to be given an unfair trade subsidy or competitive advantage. It maximises the scope for this being a *de minimis*-type exception. Legally, from a legal perspective, this amendment from the Government is a prudent one. I stress that I have not received or seen the document that all States Members seem to have received from local distillers so I am not able to comment on the position factually on their concerns, because I have not seen them.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Attorney. Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment? I call upon the Minister to reply.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The Minister has just had a call of nature. I do not know if you would like me to sum up, as the Assistant Minister?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content? Yes, you may do so, Assistant Minister.

2.4.10 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I do not have much to add to that which I have already said. I am grateful to the intervention of the Attorney General. I appreciate why Deputy Renouf has wanted to have this debate, albeit like everyone else, I am hoping that we do finish this evening at 5.30 p.m. I appreciate why he wanted to have the debate. It has been important to have the debate. I appreciate that some Members, for the reasons they have said, may vote against this amendment, but I would remind Members of what the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development said, which I was not aware of, and I would not be because it is his department, that there is a very real potential of businesses coming in and competing if we do not make this amendment.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Assistant Minister.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I call for the appel, Sir, please?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The first items as requested by Deputy Renouf, so if we could take them in 2 votes, that would be helpful.

The Deputy Bailiff:

It is the amendment with the exception of the last sentence “40,000 to 20,000 litres” that Members are invited to consider first. I invite the Greffier to open the voting in relation to the first part of the amendment. If all Members have had the chance of voting, both here and remotely, then I invite the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that this part of the amendment has been accepted.

POUR: 34		CONTRE: 6		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy I. Gardiner		
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy K.L. Moore		
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
Connétable of St. Peter		Deputy H.M. Miles		
Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy J. Renouf		
Connétable of St. John		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Connétable of St. Clement				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of St. Mary				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				

Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting contre: Deputies Gardiner, Moore, Ozouf, Miles, Renouf and Jeune.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to the appel in relation to the last part of this second amendment, namely Article 23(3)(b)(ii) for “40,000 litres” substitute “20,000 litres”. I invite the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had a chance of casting their votes, both here and remotely, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the balance of this amendment has been adopted.

POUR: 39		CONTRE: 1		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy I. Gardiner		
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 C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				

Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
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 M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Deputy Gardiner voted contre.

2.5 Draft Finance (2025 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.72/2024) - resumption - as amended

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, do you now propose Articles 22 and 23 as amended, now that they have been amended?

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

Yes, please, Sir, I do. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The debate is now open on the Articles as amended. Does any Member wish to speak on Articles 22 and 23 as amended?

2.5.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I am going to make one point, which is I do think it has been poor of the Government to bring so much information to the table so late. It has not been possible to fully understand all those points. That is disappointing. I will be supporting the amended amendment, but I do feel that has not been great.

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

I appreciate the Minister for Treasury and Resources was not in just now, but I would like an answer to my question as to whether there had been consultation and, if there were any adaptations to be made in response to the cider makers, will she be doing it.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on Articles 22 and 23 as amended? I invite the Minister to reply.

2.5.4 Deputy M.E. Millar:

I accept, in hindsight, Deputy Renouf's observation. It was a last minute change. Deputy Miles asked why this was not discussed yesterday. It was, to an extent, discussed yesterday. It was in amendment 29, which we discussed last night. Amendment 29, however, only affected the part which was in the Government Plan, which was the reduction from 40,000 litres to 20,000 litres. I discussed, but not as fully as Deputy Morel has done today, that we had moved from the dual rate for 50 per cent for true distillers and the slightly lower rate of importers of distilled spirit. We did discuss that yesterday, but the legislative changes are in the Finance law, which was our late amendment. I am sorry if that was not very well explained. It is something I will certainly take away for next year. I am sorry there has been confusion about it. To answer the Constable of St. Brelade, yes, absolutely there has been consultation about this. We do not make tax changes without consultation. One of the things I have said was some of our amendments to the Government Plan, we should not make changes to tax without some degree of consultation. There has been consultation right from the start of this year until very recently. That is one of the reasons when we realised some of the impacts of the dual rate, why we made a late amendment and we brought down the ... while the increasing of 20,000 litres to 40,000 seemed like a good idea, we then realised that that increases the number of producers that could import into the Island and get the benefit of reduced rates. There has been very full consultation with the industry over this. Thank you. I propose those 2 Articles as amended.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Those 2 Articles, that is right. Are Members content to proceed on a standing vote or is the appel asked for? All those in favour, kindly show. The Articles are adopted. Thank you. Minister, we now move on to Article 24 on its own, because 25 is subject to amendments. Do you propose Article 24 in Second Reading?

2.6 Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Are Members content to accept that on a standing vote? All those in favour, kindly show. Thank you very much, Article 24 is adopted. Minister, we now move on to Article 25, which is subject to 2 amendments. An amendment lodged by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, as amended by your amendment. Do you propose the Article as amended by those 2 amendments?

2.7 Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I do, Sir, thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Are Members content to debate that Article as amended? Yes. Does any Member wish to speak on the Article as amended?

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

One minute, if I may. One thing that has not been raised that needs careful consideration is what is happening as a result of this now amended amendment about this issue that Jersey is having an

increasing amount of old cars circulating and we are preventing other cars coming in. That is an issue for another day, I just signal that I am concerned about it being difficult to have new cars but people are not in the income bracket that can buy electric cars, so we are getting a greater and greater number of old polluting cars. This does not help. I have not raised it before because everything has been moving so fast, but there is an underlying issue which I do not think Members are aware of.

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

Very briefly. I endorse the items that Deputy Ozouf just mentioned. We need to get cleaner, greener vehicles in. I have spoken briefly about electric vehicles, which are part of the solution. Also, I believe we should have cleaner, improved fuels to keep the vehicles that we do have in circulation.

[17:00]

One of the problems being that many of the current companies that are producing electric vehicles are rolling back on their production big time, both in the U.K. and in Europe. The Chinese were going to build 2 mega-factories in Europe, producing the batteries for the new electric vehicles. Those 2 mega-factories have now been cancelled. Many European companies, Volkswagen included, will be closing down 3 of their production lines which produce the electric vehicles. The Chinese have hundreds of thousands of cars ready to go in fields. They are called BYD; and I think BYD may even end up replacing BMW, so that is something to look out for. It is an ongoing problem of supply and demand. I mentioned previously about range anxiety, which we do not have in the Island because we are 9 by 5, but the range anxiety does increase in Europe because the charging stations are not there yet. So unfortunately range anxiety is a big thing in Europe, and the Germans - not a people known for their humour - now say: "If you buy an electric vehicle you must also buy a dog so you never have to walk home alone."

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Connétable. Does any other Member wish to speak on Article 25 as amended? I call upon the Minister to reply.

2.7.3 Deputy M.E. Millar:

This change was also subject to quite a significant degree of consultation with the Motor Trade Federation. You will recollect from the Government Plan that we chose to support families through the cost-of-living crisis, that we chose only to increase duties for the top 3 V.E.D. (vehicle emissions duty) bands, those are the most polluting and our belief is that most average family cars are not in those bands, so that is why we have only affected those top 3 bands to try to help those families. We are very well aware of the issues about second-hand cars coming into the Island because I have spoken to the Motor Trade Federation twice this year about those issues. Electric vehicles are available in Jersey; I do not think the Constable of St. Saviour necessarily had a question, just an observation. I propose those Articles as amended.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Members in favour of Article 25 as amended, kindly show. Thank you very much, Article 25 is adopted in Second Reading.

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

Sir, I was just wondering if the people online are standing up.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sir, on a standing vote do you ever ask whether anybody is voting against?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, there were so many standing in favour but next time I will ask how many are against so they can stand up too. Articles 26 to 38 inclusive; do you propose those, Minister?

2.8 Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I do propose Articles 26 to 38.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on Articles 26 to 38 inclusive?

2.8.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am sorry but I have to be consistent in my voting. These are all of the Articles that deal with the stamp duty issue. I would invite the Minister when she considers what she can do, in the comments paper she spoke about the stamp duty on loans I was wrong. That is a good example of something that we could have worked on together. Stamp duty on loans, which I think is embedded in these Articles, that is something that should be abolished and I think I am right in saying that. I think the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources is agreeing with me. That would have been a good example of something we could have agreed and we cannot because we did not discuss it, but stamp duty on loans is wrong and should be abolished.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on these Articles in Second Reading? I call upon the Minister to reply.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think we were talking about 26 to?

The Deputy Bailiff:

To 38.

2.8.2 Deputy M.E. Millar:

To 38, so, yes, I apologise, those do include the stamp duty provisions. We are aware of the Deputy's concerns, thank you. I propose those Articles please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Those in favour kindly show ... the appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If those present in the Chamber and present remotely have all had the opportunity of casting their votes then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce those Articles have been adopted in Second Reading.

POUR: 38		CONTRE: 3		ABSTAIN: 1
Connétable of St. Helier		Deputy K.L. Moore		Deputy H.L. Jeune
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
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 C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting contre: Deputies Moore, Ozouf and Andrews; and Deputy Jeune abstained.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to the last Article in Second Reading, Minister, Article 39. Is that subject to an amendment proposed by you?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, I would like to propose that Article please.

The Deputy Millar:

Do you propose that as amended?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Yes, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do any Members object to the Article being proposed as amended? Do you want to explain the nature of the amendment to Members, Minister?

2.9 Deputy M.E. Millar:

One of the Articles that we have just approved, Article 31, makes changes to the Revenue Administration Law, and that relates to the administration of the Commissioners for Appeal. It requires us to appoint a chair and a deputy chair who have to be legally qualified, and they will then sit with 2 other panel members. It also increases the number of panel members of commissioners from 12 to 14. We realised, again somewhat late in the day, that if we approved the Act those provisions would come into force immediately and we would not then be able to have any meetings with the Commissioners for Tax until we had appointed chairs and deputy chairs. So Article 31 allows me to set an Appointed Day Act by order, which I will do once chair and deputy chairs have been appointed. We are basically putting the Commissioners for Tax on a similar footing to all other tribunals in the Island.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. Is the Article seconded? **[Seconded]** Thank you very much. Does any Member wish to speak on Article 39 as amended?

2.9.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am well familiar with the Commission of Appeal and I just draw Members' attention to the fact that the opportunity ... again, this is one of the details that matters, but Commissioners of Appeal are highly respected, they do a very good job, but nobody knows what their conclusions are and I just ask the Minister whether or not she would ... maybe it is the wrong time to do it but there is a complete opacity about any Commissioners of Appeal and what the judgments of the Commissioners of Appeal are. While respecting individual taxpayers' confidentiality there should be a way of somehow communicating what the Commission of Appeal are doing and the general direction of travel they are making on appeals. That is not reflected in this and I regret that. I am not voting against it but it should be found that there should be a way of making some sort of publication about what the Commissioners of Appeal are doing because people do not know.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this Article? I call upon the Minister to reply.

2.9.2 Deputy M.E. Millar:

The point that Deputy Ozouf has made is that one that I have discussed with certain of the commissioners in conjunction with their discussions about their move to the tribunal. I think once the commissioners do move to the administration of the tribunal service we will be looking to see how their decisions can be published. It is a very difficult thing to do because of taxpayer confidentiality and in a small community the level of redaction that may be required to protect taxpayer confidentiality sometimes means that they become very close to unreadable. It is an issue that also rises with some of the social security tribunals. There is also an issue that the commissioners do hear a vast number of appeals and there is very little point in, I believe, burdening the profession with decisions that really do nothing to change the law to process or policy, so we are looking at finding a way of publishing any decisions that really make a difference to how agents advise or to the interpretation of the law and the practice of the revenue. But that is something we are working on as the commissioners move to the tribunal. So I propose that Article as amended and call for the appeal.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. The appel has been called for. I invite Members to return to their seats and the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members present and present remotely have had the chance of casting their votes then I invite the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that Article 39 as amended has been adopted.

POUR: 42		CONTRE: 0		ABSTAIN: 1
Connétable of St. Helier				Deputy I. Gardiner
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 C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
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 M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

Do you wish to propose the law in Third Reading, Minister?

2.10 Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do, thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the draft law seconded in Third Reading? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the Articles as adopted in Third Reading? The appel has been called for. I invite Members to return to their seats to consider adopting the law in Third Reading. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members present and present remotely have had the opportunity of casting their votes then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the law has been adopted in Third Reading.

POUR: 34		CONTRE: 1		ABSTAIN: 7
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy I. Gardiner
Connétable of St. Brelade				Deputy K.L. Moore
Connétable of Trinity				Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf
Connétable of St. Peter				Deputy H.M. Miles
Connétable of St. Martin				Deputy J. Renouf
Connétable of St. John				Deputy H.L. Jeune
Connétable of St. Clement				Deputy A.F. Curtis
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				

Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

3. Draft Finance (2025 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.72/2024): Acte Opérateur

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, I understand you wish to propose the Acte Opérateur to give effect to the law?

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

Yes, I do, Sir, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think it is appropriate, Greffier, for you to read the draft Act.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Act declaring that the Finance 2025 Budget (Jersey) Law 20- has immediate effect. The States make this Act under Article 12 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the Act seconded? [**Seconded**] Minister, do you wish to speak on the Act?

3.1 Deputy M.E. Millar:

I move the Act.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any Member wish to speak on the Act? This is an Act declaring that the Finance Law as adopted has immediate effect.

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

If nobody else is going to speak, I hope Members are aware of the significance that this is an unbelievable ability that this Assembly has to bring into immediate effect law without a Privy Council, which has been the subject of a Royal Court hearing. If Members have not seen the privilege

and the onus of responsibility we have in doing this. This is an Acte Opérateur which means that the Privy Council is not required to consider this legislation, and it is a very important decision which we are privileged to have and I am pleased to be able to make it, from the constitutional position.

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

Just very quickly, really as a clarification. My understanding is that the Privy Council does still opine upon the legislation, but the Acte Opérateur enables the provisions to be brought into immediate effect, with the Privy Council having their adjudication - for want of a better word - at a later date, but they still do opine upon them.

[17:15]

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

I know I am one that wants to get home but Deputy Ozouf is absolutely right; this is our domestic autonomy in action and we should never take it for granted. **[Approbation]**

3.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Just a final thought. Obviously, as Deputy Morel has pointed out, it does still need to go to the Privy Council, so maybe any Members in here who are not happy with the way the Social Security Fund is being used - I look to the direction of where Deputy Bailhache would be sitting - he could make ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

That is the next regulation.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am talking about what is contained in the actual Budget. Just as a general point, he can always appeal to the Privy Council if he does not agree with anything that the Assembly has done today, and maybe they can overturn our democratic decisions.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am right in saying that is the next regulation we are doing.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think we all know that; he was making a different point. Does any other Member wish to speak on this Act? I call upon the Minister to reply.

3.1.5 Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am grateful to colleagues for their intervention and I again move the Act please and call for the appel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. I invite Members to return to their seats and the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the chance of casting their votes, either in the Chamber or remotely, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The Act has been adopted.

POUR: 41		CONTRE: 1		ABSTAIN: 2
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy K.L. Moore
Connétable of St. Brelade				Deputy A.F. Curtis
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 C.F. Labey				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
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 M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The Connétable of St. Lawrence voted contre, and Deputy Moore and Deputy Alex Curtis abstained.

4. Draft Social Security Law (Payments into Social Security Fund) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations (P.62/2024)

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move on to the Draft Social Security Law (Payments into Social Security Fund) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations. The main respondent is the chair of the Corporate Service Scrutiny Panel, and I ask the Greffier to read the citation.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Social Security Law (Payments into Social Security Fund) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202-. The States make these Regulations under Articles 50 and 51 of the Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974.

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

I would like to thank Members for approving the Budget and rejecting the first amendment. As I explained during the Budget debate, I am now putting forward a change in primary law which will reduce the value of the States grant into the Social Security Fund by £10 million in each of 2025 and 2026. With the reduction the grant for 2025 will now be £80 million and the estimated grant for 2026 will be £82 million. This change in law is specifically tied to the years 2025 and 2026 and the calculation of the States grant will revert to the underlying formula in 2027. I propose the principles.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. Are the principles seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the principles?

4.1.1 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

I do not wish to repeat my speech that I made earlier this week. It feels like it was about 6 months ago; it feels like we have been here so long. But anyway, I will be voting against this. I want to continue in my principles that we do not touch the Social Security Fund. Thank you very much.

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

I do not want to speak long but I would rather speak and attain evidence in decisions Members make. I want to turn to the principles and the background submitted in this report. I tried getting answers from the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development on how he justifies his part of the provision of the package this seeks to do, and I think it is within this debate to talk about it still because it is justified that these regulations shall be done to release funding that will be ring-fenced to help employees and employers adjust to the transition towards a living wage. Well, at the same time the Minister has told me that all productivity packages will not discriminate based on whether a company currently pays the living wage or not. I was looking to the Minister for answers but he is not here. I was hoping that we could get those answers. As I did vote with the amendment and I would like to be able to change my vote on this - Deputy Barbara Ward has given her principled view - I would like once and for all to understand how this ring-fenced money both helps employers and employees adjust to the transition to a living wage if businesses that have already adjusted to the living wage can qualify for this money; which I think is right, there should be no discrimination. The Minister has failed to explain this is a prudent use of money and I would like him to do so. I would like him to return to the Assembly and frankly do that.

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

I will not repeat the problem I have with the use of the fund; democratic decisions have been made. However, the comments that I made earlier may be erroneously ... I know that Deputy Doublet and Deputy Tadier are here; my concern is now turning towards the scrutiny that I know ... and I hope Members will forgive that we have been faced with an awful lot of information. I just would like on

record from the Scrutiny Panels that are relevant to looking at the way that the expenditure is being made, not the principle of it - because we are approving, as the last speaker has said, the actual expenditure - whether they are satisfied and they do not wish to do any more scrutiny on the way that the proposal is paid. Please advise me if that is an appropriate question to ask.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, it is a question you are entitled to ask.

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

The content of the very brief speech that I intended to make does answer the Deputy's question. I wish to reassure him that I have spoken with the president of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee and with the chair of the other Scrutiny Panel that this area pertains to, Deputy Tadier, and there will be ongoing scrutiny of this issue. We are going to be discussing this at the S.L.C. meeting on Thursday as to how we can co-ordinate this between the panels. Indeed if Deputy Ozouf is particularly interested in this area perhaps he might wish to speak to Deputy Gardiner about how he may want to contribute to the scrutiny of this.

4.1.5 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

I think there was some miscommunication. Different panels scrutinised the principle; we did not have a chance or choice to scrutinise how this £20 million will be spent because we did not receive this information in time to scrutinise. The information was given just before all amendments I think were lodged and there was no way to scrutinise it. So we scrutinised the principle and we knew that Deputy Bailhache brought the amendment but we did not scrutinise the package, how it has been distributed, who will be paid and what is the governance and distribution procedures. We will have a chance to do it because now we have information going forward.

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

I rise only in the absence of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. The Deputy who has asked the question about the funds will know well the way that the Royal Support Scheme is administered and the credits that are given out to various parts of that scheme, and how credits turn into money. While I cannot answer for the Minister on other parts of the funds that have been allocated to help with the transition to the living wage, I can assure the Deputy that when it comes to farming and fishing that the businesses that have currently got employees on the minimum wage are listed with the number of employees on the minimum wage which they employ, and those numbers are fed into the spreadsheet for credits and a scheme has been developed to help those businesses; obviously coming up to the conclusion that the more members you have on the minimum wage the greater the amount of money you will receive. It is a complicated scheme and not complicated at the same time, but I just give the Deputy that assurance that certainly when it comes to agriculture there is a good way of showing that public funds are delivering public good. Certainly, when it comes to helping transition to the living wage, that scheme is being used to be a very fair way of administering the funds.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Will he give way for a point of clarification?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Absolutely.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could the Minister just clarify - I do not know if I heard that right - that the number of employees paid the minimum wage can increase the subsidy that a business gets, whereas an equal business with employees above the minimum wage will get less money, and that the support scheme is giving more money to businesses that pay a lower per hour staff within the same sector?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am not in a position to clarify that exactly. Obviously, as I said, the Minister is not here, I was just trying to help the Deputy and explain that this is monies that are being administered through the Rural Support Scheme, but I do not know the detail other than that is the principle of the way the monies are being distributed.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Deputy Luce in his previous role as Minister brought the original proposition and my amendments in relation to cannabis were rejected, although the Government did indicate that they were going to limit it. Can he give any comfort to me and those that are listening that now with a scheme with £20 million that effectively there are no caps on anything to do with cannabis? Did he wish to comment and give any assurance on that?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I do not think we are discussing cannabis at the moment.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

No, it is the scheme for the loans and the £20 million is coming from the scheme, unless I am mistaken.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Members will be relieved to know that this is not my scheme and I do not know the answer so I cannot help the Deputy, I am afraid.

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

I just rise very quickly to say that this discussion itself shows that because of the last minute delivery of quite complicated documents - I think it was on the Friday we got a briefing and mostly it was stuck on one page of the PowerPoint, and we did not get through all the PowerPoints because Members had a lot of questions to ask, and quite rightly - and no further offer of a briefing was had and also, as Deputy Gardiner said, it was too late to even put amendments. I have brought up myself under the outcome accountability amendment that I had brought forward about the concern about the criteria; who is getting the money of the match funding, how is it being awarded, who is it being awarded to. Deputy Curtis brings up that very valid point that, as we are all asking these questions, we do not know. Unfortunately the Minister for the Environment may have added to that confusion by inadvertently saying those who have more people needing to be paid the living wage they will get more money, and that feels exactly what we were not told that was going to happen because it does disadvantage those businesses who are already meeting the living wage because that is the right thing to do. We have many businesses on the Island that already meet a living wage. We have States Members who have stood up and said that is what they do within their own businesses. We heard from Deputy Warr saying how will his business, for example, or businesses like his apply for such a scheme when he has done all the things needed to be as productive as he feels he can within this space. So there are so many questions still to be answered and that is what the concern is. As Deputy Gardiner says, we were not given enough time to scrutinise and I am going to sit down with quite a bad taste in my mouth because again I am absolutely supportive of a living wage but I just feel that this productivity scheme was not presented to us. It is lastminute.com and it has more questions than answers and that is a real concern for me.

[17:30]

4.1.8 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I do not really recognise any of what has just been said from the perspective of my panel. I do not know if my panel members feel differently but I feel that the engagement that we had with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development on the issue of this whole package that is being put

forward; I think we did have time. We can always have more time, but I think he engaged effectively. It is up to the Scrutiny Panel; we made sure that we got questions in, in a timely manner. I think I am right in saying we started doing the preparatory work before the summer, anticipating that this was going to come through. The suggestion that this has not been scrutinised I think is incorrect. I have been trying to be quite kind with Deputy Ozouf up until now but when he says that he is not sure if the scrutiny has been done but then he tells us he has not looked at the comments papers. I accept that we cannot always read everything but then to say that you have not seen anything, that is because you have not effectively read them I think. So what I would like to clarify is just some of the recommendations that we have made to give assurance to the Assembly that an initial piece of scrutiny has been done. But ultimately you cannot scrutinise something that has not been done yet. You have to wait until the package is being rolled out to exactly look at how it works, if there are any unintended consequences, et cetera. Let me just read very quickly a few of the recommendations that are relevant in this that we have put in our comments paper. The first recommendation the panel made is that the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should quantify and publish details about the benefits to Jersey realised from projects supported by the Technology Accelerator Fund, and that is all linked as one of the packages. Recommendation 4, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should monitor and assess the outcomes of the business support package during the transition to a living wage project, to inform future Government decisions about the project prior to the lodging of the next Government Plan. So what we are asking there is that when this rolls out in the next year, of course we are going to be scrutinising it. I suspect Corporate Services will be looking at it, but we expect them to be monitoring how this package is working out before they come back next year with the next Budget. Recommendation 5, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should report to the States in each year from 2025 to 2028, so into the next Government and into the next Assembly, on the progress and outcomes of the research study to establish and maintain a set of household minimum income standards in Jersey. Not immediately the same as the living wage but there is clearly an interaction between those 2 pieces of work that are going on; one involving the Social Security Department but the other of course involving very much the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and his department. There is definitely an interaction of course between minimum income standards more generally and the living wage. The 2 are not the same but they do overlap very much. So I think the suggestion is that we have done as much scrutiny as we can. Ultimately this kind of issue remains a political one; you either agree with the living wage or not, you either agree with the way the package is being rolled out or not, and I think I am happy to accept that there is a plurality of views both in the Assembly and in our panel, but the suggestion that we have not done the requisite scrutiny on this, any suggestion of that is completely unfair and fallacious. That has also been recognised by Deputy Doublet who spoke earlier. Yes, there will be a piece of work to do, a continued piece of work to monitor, which we will do objectively, looking at the Minister, asking if the methods put forward are effective, if they have any unintended consequences, and what the role is. We did have some acknowledgement from the chief economic adviser that there are consequences on both sides about going to a living wage, and that there are going to be higher costs for businesses but at the same time there is reduction in supplementation perhaps, and that more money in the economy where poorer people ... this is perhaps the way I am analysing it, it is also better if it is being spent on the economy. So these are political consequences, economic consequences of the decision we have today, but certainly from an Economic Scrutiny Panel point of view I am quite content that we have done the requisite work that we needed to, and that will be ongoing. Again I thank my panel members; I could not have done it without Deputy Southern, Deputy Andrews and, particularly, Deputy Wilson has been very valuable as a vice chair, especially when I have not been able to be there in person, and we have always kept in touch to make sure that we are following a clear process that we are content with, even if we might ultimately have slightly different political views when it comes to debates in the Assembly.

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

I thank Deputy Tadier for those comments. I am going to speak as an independent Deputy because clearly when you are in the panel and you are trying to reach a consensus ... I think Deputy Tadier has outlined the panel's position on this but for me it does leave some unanswered questions, particularly about the targeting of this. I think in the comments paper I did ask the Minister at the time about where were the particular areas that they believed to see improvement in productivity and increased competition as the result of introduction of the living wage. I have to say, we got a bit of a vague answer on that and I do think that given the seriousness and the volumes of money involved we do need to expect where the plan is for the targeting of this resource going forward. One of the things that I am particularly concerned about is to understand what kind of productivity measures we will see accompanying increases in living wage, and I think we have already spoken with some of the members who are saying that they are doing as much as they can as well as paying people living wage. The question begs, what is the added advantage that some parts of the economy will see as a consequence of this scheme being introduced? The issue here I think is that we have got so much uncertainty about it. I absolutely support the move to living wage and minimum income standards and the work that is going to be done on that. But the thing that I want to share with the Assembly as an independent candidate is that I personally still have some concerns about the targeting of this and how this will be used effectively.

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

I am sorry that Members feel that there was not appropriate time for scrutiny of the package. I have to say there is a reason that we have Scrutiny Panels, and that is because we have been engaging with the Scrutiny Panel over time on this package of support and, as I understand it, one of the reasons for having different topic focused Scrutiny Panels is because the Assembly can rely on that Scrutiny Panel to give them comfort. So we were going to the Scrutiny Panel, we did explain to them what was going on with the productivity support scheme and the wider package, and I think that is entirely appropriate. I am sorry that the actual final package, which had only changed in some very small details at the very end, arrived late in that respect, and I am sorry about that. But the key elements of that package remained pretty much unchanged for months, and the Scrutiny Panel was aware of those. In fact the Assembly was, because I spoke in the Assembly outlining where the money would be allocated, and any changes that happened at the very end were small in that respect. I apologise that people feel that there was not enough transparency about it, that was not the intention, but I do know that we engaged with Scrutiny throughout, and that is the appropriate thing for a Minister to do, is to engage with Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Panel wrote a very good comments paper about it, which is there so the Assembly can then draw conclusions from that work. That is the appropriate process for these things. So in that sense it is a shame that ... I think people sometimes misunderstand the Scrutiny process. I enjoyed my 3 years as a Scrutiny chair and it may be that I am in Scrutiny again at some point, and I will continue to do that. I think that is a really important role and I always saw the fact that we have topic based Scrutiny Panels as being ... one of the elements of their work is to give assurance to the rest of the Assembly as to the scrutiny that has taken place on any given topic, policy or law change. Nobody in Jersey has done this before and so the outcomes cannot be guaranteed; that is impossible and it does not matter which Government you are in, it does not matter which Ministry you are in, and it does not matter which Scrutiny Panel you are on. When we make different choices and we start something new which has not been done before it is not possible to predict exactly the future. When I came in and when I was re-elected as Minister for Sustainable Economic Development I undertook to make sure that we did not have a support system which was based on effectively just subsidising wages. That was something I did not want to do. The faster movement to the living wage than was previously the case, in my mind, given the commitment to provide support around that for businesses, gives us an opportunity to help those businesses become fitter for the future. That is not just some trite phrase; I really do mean that. Our economy needs to improve its productivity and the support we are giving is designed to help do that. We have targeted it in those areas that we know are going to be affected by the minimum wage, so we have targeted the visitor economy. The only area where it is effectively a subsidy for businesses is in agriculture

and fisheries, and the reason for that is because that can be targeted directly through the existing support schemes. But for all other sectors it is focused on helping them invest in their own businesses or helping them have greater productivity by bringing more customers to them. Those are really important things to do. Because of targeting we know that elements such as the care sector can be affected by the living wage changes, we know that charities can be affected by living wage changes, so we also realise it would be difficult to just have different pots for lots and lots of different areas. We also cannot be sure; there could be firms in the construction sector that still pay the minimum wage, there could be firms in the finance sector somewhere that pay the minimum wage. It is impossible to have a pot for every single sector, which is why for those other sectors the larger of those pots is available to businesses and charities and social enterprises to help them do the investment that they need as well. I think that is really appropriate. I think that is the best use of taxpayer money, because if taxpayer money is being used to invest in businesses in a way that makes them stronger and more able to withstand the challenges of the future and to help us deal with the ageing population, then that is a massive win and that is an appropriate use of public money. I stand by that and I think that is a really good and farsighted thing for this Government to do and I am proud to lead that piece of work. Deputy Tadier is absolutely right; the scrutiny of this will be ongoing. The learning from it is going to be constant. There is no doubt that I am going to learn from it, the department will learn from it, the Assembly will learn from it. If we need to make changes in some months or years' time then we are ready to do that because that is what we do. This is not a Minister trying to force through a policy which has been his pet policy that he has wanted for years and years; this is a Minister who has looked at a challenge and said: "I think this is the best way to address that challenge." I stand by that. I do think this is the best way to address that challenge. The chief economist agrees with me. This is probably the best way to address that challenge. I see a Deputy not happy with me. I am not talking about the source of the money; I am talking about how we distribute the money. The source of the money is a separate matter, but the distribution of that money I do believe we are doing in the right way to help us create that resilient economy for the future. We will learn and where learning can help us change things and improve things I pledge to put those learnings into effect and to change them as we go, and I will work with Scrutiny on that. I will listen to Scrutiny on that. But this has not been an unscrutinised piece of work. This piece of work has been scrutinised. With that I just hope that brings some assurance to Members.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Given the time I am obliged under Standing Orders to ask Members if they wish to continue or adjourn.

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

I vote we continue.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to continue?

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

I have a Parish dinner which I am hosting at 7.00 p.m. at the Hotel Ambassadeur and 2 other Deputies are St. Clement are sort of obliged, depending on Standing Orders, to be there as well. I do not know what the ruling would be on that if I could take a leave of absence at, say, 6.00 p.m.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, well if you need to withdraw, you need to withdraw.

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

Could we know how many people still want to speak?

[17:45]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you could. How many Members still wish to speak on the principles? Just one.

4.1.11 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I appreciate the Minister has engaged with Scrutiny. I think that is great and I know he believes in that very strongly. I think the point that has been made in opposition to that is that for ordinary Members of the Assembly we did not get details of this until a few days before this meeting. We would not have been able to test the questions that it raises. I know that for a fact because I have asked many questions in that Assembly. It was originally going to be presented to us in September, then it was the end of the September, then it was October, and then it finally became the middle of November. It changed from being a scheme that was going to be funded out of reprioritisation to a scheme that was going to be funded from the Social Security Fund. It changed from being a scheme that was called the productivity scheme to being a living wage support scheme. I also know because we had a Scrutiny hearing with the Minister for Social Security in which she declined to discuss details of the scheme because they were still confidential, and I think that was either the end of September or the beginning of October. So there is no question that from an ordinary Member's point of view we have not had much sight of this and I think that point is an important counter to what the Minister has said.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. I call upon the Minister to reply.

4.1.12 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I remind Members that what we are voting on now is the legislation to make the funding available. This legislation has in fact been lodged for some months. I thank the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development for his words. Of course the package is not my package, it is one that will be run by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development so it was right that he spoke to that. What I can speak to as Minister for Social Security, while I was content to bring this legislation - and I do not want to repeat too much of what I said yesterday - I have been working for months very closely with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. We have been consulting with the different sectors and the business representatives and this package is based on that consultation, it is based on the economic advice that we have had from the chief economic adviser, and most recently this is based on a States Assembly decision that was made yesterday. So I maintain the principles.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the appel asked for? The appel has been asked for. I invite Members to return to their seats and the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity to cast their votes, both here and remotely, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The principles have been adopted.

POUR: 31		CONTRE: 13		ABSTAIN: 1
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet
Connétable of St. Brelade		Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy I. Gardiner		
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 H.M. Miles		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Deputy J. Renouf		

Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Deputy B. Ward		
Deputy C.F. Labey		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
Deputy M. Tadier		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				

The Greffier of the States:

Those voting contre: the Connétables of St. Lawrence and St. Clement; and Deputies Gardiner, Moore, Ozouf, Warr, Miles, Renouf, Jeune, Curtis, Ward, Wilson and Andrews; and Deputy Doublet abstained.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Now, it is not free from doubt whether or not this is a taxation draft for the purpose of Article 72, but on the footing that it is not a taxation draft do you wish to scrutinise this matter for your panel, Deputy Miles.

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

No, thank you, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much. We now move to the Articles, of which there are 2. Minister, how do you propose to advance the Articles in Second Reading?

4.2 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

En bloc please, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Are the Articles seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the Articles?

4.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Can I just get on the public record whether or not this is the funds that will be available for cannabis growers?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just ask a point of order, does that arise out of the Articles, that question?

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is a very interesting question. [**Laughter**] We will find out if it is a proper question in a way when the Minister replies, but I think the Deputy was entitled to ask the question. Does any other Member wish to speak on the Articles in Second Reading? I call upon the Minister to reply.

4.2.2 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course that is not really my question to answer; that is one for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, so I will just maintain the regulations.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, the regulations in Second Reading. Members in favour kindly show. The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats for considering the Articles in Second Reading and I invite the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members present here and remotely have had the opportunity of casting their votes then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the regulations have been adopted in Second Reading.

POUR: 31		CONTRE: 13		ABSTAIN: 1
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Lawrence		Deputy L.M.C Doublet
Connétable of St. Brelade		Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy I. Gardiner		
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 H.M. Miles		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Deputy J. Renouf		
Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Deputy B. Ward		
Deputy C.F. Labey		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
Deputy M. Tadier		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy S.G. Luce				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				

Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M Porée				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				

Minister, do you propose the regulations in Third Reading?

4.3 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, please, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are the regulations seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the regulations as adopted in Third Reading? Those in favour of adopting the regulations in Third Reading kindly show. Those against? The regulations are adopted in Third Reading. That concludes Public Business for this meeting and I ask the chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) to propose the arrangement of Public Business for future meetings.

ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Bearing in mind that we have been debating in this Assembly for nearly 34 hours this week, please could you indulge me before I make the arrangement of business. On behalf of the Assembly I would like to thank the Bailiff, Deputy Bailiff, the Greffier, Deputy Greffier, Attorney General, the Greffe staff, the Government staff, the ushers, and Jan and all who have supported us this week. **[Approbation]** The arrangement of Public Business; our next sitting is in 2 weeks' time on 10th December and we have a lengthy Order Paper. At the moment we have 15 items of business to debate, Draft Shipping P.46, P.63 Amendment to Standing Orders - Remote Participation in States Meetings, P.65 Public Elections: Extension of Eligibility Criteria, P.66, Draft Social Security Law (Parental Allowance and Death Grant), P.71 Reporting on Ministerial Affairs, P.73 Draft Limited Partnerships Amendment Law, P.74 Modern Languages in Schools, P.75 Draft Employment and Discrimination Tribunal Amendment, P.76 Amendment to Standing Orders - Miscellaneous Amendments, P.77 Draft Single Use Plastics et cetera, P.80 Amendment to Stading Orders - Timeline for Ministerial Appointments, P.81 Jersey Overseas Aid: Appointment of Non-States Commissioner, P.82 Support Scheme for Individuals Qualifying to Represent Jesey in Off-Island Competitions, P.83 Elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the States Assembly: Selection and Appointment, P.83 Amendment from Deputy Sir Philip Bailhache. So please be aware that if we have any hope of giving due consideration and good debate on this very heavy Order Paper we will be sitting for the full 4 days. Thank you, I make the arrangement of business.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that seconded? [Seconded]

5.1 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:

I am pleased to follow the chair of P.P.C. with a request to the proposer of P.83 to agree a deferment of the debate on the elected Speaker from its current listing at the end of the Order Paper on 10th December to a future date in the new year. The reason - and after consultation with some of my fellow Connétables - is to allow time for the Connétables to arrange a series of Parish meetings so that we can enter the debate fully informed as to the wishes of our parishioners on this matter. At the same time we would like to extend an invitation to the proposer and any other Members to attend and explain to the public the rationale behind the proposals and, if approved, the impact of the changes. Constables often come in for criticism for not making better use of Parish meetings to discuss matters of wider public interest. I will avoid the word "constitutional" and substitute our Island identity. I hope the proposer will be amenable to this proposal, appreciating that having had a long Budget debate taken out of a 3-week lodging period this has already severely restricted the ability of Members to prepare. Therefore, I sincerely hope that in the spirit of fairness, openness and democracy, the Constable will agree to moving his proposition from the end of an already long and tedious - not tedious, sorry - Order Paper [Laughter] to a future date to provide the opportunity for a full and proper debate that the public will expect on this important matter. This is something that involves all Islanders, not just 49 Members, and should not be rushed through at the end of a busy week at the end of the last sitting of the year. I think the way we are all feeling this evening, well, I am pretty jaded at the end of this week and to take a matter to a debate on such an important matter, which is really how we operate in this place, I think deserves proper consideration and I do not think, with all due respect, that this is being facilitated by leaving this item on that paper. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Connétable, are you asking the Assembly to determine this issue now or the Connétable of St. John to consider it now?

The Connétable of Trinity:

Well, I did not realise that that was in our gift. I was just asking for a reasonable consideration of that request but is it something under Standing Orders that one can ask for?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, ultimately the Assembly is the master of its own procedure. If you want to determine this now - although I have no embarrassment at all in presiding - I think it would be best so Members can speak freely, if the Greffier presides over this particular debate about when this should be determined. I invite the Greffier to consider this matter.

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

Sir, I do not think there is any need for you to withdraw. It is unfortunate that my colleague did not consult with this Constable because I would have been able to give a decision this evening. I will consider that and I will advise Members shortly, thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are you content with that, Connétable?

The Connétable of Trinity:

Yes, thank you.

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

I would like to, if I may, agree with the Constable of Trinity and put it beyond doubt that we are not going to be understanding ... because just an undertaking, we can make a decision to put it at the next

sitting, because I do not want to have my New Year - and others - preparing for a debate that I might not know. So if the Connétable cannot even concede maybe the Constable of Trinity could kindly propose a later date because that is in order.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am now going to invite the Greffier to chair the remainder of the Public Business.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

We have not finished if you want to take your seat. The Deputy Bailiff just asked me to take over on the arrangement of Public Business. That was a proposition was it, Deputy Ozouf, that you want to make?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am in the hands of the Constable if he would like to propose it of course.

The Connétable of Trinity:

If I may, ma'am?

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Yes, Constable.

5.2 The Connétable of Trinity:

Then I would like to make a proposal that we move it to the second meeting in the new year. The only date that I have is 21st January, which I think will still be too tight to arrange the series of public meetings that we are hoping to achieve, so whatever the meeting is after 21st January.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Greffier, if you could help me with the date of the next meeting?

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

It is 4th February.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

It is 4th February, so the proposal is to move it to 4th February. Is that proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Does anybody want to speak on the proposition?

[18:00]

5.2.1 The Connétable of St. John:

The reason I brought my proposal and the time I brought my proposal was because of the impending retirement of the current Bailiff, which is in October. I think it is disingenuous that the mover of this proposition has not had the courtesy ...

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Connétable, it is not a word that you can use, I am afraid.

The Connétable of St. John:

I will withdraw that then. I withdraw that and I apologise; it has been a long week for everybody. But I am disappointed that my colleague has not had the courtesy to tap me on the shoulder and talk to me about that. We have been here, as the Constable of St. Martin said, for over 34 hours, that does not include lunchtimes, and I have been sat in my chair for every minute of every debate. I have been available and nobody has spoken to me. I would ask the Assembly to give me time to consider the proposition. I am delighted that my colleagues want to engage with their parishioners, I think that is fantastic and should be encouraged. I really would ask for time, thank you.

5.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I agree with that. I think it is unfortunate that if Deputy Jehan ... Connétable Jehan, sorry, I had a future flash there. [Laughter] If he had been consulted with a bit of time this could have been resolved. It is nice to see some of the Constables get passionate about something, even if it is about keeping things very feudal.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Deputy, I do not think that is necessary. I think you should withdraw that comment.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay, it is not nice to see them getting passionate about things then. [Members: Oh!] No? Sorry, what are we allowed to say? Are we being censored now.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

This is not an opportunity for an across the floor debate. Deputy, do you want to continue your speech?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Ultimately this is a matter for Members to decide. What is being proposed on the paper is not the removal of a civic head of the Island, it is a matter of who chairs this Assembly. So it would be more constructive, I would suggest, for Members to speak to each other ahead of the scheduling of any future debate on this, whether it is at the next sitting, at a sitting in January, or even if it is on 1st April, to decide whether we can agree with this. Because what is being proposed via a series of Parish meetings, which will be chaired by somebody who is not impartial and has made up their mind on the issue, versus 49 States Members getting together to decide who should chair their Assembly. It would be much more of a constructive way forward to decide on if, and indeed when, we have this debate. So I would ask that time is given to the mover of this proposition to decide if and when he wants to proceed with it and how and in what way. I would suggest that internal presentations would be much more fitting than involving the public in issues that have absolutely little real relevance to them.

5.2.3 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I would like to address 2 points. I would really like to say that I do not think all Deputies particularly show much passion about some things.

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

Ma'am, can I raise the same problem?

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

Excuse me, Ma'am, the chair of P.P.C.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Yes, I am just saying that is not very fair all this ... there are 2 points. First of all, Constable Jehan who sits next to me, I did raise it - and he said nobody had raised it with him - with him because I did say that it was a very heavy Order Paper and this was coming at the end, so I did raise it with him. I apologise if I have said anything wrong. The other thing is I had not heard everything that Constable Le Sueur was saying previous to him saying it. I knew that he was going to ask for this but if we are having meetings in our Parishes, the Constable of Trinity has said that any Members are allowed to come, so they can sit on the stage as well. It is not going to be partisan or anything. So if you all would like to turn up to the meetings we have ...

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Through the Chair.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Sorry, through the Chair. We have been asked in our Parishes whether we can have these meetings. I think we have all been approached to say can we have some kind of meeting because it is of great interest to the Island. Whether the bringer of the proposition or Members supporting it think it is or not, it is of great interest to Members.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Forgive me, the matter that you are being asked to decide upon is really whether or not you wish to move the proposition to 4th February, rather than the detail of what may or may not be the format for meetings.

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

Just briefly, I do believe we are heading towards the festive season and it is normal in most Parishes to conduct drinks parties and events to engage with parishioners and to thank them for their service during the year. That would provide a good opportunity for Constables to engage with those parishioners and to hear what they have to say. There are other mediums available to them to do so also. I would reiterate the point that Deputy Tadier made, that this is really a matter for the Assembly in terms of who the speaker is in this Assembly, and that really only affects 49 of us. If we look back at the last referendum that was held in the Island on the composition of this Assembly, only 26 per cent of people on the electoral register engaged with that referendum, and that shows I think the level of interest that really is there within our community. This is really a matter for this Assembly between itself, but I think we really should give the Constable a moment to consider this rather than being put on the backfoot by his fellow Constable and allow him to make a decision about his own amendment.

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

I am pleased to follow the previous speaker. I think this is the first time in the past 6 years I have experienced a debate on when to have a debate on somebody else's proposition [**Approbation**] and I find it a little bit disrespectful. I think we should give the Constable of St. John the opportunity to decide when he would like his proposition to be debated. I would also like to remind Members from a P.P.C. perspective, there is also an amendment to be discussed regarding a referendum. If that is approved there has to be, I believe, according to the Referendum Law, a minimum of 3 months which then means that the timetabling to bring forward any legislation that needs amending from a P.P.C. perspective; and of course as we know we do not like to do that with less than one year before an election so we need to be mindful of that as well. I will be rejecting this proposition to delay it. I think we should give the Connétable who has brought forward this proposition the opportunity to reflect and to decide when he would like this proposition to be debated.

5.2.6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I was going to be amending the proposition in a helpful way, I think in a constructive way, and I wanted to basically make sure that I have got the intent and the wishes for consultation on what is undoubtedly an important issue, because there are other related issues that follow. That is what I wanted to say. I was not in any way trying to ... we have had a very heavy period of time and there has not been enough time to consider these. We do have the Christmas break. I for one am trying to go away and I just wanted certainty so that I know whether or not I need to be prepared for something or not and get an amendment, which is properly considered, properly consulted, giving the Constable that brought it respect and also the other Constables and other Members the opportunity to consider the amendment that I was putting forward, which I have not had time to do and I apologise for that. But it is a proper item and I think the Constable Trinity is reasonable, but we need to have certainty please.

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

I hesitate to prolong this procedure. My understanding is that the Constable of St. John, regarding the initial approach, said, yes, he was quite happy to defer it. As long as he is deferring it away from the next Assembly I think it should be left with him to come back to the States, but I do think it is appropriate for individual Parishes to have the opportunity to consider it in a formal way and not simply at social events.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Does any other Member wish to speak? Otherwise I draw this debate to a close and call upon the Connétable of Trinity to reply.

5.2.8 The Connétable of Trinity:

I set out to seek just a deferment and I felt perhaps I got a little bit railroaded and carried away. I am more than happy to leave this matter with the Constable of St. John to deliberate, and I would ask if he would come back to me in a reasonable period of time so that if we need to do something else or propose something else then we can do that. I would just add that if I was to hold a Parish meeting - not a Parish Assembly - that I would be asking an independent person to chair that meeting, in case anyone is worried that there would be an intentional bias on my part. Just to say that I appreciate that this has been brought because the announcement of the retirement of our current Bailiff, but of course it could equally coincide with perhaps the next general election date as a point at which we could change. With that I am happy to withdraw that proposal and leave the matter as a request that the Constable of St. John gives that matter consideration, thank you very much.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Are Members content that the Connétable withdraws his proposition and we leave things for the ... very well. Then returning to the arrangement of Public Business, does any other Member have any other item they wish to raise? It has been a very long week; is the adjournment proposed? The Assembly stands adjourned until 10th December.

ADJOURNMENT

[18:11]