

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 1st OCTOBER 2024

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[9:30]

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

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

I would just like to inform the Assembly that I have to attend a funeral later this morning. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. Deputy Doublet, was that you in the ether?

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

Yes, thank you. I just wanted to inform the Assembly that as I have a medical appointment mid-morning I may need some flexibility around my question, which is due to fall probably mid-morning.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much for that.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Deputy Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

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

QUESTIONS

2. Written Questions

2.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding Government expenditure on consultants (WQ.268/2024)

Question

Will the Chief Minister state how much the Government has spent on consultants, excluding those permanently employed in the Health Department, each year from 2014 to date?

Answer

Since 2019, the Government has published an analysis of expenditure on third-party contractors in line with the requirements of P.59/2019. This is summarised below from those public reports.

The P59 reporting categories changed in July 2020, hence the below analysis shows the categories after that date (Table 1) and before that date (Table 2).

Table 1: Agency Health Care & Social Workers, Consultancy, Contingent Labour, Fixed term Contractors and Local Agency Costs July 2020 – December 2023

Expenditure has been reported in the P59 report in the below categorises since July 2020:

£000	Jul -Dec 2020	2021	2022	2023
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Agency Health Care & Social Workers	6,780	15,981	23,916	37,746
Consultancy	23,622	39,894	33,013	40,146
Contingent Labour	6,447	13,692	27,055	26,103
Fixed term Contractors	9,007	27,826	28,212	16,964
Local Agency	2,227	5,986	5,190	2,628
Total	48,083	103.379	117,386	123,587

Table 2: Consultancy Costs January 2019 – June 2020

Expenditure was reported in the P59 report in the below categorises between January 2019 - June 2020:

£000	2019	Jan – Jun 2020
Consultancy services provided by a supplier	11,963	8,239
Consultancy services provided by a specific individual	7,240	3,839
Fixed-term employees Civil Service Grade 15 and below	15,378	6,878
Fixed-term employees above Civil Service Grade 15	1,235	525
Local agency staff	5,789	2,279
Local and UK Nursing agency cost	6,008	2,712
Social worker agency cost	2,853	1,072
Total	50,466	25,544

For the period 2014 – 2018, before the P59 reporting commenced, comparable information is not available in an extractable format.

For reference, links to the published reports as follows:

- First report (January to June 2019): [See R.149/2019](#)
- Second report (July to December 2019): [See R.63/2020](#)
- Third report (January to June 2020): [See R.13/2021](#)
- Fourth report (July to December 2020): [See R.118/2021](#)
- Fifth report (January to June 2021): [See R.187/2021](#)
- Sixth report (July to December 2021) [See R.17/2023](#)
- Seventh report (January to June 2022) [See R.17/2023](#)
- Eighth report (July to December 2022) [See R.30/2024](#)
- Ninth report (January to July 2023) To be published September 2024
- Tenth report (July to December 2023) To be published September 2024

2.2 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the process to plan the number of Government school places available for children in the Island (WQ.269/2024)

Question

Will the Minister detail the process undertaken by his Department to plan the number of Government school places available for children in the Island, and advise when this process was last reviewed?

Answer

The CYPES Informatics team collect a termly “census” of all pupils in Jersey in order to monitor trends in pupil numbers. The team also complete an annual demand forecasting exercise incorporating current pupil numbers, annual births and migration data, as well as considering population projections produced by Statistics Jersey. The whole cohort predictions are then used to forecast demand for specific cohorts, such as non-fee paying government schools, or town primary schools.

The process was reviewed this year, with the most recent forecast produced in June 2024 which will be used for future estate planning.

2.3 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Food (Jersey) Law 2023 Regulations (WQ.270/2024)

Question

Further to his responses to Written Questions 20/2024 and 198/2024, will the Minister provide a timeframe and an update on the progress being made in bringing forward the Food (Jersey) Law 2023 Regulations, including the labelling of allergens in food?

Answer

The Department now has dedicated resources engaged on moving forward with the subordinate legislation which will allow the Food Law (Jersey) 2023 to come into force. The departure of specialist staff has delayed work in this area, but discussions are expected shortly with the Legislative Drafting Office on the best approach to deliver the desired outcomes. This will be encapsulated in law drafting instructions. The resulting draft Regulations will then be subject to consultation with stakeholders and the EHI Scrutiny Panel. Any subsequent revisions will be incorporated into revised Regulations and then lodged with the States Assembly for debate and approval. This is expected in 2025.

As explained in the answer to WQ20(2024), it is worth reiterating that most of the packaged food available locally is either imported from the UK or EU, meaning that the Island is provided an elevated level of consumer protection. Mandatory EU labelling requirements, which are substantively unchanged by Brexit, provide for detailed ingredient lists in a legible font size with prominence given to the 14 most serious allergens on labelling. The Food Safety (Labelling) (Jersey) Order 2005 deems such imported products compliant with local legislation, provided they are in a language understood by the intended consumer. Local legislation also legislates against misrepresentation of food, e.g. claiming that a product is suitable for an allergic consumer when it is not.

2.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Marine Spatial Plan (WQ.271/2024)

Question

Further to the lodging of ‘Marine Spatial Plan’ (“MSP”) (P.44/2024), will the Minister –

(a) detail the evidentiary basis underpinning the reduction in Marine Protected Areas from the draft MSP including any further research undertaken within these areas since the publication of the initial draft MSP;

- (b) provide an itemised timetable for the further research as proposed in the MSP and the expected date of the research results;
- (c) explain what steps will be taken on completion and evaluation of the research in (b) above, particularly in relation to expanding the Marine Protected Area network; and
- (d) advise whether, in his assessment, the "precautionary approach", which is one of the MSP's principles, has been adopted in relation to the areas that have been identified as needing further research?

Answer

(a) The reduction in these areas was based on the responses received from the mobile gear fishing industry (both Jersey and France) during the public consultation. This evidence consisted of vessel tracking information and could not be included in the consultation summary due to anonymity issues. Further to this, meetings were held between Marine Resources officers and the mobile gear working group to work out where the proposed MPA network would have the biggest impact on their operations. Where economic importance was great and the evidence base to protect these areas was less refined, it was decided to take out the areas from the MPA network until further research could be done to refine the boundary so that it only covers the sensitive habitats in question.

(b) In line with ongoing habitat mapping work, research into these areas began in summer 2024, and will continue into spring/summer 2025. Drop camera surveys will be carried out on a 500x500m grid across the research areas. This work feeds into the Marine Resources workstream to gather seabed footage to help ground truth the 2022 modelled habitat map. Should the MPA proposal be accepted, drop cameras in the research areas will be prioritised going forward and should be completed in spring 2025. The data analysis will be carried out in spring and summer 2025 once all of the drop cameras are complete. Once the drop camera videos have been assessed, this will indicate distribution of sensitive habitat. If results from the drop cameras do not show clear distribution, or if there is uncertainty as to the condition of the habitat, in particular maerl, this will be followed up with towed video or grab sampling to understand the composition of the maerl (live vs dead maerl nodules and infaunal species).

(c) This is not specified at this time. If the MPA proposal is accepted in its current form by the States Assembly, the timelines to implement the various MPA types (initial, phased, seasonal and research) will depend on a number of factors, such as law drafting time for the initial and phased MPA areas, and consultation periods for the seasonal and research areas. Consultation will be carried out initially through the Marine Resources Panel (MRP). Marine Resources officers will then make a recommendation to the Minister for the Environment. Further law drafting time would be needed for any legislation amendments arising from the results from the research areas and consultation through MRP. If sensitive habitat is found, then the recommendation will be to close all or part of these areas to mobile gear. If no evidence is found, then no further amendments will be suggested. Closure of fisheries areas will have implications under the Trade and Cooperation agreement and will therefore require standard notice periods to be followed.

(d) With the current data available Government does not have a 100% understanding of the extent of sensitive habitats or their condition. Under the precautionary principle Jersey could argue to protect the whole of its waters while research is carried out on habitat extent and condition. The current MPA recommendation protects the areas where greater confidence exists in the habitats that are there, based on a combination of datasets, such as benthic videos, grab samples, dive information etc. Offshore areas are typically less surveyed and reliance on the modelled habitat map (extrapolated from available datasets) is therefore greater in some areas. While there are charts from historic surveys, there is limited recent ground truthed data from some of the MPA areas that have been highlighted as economically important to the mobile fishing industry. Fishing is an important part of Jersey's cultural identity, and the MSP also highlights the need to safeguard this industry and make

sure it is sustainable into the future. It was therefore decided to conduct benthic habitat surveys in these areas prior to making a recommendation for their inclusion in the MPA network and it may be that only part of these research areas are put forward for protection from mobile gear. It is important to note that MPAs are not the only way of managing the impact of mobile gear fishing on the seabed. There is now a permit system in place to limit the number of Jersey mobile gear boats, and there are technical measures currently being discussed to improve the efficiency and sustainability of this sector.

2.5 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for Social Security regarding the Upper Earnings Limit (WQ.272/2024)

Question

Will the Minister provide an estimate for the amount of revenue that would be raised in Social Security and Long-Term Care contributions through an increase in the Upper Earnings Limit, broken down into increments of increases of £100,000 up to an income of £1,000,000; and will she further provide the same estimate for revenue that would be raised by removing each Upper Earnings Limit?

Answer

The following data outlines the amount of revenue that would be raised in Social Security and Long-Term Care contributions through an increase in the Upper Earnings Limit (UEL), broken down into 20% incremental increases, as well as the estimate for revenue that would be raised by removing the Upper Earnings Limit. Estimates are based on the 2022 tax year. More time would be required to undertake the analysis requested, in terms of the amount of revenue that would be raised through an increase in the Upper Earnings Limit broken down into increments of increases of £100,000.

2022	UEL £	Social Security Contributions	Long-Term Care Contributions
2022 UEL	260,688	Increased revenue in £'m	Increased revenue in £'m
20% increase in UEL	312,826	0.9	0.7
40% increase in UEL	364,963	1.6	1.3
60% increase in UEL	417,101	2.1	1.8
80% increase in UEL	469,238	2.6	2.2
100% increase in UEL	521,376	3.0	2.6
No UEL	Removed	9.2	8.2

Value of increased revenue in £'m rounded to nearest £0.1m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- This table includes High Value Residents who may be subject to separate tax arrangements

- No assumptions have been made for possible behavioural change
- Change calculated based on annual income. Monthly income fluctuations may result in differences to additional amounts raised
- Uses data and base UEL (£260,688) from Year Of Assessment 2022

2.6 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding individuals paid from public funds who are not ordinarily resident in Jersey (WQ.273/2024)

Question

Will the Chief Minister state how many individuals are currently in receipt of a salary or remuneration paid from public funds, via any legal or administrative structure, but who are not ordinarily resident in Jersey; and will he provide a breakdown of any such individuals by department, and grade or salary/remuneration band?

Answer

All employees of the States Employment Board should be resident or ordinarily resident in Jersey.

One notable exception relates to the Island’s representation overseas, which is important in maintaining both political and commercial links, on which many of our industries rely. A small team of External Relations staff are based off-island and in two cases the service is shared with the government of Guernsey.

The overseas offices promote our external interests, and each has a legal entity that employs a small number of individuals as follows.

	Government of Jersey London Office	Bureau des Îles Anglo-Normandes (shared with Guernsey)	Channel Islands Brussels Office (shared with Guernsey)
Grades 5-12	6	Fewer than 5	Fewer than 5
Grades 13 and above	5		

There are three other roles relating to specialist staff from the Economy Department, Law Drafters Office and the office of the Director of Civil Aviation.

Public funds are also used to pay a range of other employees who are not resident in the Island, including consultants, agency workers and employees of arm’s length organisations and various grant-funded bodies. The Government does not hold information on the residential location of all these individuals.

2.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the reduction in the GST *de minimis* level (WQ.274/2024)

Question

Further to the reduction in the GST *de minimis* level from £135 to £60 for overseas consumer purchasers that do not have GST charged at point of purchase, will the Minister provide information on –

- (a) the total GST collected, broken down by month, from 1st July 2023 to date;
- (b) the amount of time spent analysing the possible impact of reducing the GST *de minimis* level prior to implementation;

- (c) the cost to develop the Customs and Excise System for the Administration of Revenue (CAESAR) in preparation for the reduction in the *de minimis* level;
- (d) the amount paid to UK or local marketing and research companies for work done in relation to (b) and (c); and
- (e) the number and cost of additional staff recruited to administer the reduced *de minimis* level from 1st July 2023 to date?

Answer

- 1) The mandatory registration of offshore retailers for GST has increased the amount of GST being remitted directly to the Treasury and also enabled a reduction in the GST de minimis Level from £135 to £60 from 1 July 2023. Registered business (including registered offshore retailers) charge GST on all of their sales, regardless of value. The de minimis level now only applies to importations from unregistered offshore retailers (ie those with Jersey turnover of less than £300,000 and exists to help Customs officers clear lower-value private importations quickly and efficiently.)
- 2) The total GST collected from July 2023 to August 2024 is summarised below. Note that these amounts refer to the GST collected by the Government of Jersey during this period; figures will therefore differ from those included in the annual accounts.

Month	GST collected (£'000)
July 2023	8,194
August 2023	10,205
September 2023	8,899
October 2023	11,125
November 2023	10,306
December 2023	9,084
January 2024	14,589
February 2024	4,780
March 2024	8,192
April 2024	6,964,
May 2024	6,151
June 2024	7,848
July 2024	9,548
August 2024	9,299

Figures rounded to the nearest £1,000.

- 3) The GST de minimis was reduced as part of the package of changes to collect GST at source from online retailers. Prior to this change, the previous de minimis of £135 applied to sales from all offshore retailers. As such, it is not possible to isolate the time spent analysing the impact of reducing the de minimis; this work was done as part of a larger assessment of the impact of this change.
- 4) Similarly, the changes introduced to CAESAR and increase in staff in July 2023 related to both the reduction in the de minimis level and the collection of GST at source from online retailers. Customs used the opportunity to enhance CAESAR for users at the same time. The majority of the CAESAR development work related to both the user interface upgrade and to automate the collection of GST at source for online retailers.

It is not possible to isolate system and staff costs associated solely with the de minimis reduction. The total cost of updates to CAESAR in preparation for this package of changes was £190,850.

- 5) £9,150 was paid to a customer-research organisation for customer insights in respect of interface upgrades required for CAESAR.
- 6) A total of four additional staff were initially employed as a result of the changes from June 2023, one in Customer and Local Services and three at Jersey Customs & Immigration Services. Since June 2024, this has reduced to three staff

The total cost of additional staff from June 2023 to August 2024 is £232,736.

Early analysis suggests that the first full year’s additional GST receipts from the mandatory registration of online retailers may exceed £4m. This arises from the registration of offshore retailers and the consequent reduction in the number of importations to which the de minimis level could apply. The majority of goods bought from these large offshore retailers now attract GST in the same way as goods bought from Jersey retailers, fulfilling a long-standing commitment of successive governments since GST was introduced.

2.8 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Chair of the Comité des Connétables regarding the gender of Roads Committee members (WQ.275/2024)

Question

Will the Chair provide a breakdown of Roads Committee members by gender for each Parish, both as an overall number and as a percentage?

Answer

As explained in response to the written question WQ.104/2018, the Parishes do not request the gender of those holding office so the breakdown relates to the titles and names as shown on each Parish’s website. The membership is as set out in Article 3 of the Loi (1914) sur la Voirie namely three elected members for each Parish other than St Helier which has five elected members, the Connétable and the Rector.

Parish	Male members – number and %	Female members – number and %
St Brelade	4 – 80%	1 – 20%
St Clement	5 – 100%	
Grouville	4 – 80%	1 – 20%
St Helier	6 – 85.7%	1 – 14.3%
St John	4 – 80%	1 – 20%
St Lawrence	3 – 60%	2 – 40%
St Martin	4 – 80%	1 – 20%
St Mary	4 – 80%	1 – 20%
St Ouen	5 – 100%	
St Peter	5 – 100%	
St Saviour	5 – 100%	
Trinity	5 – 100%	

2.9 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Chief Minister regarding the Government Gender Pay Gap Report (WQ.276/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) the date when the next Government [Gender Pay Gap Report](#) will be published;
- (b) whether the Government intends to produce a gender pay gap action plan for all States departments and, if so, when and, if not, why not;
- (c) what budget, if any, has been allocated for 2025 to ensure the continued production of gender pay gap reports and the development of an action plan and, if no budget has been allocated, why not;
- (d) how many Arm's Length Organisations and Specified Organisations (as defined in the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019) have volunteered to publish their gender pay and income ratio information, as mentioned in [P.31/2023 as amended](#)?

Answer

- (a) The next Gender Pay Gap Report is due to be published in December. The latest Public Sector Staffing Statistics were published on 27th August and is available here: [Public Sector Staffing Statistics \(gov.je\)](#) and the next set is due to be published in November.
- (b) There will not be a separate gender pay gap action plan for each Government department, but departments are in the process of creating Workforce Plans, which will address workforce pay gaps in all diversities, including gender.
- (c) Gender pay gap reports are produced as business as usual from within existing resources.
- (d) Five of the six Specified Organisations report their gender pay and income ratio information-
 - Andium Homes Limited
Yes – see [Andium-Homes-Annual-Report-2022](#)
 - Jersey Post International Limited
Yes – see [Jersey Post report 2023](#)
 - JT Group Limited
Yes – see [Jersey Telecom Annual Report 2023](#)
 - Ports of Jersey Ltd
Yes – see [POJ-Annual Report 2023](#)
 - States of Jersey Development Company
Yes – see [Jersey development annual report 2023](#)
 - Jersey Overseas Aid Commission
No - JOAS only employs 8 staff, so pay reporting would risk indicating individual salaries. In addition, JOAS does not formally record the gender of its employees

The public Finances Manual identifies 13 Arm's Length Organisations:

- Digital Jersey
- Visit Jersey Limited
- Jersey Sport
- Jersey Arts Trust
- Jersey Arts Centre Association
- Jersey Opera House
- Jersey Heritage Trust
- Employ Jersey

- Jersey Finance Limited
- Jersey Business Limited
- Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service
- Jersey Consumer Council
- Jersey Citizens Advice Bureau

The list does not include organisations that receive funding from the Government or States of Jersey of less than £75,000 per year.

Jersey Sport, Jersey Business and Visit Jersey have volunteered to report on their gender pay and income ratio in 2024 and, in line with our previous commitments, the Government is currently working with the other ALOs to confirm their commitment to gender pay reporting.

2.10 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding legislation to ensure Estate Agents obtain membership of an independent redress scheme (WQ.277/2024)

Question

Further to his response to Oral Question 69/2024, will the Minister advise whether he is still on track to lodge legislation to ensure Estate Agents obtain membership of an independent redress scheme by the end of this year or beginning of next year, and will he further advise whether he is considering, or will consider, making it a requirement that Estate Agents undertake relevant professional examinations, and if not, why not?

Answer

The legislative changes remain on track and I have, this month, approved law drafting instructions which are now with the Legislative Drafting Office.

These drafting instructions have been shared with the EIA Panel and will require Estate Agents to be a member of an Approved Redress Scheme.

Codes of Practice are offered by redress schemes. Both of the UK Trading Standards approved redress schemes are run as independent organisations with a range of criteria required for membership to be considered (professional indemnity insurance, a designated client account, a company registration/Value Added Tax number, evidence of membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme, etc).

These Codes of Practice are slightly different depending on region (with Scotland and the Channel Islands having separate Codes of Practice) but do not currently require individuals to undertake professional examinations.

2.11 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the closure of the Jersey Recovery College (WQ.278/2024)

Question

Further to the closure of the Jersey Recovery College ('the Charity'), will the Minister advise –

- (a) when his department became aware that there were financial problems at the Charity;
- (b) what steps, if any, were taken to try and support the Charity;

- (c) what steps, if any, have been taken to ensure that the services provided by the Charity are provided in other ways;
- (d) what risk analyses, if any, have been conducted, given that the services provided by the Charity are no longer available; and
- (e) whether any conflicts of interest were identified or considered, in respect of the involvement of the Minister and Assistant Minister with any other mental health charity?

Answer

- (a) HCS were first made aware of the charity's significant financial problems on 18th January 2024.
- (b) The JRC contract at that point was due to expire on 30 June 2024. A number of meetings were held between HCS officers and the JRC to establish how the service could be sustained. The resultant actions were that:
 - i. Four months funding was paid in advance (following sharing of financial accounts) to support the charity's cash flow.
 - ii. The HCS commissioning team met with private funders to give assurance of government support, so that they in turn would offer financial support.
 - iii. HCS agreed to direct award a further 12 month contract from 1 July 2024, and work with JRC to redesign the service offer to meet those identified needs subject to financial viability of JRC. A longer contract could not be offered at that time, as the financial viability concerns were already known.
 - iv. A plan to deliver a significantly lower level of activity (4 groups per week) in the second half of 2024 was accepted, as a transitional phase. This was further supported by the offer of involvement of HCS mental health staff in the delivery of some of the planned groups.
 - v. An implied contract was entered into in July and August, paying JRC another 2 months funding to cover the summer school courses already committed to
 - vi. The HCS commissioning team spent a considerable amount of time working with JRC to support them in exploring options, service development and financial assessment.
- (c) JRC provided activities that were commissioned and funded by HCS, and activities that were not (at a ratio of 50:50 prior to 2024). HCS were already in discussion with JRC prior to the financial challenges being known about the need to vary the services commissioned by HCS and introduce a new delivery model, based on identified needs (and in part utilising the partnership delivery model that we planned to introduce from July onwards). Since the closure of JRC was announced, the HCS mental health team has been working with service users and others to develop a new group model that will be (incrementally) introduced from October onwards, which will replicate some of the work previously delivered by the JRC. The intention is to continue to grow this over coming months, and to include some of the wider mental health promotion / stigma reduction activities that were delivered by JRC.
- (d) During the last term, a total of 79.5 hours of courses were provided over 4 months, an average of 4 hours per week, so the level of support provided was not extensive. As work

had already started in partnership with JRC to deliver a new model, we were able to build on this work to develop a plan when the closure was announced. HCS staff have of course identified and considered potential risks that may arise as a result of the closure – including to people who use services, staff and the wider system – and established plans to mitigate these (including offers of individual support and plans to develop alternative / replacement services as soon as possible).

- (e) No conflicts of interest were identified. The Ministerial team were aware of – and supported - the various actions taken in early 2024 to seek to support / sustain the JRC, and were briefed by the Director of Mental Health and the Chief Officer when the JRC impending closure became known. There was no plan to redistribute any of the JRC funding to an alternative charity – the replacement service will be delivered initially within the HCS mental health services, whilst the future model is developed. Any future plans to grow this area of service with charitable partners will be discussed and agreed at the Mental Health Partnership Board (which includes representation from the majority of the charitable partners) and would be subject to a competitive tender process.

2.12 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade of the Minister for External Relations regarding the Lloyds Bank branch closure in St. Brelade (WQ.279/2024)

Question

Further to the announcement by Lloyds Bank that it is to close its St. Brelade branch, will the Minister advise what communication, if any, he has had with Lloyds bank to discuss the support that will be provided to customers who will be negatively impacted by this closure, and whether any such support will be provided on an ongoing basis; and if he has not had any such communication, will he undertake to do so?

Answer

The Minister, as well as the Chief Minister and senior government officers, have met the chief executive of Lloyds Bank International in recent weeks to discuss the closure of the St Brelade branch.

Although it is understandable that some customers will be disappointed by the closure of their local branch, it is important to recognise that such decisions reflect global changes to banking practices, most especially a significant decline in face-to-face transactions and a rise in internet banking.

As publicly stated by Lloyds, transactions at the St Brelade branch fell by almost a third between 2018 and 2023.

Lloyds have advised the Minister that they are in the process of contacting customers to inform them of the alternative banking services available.

Furthermore, the bank has informed the Minister that extra staff have been made available to help customers register for telephone and/or online banking, and that an open day is being planned during which customers will be able to bring their devices into the branch so they can be guided through the set-up process. Additionally, staff will be made available to visit the homes of more vulnerable clients to discuss their options and provide any further assistance.

The nearest free-to-use ATM is 50 metres away, and customers who prefer in-person banking will be able to continue to use the St Helier branch.

2.13 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding postgraduate study bursaries (WQ.280/2024)

Question

In respect to Islanders who are undertaking postgraduate study, will the Minister provide a breakdown for each of the academic years 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25, of –

- (a) the annual budget allocated to the Jersey Bursary;
- (b) the total number of applications received for the Jersey Bursary;
- (c) the number of bursaries that were granted;
- (d) the accumulated value of the bursaries granted; and
- (e) the number of bursaries that were granted for the maximum value of £10,000?

Answer

- (a) The annual budget for the [Jersey Bursary](#) is £120,000 and is allocated following an application and interview process.

The amount allocated each year will take into consideration the length of the courses as there will be ongoing payments dependent on the course. The below table shows the amount that was allocated for the first year of the courses.

- (b), (c), (d) and (e)

Academic Year	Total Applications	Total Bursaries awarded	Amount	Number of Bursaries of £10,000
2022/23	39	17	£108,000	3
2023/24	33	14	£100,500	6
2024/25	44	16	£79,000	1

2.14 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the reuse centre at La Collette (WQ.281/2024)

Question

Further to his response to [Written Question 79/2024](#), will the Minister provide an update on whether a suitable applicant for the reuse centre at La Collette has been found through the tender process, and if so, provide details of the applicant and how they will make use of the facility?

Answer

Yes, Enable Jersey has been successful in its tender application as part of the tender process.

The outline of their proposal is to offer a reuse service:

- Focusing on the reuse and repurposing of pre-owned medical equipment such as beds, chairs, walkers, wheelchairs and scooters etc.
- Providing affordable medical supplies – the organisation supports individuals in need while reducing waste and promoting a circular economy.

The service would:

- Receive preowned and reuseable medical items (as outlined above) from members of the public.
- Establish an Equipment Hub (at the reuse facility) to open several mornings/days per week where items can be dropped off/viewed and taken away for reuse.

As part of their outline business plan, Enable Jersey are looking to work with Government to expand their services with the option for joint services being provided at this location going forward.

2.15 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding staff employed across the Public Sector for each grade above Grade CS11 (WQ.282/2024)

Question

Will the Chair advise how many staff were employed across the Public Sector for each grade above Grade CS11, broken down for each of the last five years?

Answer

The below table outlines civil service and personal contract holders headcount, taken at the 31 December of each year.

The data includes all staff with a full time-equivalent (FTE) basic salary equal to, or above that of a CS11 increment 1 (CS11:1) for each year. As such, there are staff excluded from certain grades where their FTE salary is less due to being on a lower increment in the scale. CS10:4 is of an equal value to a CS11:1; however, employees at CS10:4 have been excluded as the question asks for CS11 and above. All zero hour / bank staff, and employees with an FTE of 0 have been excluded.

Grade by Paygroup	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Headcount	Headcount	Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Civil Servants					
CS11	225	293	288	354	380
CS12	297	258	297	290	338
CS13	104	116	135	190	213
CS14	82	87	80	95	97
CS15	46	59	67	82	76
Personal Contract Holders	144	93	165	88	100
Grand Total	898	906	1032	1099	1204

2.16 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding police officer recruitment (WQ.283/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise, for each of the last five years, the number of police officers that have been recruited, and the number of police officers who have left the States of Jersey Police?

Answer

The table below shows the number of States of Jersey Police Officers that have been recruited, as well as those that have left the force, in the last five years.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
No. of Police Officers Joining the States of Jersey Police	13	31	18	13	28	2	105
No. of Police Officers Leaving the States of Jersey Police	11	13	20	30	19	5	98

This data reflects the States of Jersey Police’s ongoing efforts to maintain a robust and effective police force, despite challenges. The States of Jersey Police remain committed to ensuring the safety and security of our community through strategic recruitment and retention initiatives.

2.17 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Chair of the Comité des Connétables regarding the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 (WQ.284/2024)

Question

For each of the last five years will the Chair provide a breakdown, per Parish, of –

- (a) the amount credited to the Parish’s General Account pursuant to the Article 4(5) of the [Dogs \(Jersey\) Law 1961](#) (the ‘1961 Law’);
- (b) the number of dogs seized by that Parish pursuant to Articles 6,7 and, 9 of the 1961 Law or in accordance with its powers under Article 10 of the 1961 Law;
- (c) the net amount (after receipt and payment of expenses pursuant to Articles 10 (3)(b), 11(11)(b)(iii) and 11(15)) defrayed from the Parish's General Account pursuant to Article 10 and 11(15) of the 1961 Law; and
- (d) the costs, if any, incurred in respect of signage, or on education relating to dogs?

Answer

- (a) Article 4(5) of the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 relates to the annual dog licence; the figures for the last 5 financial years (May to April) are set out below (the fee increased on 1 March 2020).
- (b) The Articles refer to the wearing of collar by dogs in a public place (Article 6), the seizure of stray dogs (Article 7) and the worrying of livestock by dogs (Article 9). The Parishes have a contract with the JSPCA for the collection and housing of stray dogs. The figures include dogs taken direct to the JSPCA as well as those collected by the JSPCA on the authorisation of the Duty Centenier so the specific figures are not available.

(c) The contract provides for the JSPCA to collect from the dog owner the collection and housing costs incurred prior to releasing the dog so these figures are not held by the Parishes. The figures shown below are the retainer paid by each Parish for the contract with the JSPCA.

Parish	(a)	(c)	(d)
St Brelade	2019 / 2020 - £7,820 2020 / 2021 - £16,670 2021 / 2022 - £16,045 2022 / 2023 - £15,371 2023 / 2024 - £14,742	2019/2020 - £1,309 2020/2021 - £1,047 2021/2022 - £982 2022/2023 - £1,039 2023/2024 - £1,023	Nil
St Clement	2019/2020 - £5,677* 2020/2021 - £12,111* 2021/2022 - £13,445 2022/2023 - £13,910 2023/2024 - £11,351 * change in accounting system so detailed info n/a, net after all expense	2019/2020 - £1,050 2020/2021 - £839 2021/2022 - £843 2022/2023 - £858 2023/2024 - £881	2022/2023 - £242
Grouville	2019/2020 - £2,895 2020/2021 - £6,442 2021/2022 - £7,142 2022/2023 - £7,470 2023/2024 -	2019/2020 - £523 2020/2021 - £418 2021/2022 - £472 2022/2023 - £571 2023/2024 - £536	No costs incurred for signage (information on a page on the Parish website about dog licences).
St Helier	2019 / 2020 - £8,570 2020 / 2021 - £15,550 2021 / 2022 - £16,850 2022 / 2023 - £14,383 2023 / 2024 - £19,051	2019/2020 - £1,524 2020/2021 - £1,220 2021/2022 - £1,110 2022/2023 - £1,157 2023/2024 - £1,105	Approx. 18 dog signs around the parks, to replace/renew would cost c. £50 per sign, or £70 if replacement pole & fixings are required.
St John	2019 / 2020 - £2,450 2020 / 2021 - £5,465 2021 / 2022 - £4,179 2022 / 2023 - £4,421 2023 / 2024 - £4,467	2019/2020 - £380 2020/2021 - £305 2021/2022 - £321 2022/2023 - £314 2023/2024 - £353	Nil
St Lawrence	2019 / 2020 - £3,090 2020 / 2021 - £3,180 2021 / 2022 - £6,490 2022 / 2023 - £5,890 2023 / 2024 - £7,600	2019/2020 - £356 2020/2021 - £285 2021/2022 - £313 2022/2023 - £334 2023/2024 - £312	In house production of signage at minimal cost.
St Martin	2020 £2,936 2021 £6,308 2022 £6,215 2023 £6,679 2024 £6,720	2019/2020 - £590 2020/2021 - £472 2021/2022 - £444 2022/2023 - £453 2023/2024 - £454	Nil
St Mary	2019 / 2020 - £1,690 2020 / 2021 - £3,070 2021 / 2022 - £3,221 2022 / 2023 - £3,161	2019/2020 - £257 2020/2021 - £206 2021/2022 - £209 2022/2023 - £210	Nil

	2023 / 2024 - £2,760	2023/2024 - £214	
St Ouen	30.04.20 - £3,173 30.04.21 - £6,345 30.04.22 - £6,610 30.04.23 - £7,090 30.04.24 - £6,700	2019/2020 - £658 2020/2021 - £526 2021/2022 - £506 2022/2023 - £483 2023/2024 - £517	Nil
St Peter	2019-2020 £3,805 2020-2021 £7,590 2021-2022 £6,650 2022 -2023 £7,670 2023-2024 £7,900	2019/2020 - £679 2020/2021 - £543 2021/2022 - £539 2022/2023 - £565 2023/2024 - £570	In house minimal cost Purchased 4 x dog signs from the States sign dept. 11/05/2022 for £148 (asking not to let dogs poo)
St Saviour	2019 / 2020 - £7,350 2020 / 2021 - £14,210 2021 / 2022 - £14,062 2022 / 2023 - £13,930 2023 / 2024 - £14,430	2019/2020 - £1,005 2020/2021 - £804 2021/2022 - £921 2022/2023 - £800 2023/2024 - £1,035	Nil
Trinity	2020 - £2,720 2021 - £4,955 2022 - £4,920 2023 - £5,930 2024 - £5,110	2019/2020 - £419 2020/2021 - £335 2021/2022 - £340 2022/2023 - £341 2023/2024 - £375	No costs were incurred.

2.18 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding traffic calming measures on Rue des Prés in St Saviour (WQ.285/2024)

Question

Further to requests for traffic calming measures on Rue des Prés in St Saviour over the last two years, and his meeting with residents in April 2024, will the Minister –

- (a) provide an update on what progress, if any, is being made on these measures;
- (b) advise when residents can expect traffic calming measures to be installed;
- (c) confirm what traffic monitoring, besides that undertaken by the Parish, has been carried out by the Department for Infrastructure in this area in the last 5 years, and the subsequent outcomes of any such monitoring; and
- (d) advise the estimated cost for implementing on Rue des Prés –
 - (i) speed bumps; and
 - (ii) road narrowing (similar to work recently undertaken next to Trinity school)?

Answer

- a. The main entrance to Plat Douet School is on Plat Douet Road. Many of the school travel issues are linked to ad-hoc parking on this road. The section of La Rue des Pres in question has school warning signs in place with flashing lights (wig-wags) which operate during school drop off and pick up times. These warning signs act to indicate the presence of parents and young children. There is a traffic signal controlled pedestrian crossing point, providing safe and direct access to the school grounds from the footway on the southeast side of the road. The road also has good street lighting provision designed to keep the road safe during the hours of

darkness. The Department for Infrastructure and Environment (“I&E”) have made an assessment of the background issues and road traffic accident data on Rue des Prés and have not identified an established collision problem. While I&E wish to support active travel to schools, no effective regulatory or highway changes have been identified that would further improve the utility of the road, noting that the road and its footways are physically constrained.

- b. I&E believe that the narrowness of Rue des Prés, especially from Le Clos de la Molleterie southward is having a suppressing effect on traffic speeds. With regard to the introduction of traffic calming measures, such as speed humps or a raised table crossing, I&E believe that such measures would not reduce traffic speeds from those currently recorded without very adverse profiling and would be at odds with the volume and nature of traffic using the road (including HGVs, etc.). The introduction of a ‘give and take’ road narrowing scheme (similar to the Trinity School trial) would be impractical due to higher traffic volumes using Rue des Prés.
- c. The two most recent 7-day speed surveys carried out by I&E on Rue des Prés were by the entrance to Milady Farm during November 2023 and by Le Pre de Talbot (near the current pedestrian crossing site) during November 2023. Both surveys show good speed compliance. Analysis of the survey adjacent to Le Pre de Talbot shows that traffic speeds are, on average, no higher than 22mph for most of the traffic (85%), indicating that motorists are driving at appropriate speeds to match the road conditions with a narrow carriageway width and school pedestrians present on the footways. In light of this result, it is assessed that there is no notable benefit in changing the speed limit.
- d. Estimated costs:
 - i. The introduction of speed humps or a raised crossing table would cost in the region of £5000 to £30,000 per item.
 - ii. The introduction of a ‘give and take’ road narrowing scheme (such as Trinity School trial) with Zebra crossing would cost up to £250,000.

All schemes must be cost benefit weighed against other schemes. I&E currently have a number of school related projects in pre-feasibility and development stage that require funding.

I&E believes that the implementation of the Canning Court redevelopment ([P/2023/0266](#)) between the School and Waitrose will create an alternative walking route to the school from the Waitrose car park, reducing demand on Rue des Prés.

2.19 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Chair of the Comité des Connétables regarding allotment gardens (WQ.286/2024)

Question

In relation to allotment gardens, will the Chair provide the following information for each Parish –

- (a) the number of allotments available and the number being used;
- (b) the total surface area of all allotments;
- (c) whether they are organised privately or by the Parish, and the process used to assign allotments; and

(d) confirm what plans, if any, exist to increase the availability of allotments and the timeline for these plans?

Answer

Parish	
St Brelade	
(a)	35 allotments available and being used.
(b)	Surface area of all allotments approx. 3 verges.
(c)	Administered by Site Committee under JALGA (Jersey Allotments & Leisure Gardening Association), allotments are assigned from the waiting list.
(d)	None at present, demand not as strong as initially considered.
St Clement	
(a)	4 allotments available through the parish only, all in use.
(b)	286 m ²
(c)	Private allotments rented by a parish trust for the benefit of parishioners who have no outside space or do not have the means to rent themselves. Availability is advertised through the parish magazine and website and allocated by the Connétable.
(d)	The Parish is first on the waiting list should more allotments become available and they will be taken on as soon as possible.
Grouville	
	The Parish of Grouville does not own any allotments, nor does it lease land for allotments to be run privately.
St Helier	
(a)	64 allotments, all in use with a waiting list of two to three years.
(b)	Total surface area 5,403 sq.m.
(c)	The site is administered by the Clos du Hugh allotment association committee, which is a limited company originally set up by JALGA (Jersey Allotments & Leisure Gardening Association). The waiting list is managed by the allotment committee secretary on a strictly first come first served basis to <i>bona fide</i> St Helier residents.
(d)	The Allotment Committee is hoping for more land to be made available but is not actively engaging with a search. The Parish is aware of the need for more allotments but currently has no plans in place to increase the availability.
St John	
	The Parish does not run any allotments but does lease a field to a Company who administer allotments in accordance with the terms of their lease.
St Lawrence	
	The Parish does not own any land that is provided for allotments.
St Martin	
	The Parish is not aware of any allotment schemes in the Parish and has no plans to provide any in the immediate future.

St Mary	
	The Parish has no allotments neither does it have any knowledge of how any privately operated allotments are organised, if they exist. There are no current plans to provide allotments.
St Ouen	
	The Parish does not provide any allotments.
St Peter	
	The Parish does not currently provide any allotments. Subject to Planning Permission the Parish is due to make up to 6 new allotments available in 2025.
St Saviour	
	The Parish is in the early stages of progressing plans to provide allotments in the future but is not able to provide a timeline as these are only initial discussions.
Trinity	
	The Parish does not have any allotment gardens and is not aware of any being organised on a private basis.

2.20 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for the Environment regarding residential developments (WQ.287/2024)

Question

Further to the decrease in the rate of home completions from 2012 to 2021 compared to the previous ten years as referenced in the [Jersey's Fiscal Policy Panel Housing Market Review](#) (Pg.4), will the Minister advise the following for the period 2021 to date –

- (a) the total number of residential developments granted permission and the current status of those developments (completed, in progress, or not started); and, if any of the developments have not started, advise the reasons, if known; and
- (b) how the numbers in (a) compare with the target of 800 homes per year as agreed in the Bridging Island Plan 2022 to 2025?

Answer

The net increase in new residential developments granted permission in 2022 and 2023 is detailed below. The information is not held for 2021 and cannot be collated in the time available.

2022 = 289 granted permissions

2023 = 615 granted permissions

To date, in 2024, 396 new dwellings have been granted permission. A further 248 dwellings have been provisionally approved, subject to the finalisation of Planning Obligation Agreements.

In 2024, 108 Building Byelaws commencement notifications were issued for new dwellings, and 373 new dwellings had a completion certificate issued under Building Byelaws.

The department does not hold information on why developments with planning consent have not commenced.

The data before 2022 contains inconsistencies, which means that the final figures for granted planning permissions, completions and commencement for new homes cannot be reliably collated in the time available for responding to this written question.

2.21 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding Jersey's Cannabis Industry (WQ.288/2024)

Question

In respect of Jersey's Cannabis Industry ('the Industry'), will the Minister advise –

- (a) what plans, if any, exist to develop a strategy for the Industry;
- (b) the annual amount of funding, if any, allocated to and spent on supporting the Industry since 2022 and the amount proposed for 2025;
- (c) the estimated annual revenue of the Industry to the Island since 2022 to date;
- (d) what key benefits to the Island were agreed by the Government when the development of the Industry started, and what evidence the Government holds that these benefits are being delivered;
- (e) what aspects of the Industry, in terms of policy and legislation, fall under the remit of other Ministers; and
- (f) how much Cannabis is grown in Jersey, how much, if any, of it is prescribed locally and how much is exported?

Answer

a) Owing to resource constraints, there are no plans to develop a strategy for the cannabis industry at this time. However, in line with good practice and owing to a change in personnel, I have asked officers in the Department of Economy to carry out an economic programmes review, from first principles, during quarter 4.

b) Since 2022 officer time has been used to establish the MOU with the UK Home Office and engage and support industry. Independent advice and expertise has also been provided through consultancy services and the total spend on this to date is estimated at £100,000.

Regulatory activity within the Department for Health and Community Services to issue licenses is undertaken by the Chief Pharmacist however it is not possible to separate these costs incurred from the rest of the Chief Pharmacist's role.

The Economy Department is also providing £100,000 for 2024 and £300,000 for 2025 to support the regulation of the industry which is administered by the Chief Pharmacist.

c) & d) The objective of the then Government in seeking to foster a medicinal cannabis industry was to generate economic growth and attract inward investment.

Access to data on revenue may be limited due to its commercial nature though available data will be collated and assessed as part of the economic programmes review later this year.

e) Whilst economic development and export policy sits with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. Matters relating to the licensing of cannabis cultivation, the management of cannabis as a controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Law (1978) and as a medicinal product under the Medicines Law 1995 rest with the Minister for Health and Social Services. Additional responsibilities for policing and planning fall to the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs and Minister for Environment respectively.

- f) No-one in Jersey currently holds a manufacturing licence to manufacture a medicinal product in a final dosage form. This means that no cannabis cultivated on Island will be able to be directly supplied to pharmacies to dispense to patients who have been prescribed a CBPM locally. However, some product is exported for further processing by manufacturers – and this product may then be imported back to Jersey – but there is no way to identify how much this is.

It has not been possible to collate data on the total quantity of cannabis in the time allocated due to the complex way this data are measured. It is held in different forms including the number of plants, wet weight, dry weight produced, amount destroyed, and the purpose of cultivation. I have asked officers to review the available data to explore the best way to quantify the island's total cannabis production.

2.22 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding new housing developments built next to growers, horticulturalists, glasshouses and small business parks (WQ.289/2024)

Question

In relation to new housing developments built next to growers, horticulturalists, glasshouses and small business parks in the last 15 years, will the Minister advise –

- (a) the total number of noise complaints received by his department from house owners or tenants;
- (b) what steps, if any, were required to mitigate complaints that were upheld, in particular in relation to businesses; and
- (c) how many, if any, of these businesses have ceased trading?

Answer

- a. Environmental and Consumer Protection within the Regulation Directorate have recorded two noise complaints from owner or tenants of properties built in the last 15 years next to growers, horticulturalists and small business parks.
- b. The directorate has a live investigation into potential noise nuisance relating to these types of complaints. As previously informed, details relating to live cases cannot be disclosed because it could prejudice the investigation.
- c. Information on whether businesses have ceased trading is not recorded or held by the directorate.

2.23 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Dementia strategy for Jersey (WQ.290/2024)

Question

Further to the publication of [Strong Foundations: A dementia strategy for Jersey](#) on 28th June 2024 and the [Dementia strategy for Jersey, Implementation plan for Year 1](#), will the Minister advise –

- (a) how, and to what extent, his department is working with stakeholders;
- (b) the draft budget for implementing the strategy in 2025; and
- (c) the total funding required to fully implement the strategy, broken down between Government funding, and funding and resources which will be delivered by stakeholders?

Answer

- (a) The implementation of the strategy is overseen by a small steering group, which along with HCS officers has representatives from CLS, the charitable sector, a service user and carers. This work is led by a dedicated programme lead, who also coordinates the various pieces of work that are set out in the implementation plan (some of which are led by people from outside HCS). Partnership working with stakeholders is an inherent requirement of the plan, and of some of the actions (as described in the implementation plan).

Whilst work has commenced against a number of the actions, there has also been some delays in this work in recent weeks due to unplanned absence, but this has been identified and is being addressed. Significant work has been undertaken in reducing the delay in diagnosis for memory assessment, and this target has already been achieved.

- (b) The draft budget for 2025 is not yet finalised – this will be done as part of HCS budget setting for 2025 - and a total funding budget has not been developed. The agreed approach was to set out and publish the plan for year 1, clearly identifying the financial requirements and then building upon this as the work plan develops.
- (c) As I stated in my ministerial foreword to the [Strong Foundations: A Dementia Strategy for Jersey](#) published on 28 June 2024:

With regard to the longer term, I am committed to increasing investment in Public Health initiatives to prevent ill health across a wide range of ailments, including dementia. This is work in progress and would be subject to consideration by Council of Ministers and the wider Assembly. It is my sincere hope that this would result in the delivery of any areas of the strategy that are currently unfunded.

I cannot provide the total funding required, at this time, to fully implement the strategy, but I remain fully committed to identifying and securing the funding necessary to deliver the whole strategy at the earliest opportunity

2.24 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding research into the impact on soil health, food resilience and existing agricultural produce if plans for farming are encouraged through the agricultural loans scheme (WQ.291/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise whether any research has been undertaken into the impact on soil health, food resilience and existing agricultural produce if plans for farming are encouraged through the agricultural loans scheme, and if not, why not?

Answer

Research was undertaken earlier this year into the impact on soil health, food resilience and existing agricultural produce and was commissioned by the Department for the Economy, the results of which will be published in a food resilience report in November.

The report will inform future policy decisions by identifying challenges to productivity and resilience across the local food system.

This report also offers a series of recommendations to improve local food system functionality by implementing appropriate regulations that enable resilience, collaborating better within Government, influencing the private sector, investing in infrastructure, developing innovative partnerships,

including multiple perspectives within the industry, and using a systems approach in decision-making.

2.25 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the proposed Living Wage transitional support fund (WQ.292/2024)

Question

In respect of the proposed Living Wage transitional support fund, will the Minister advise –

- (a) why the Social Security fund was chosen as the source of the funds, rather than general tax revenues;
- (b) what calculations support the statement in the draft Government Plan 2025-2028 that “This temporary adjustment is not considered to have any long-term impact on the health of the Social Security fund”; and
- (c) at what threshold a reduction in the grant to the Social Security fund would have a long-term impact on the ability of the Social Security fund to provide the support it is set up to deliver?

Answer

In developing the Budget 2025 to 2028, the Council of Ministers carefully considered the overall approach to delivering balanced public finances, including the funding of CSP priorities (including the transition to the Living wage), existing services and a deliverable capital programme.

It was identified that as Business support during the transition to a Living Wage required temporary and time bounded funding, the States Grant paid into the Social Security Fund out of general taxation could be considered.

The Budget is tightly balanced, with no capacity in the Consolidated Fund in the latter years of the plan. Reprioritising a small part of the States Grant to the Fund on a temporary basis was chosen, particularly given the impact on employers and employees of the move to a Living Wage. The States Grant formula is calculated with reference to actual supplementation with a two-year lag, and so does not take into account any reduction in supplementation as a result of the move to the living wage.

The value of the States Grant paid into the Social Security Fund will increase from £77m in 2024 to £80m in 2025, and then return to its full, formula value from 2027 (which will be extrapolated from 2025 actual supplementation).

The long-term position of the Social Security Fund is considered in the regular [Actuarial Review](#). The latest review concluded that “*the Fund remains in good health and is expected to be able to pay benefits out for several decades under a range of scenarios considered*”. The combined value of the Social Security Fund and Social Security (Reserve) Fund stands at £2.3 billion at the end of 2023, estimated to increase to £2.5 billion by 2025, the proposed reduction represents less than 1% of the funds value. No formal calculations were carried out, as £20 million is clearly immaterial to the fund on the actuarial timescales used.

The Long-term projections for the fund are heavily reliant on actuarial assumptions, and therefore it is difficult to determine a single threshold – the impact would need to be considered in balance. However, it is important to note that temporary reductions such as the one proposed have a much smaller impact than permanent changes to the Grant formula.

2.26 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding the West of Island Master plan (WQ.293/2024)

Question

Further to the response to Oral Question 155/2024, will the Minister advise –

- (a) when and why work on the West of Island Master plan was removed from the work programme;
- (b) what, if anything, has replaced it;
- (c) when he considers work on the West of Island Master plan will commence, further to the response to [Written Question 40/2024](#);
- (d) the reasons behind the delay in the St. Brelade's Bay Improvement Plan and when it will now be delivered; and
- (e) the basis for the lack of communication to the elected representatives of St. Brelade for the aforementioned delay?

Answer

- (1) The development of a west of island planning framework remains part of the work programme to be undertaken as part of the preparatory work to inform the next island plan review.

Its commencement and progression is, and has always been, subject to the availability and capacity of resources for it to be undertaken.

- (2) There are essentially three current work programmes associated with the maintenance and development of the island's planning policy framework. These can be summarised as:
 - implementation of the bridging Island Plan (the review of existing and the development of new supplementary planning guidance);
 - reviewing the island plan review process and the form of the island plan; and
 - preparation of a new evidence base to inform the next island plan.

Work is being undertaken to progress all three of these work programmes within available capacity and resources.

In addition, other priorities have arisen as a result of decisions of the Assembly, which have impacted the progression of these work programmes. This includes the priority afforded to the reform of the planning service which is identified as one of the Government's 13 strategic priorities.

- (3) There is a range of work that is required to be undertaken to inform the preparation of the next island Plan. Work is underway to progress elements of this, as resources allow.

It is not currently possible to provide a definitive programme for the commencement and progression of the development of a west of island planning framework. This will be dependent upon the availability and capacity of resources for it to be undertaken, relative to other priorities.

Progression of this work may also be affected by the Government's objective to curb growth in public sector spending and to rely less on consultants.

- (4) Bridging Island Plan Proposal 18 – St Brelade’s Bay improvement plan states that the Minister for the Environment will develop such a plan by December 2023.

A brief for this work was agreed by the Minister, in consultation with elected parish representatives, in August 2023, with a view to its delivery by the end of that year.

Progression of the work was, however, rescheduled to enable consultation with all stakeholders with an interest in St Brelade’s Bay, including visitors and other non-residents, over the summer and shoulder months. With the agreement of the elected parish representatives the timetable for the work to be undertaken was rescheduled to allow completion of the project in 2024.

Since that time, and in accord with the new Government’s priorities, resources have been focused elsewhere, as set out above, and this work remains to be progressed.

Future progression of this work may also be affected by the Government’s objective to curb growth in public sector spending and to rely less on consultants.

- (5) As stated at (d), the initial reprogramming of the work was the subject of engagement and agreement of elected representatives.

The subsequent reprioritisation of the work was communicated to the Connétable of St Brelade, on the basis that he had sponsored an amendment ([\(P36/2021\) – eighty-sixth amendment](#)) to the bridging Island Plan relating to the proposal to develop the St Brelade’s Bay improvement plan; and also to Deputy Scott, given her consistent and close interest in the area.

2.27 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding MOT-style vehicle inspections (WQ.294/2024)

Question

In relation to MOT style vehicle inspections, will the Minister advise –

- (a) which vehicles are subject to these tests and the rationale in relation to requirement or exemption for each type of vehicle;
- (b) any policy or framework relating to these inspections;
- (c) what assessment he has undertaken, if any, that confirms the current system of inspections is achieving positive outcomes;
- (d) whether he has given any consideration to the system being discriminatory, in targeting certain vehicles over others; and
- (e) whether he is considering ending the scheme or extending it to include more vehicles?”

Answer

- a. DVS currently undertakes the periodic inspection of public service and oversized vehicles and also the annual inspection of all commercial vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, which began in 2018.

In April 2019, DVS began the Periodic Technical Inspection of mopeds, light motorcycles and minibuses.

Extending vehicle inspections to all remaining vehicles was the subject of an appraisal of options which was concluded in October 2021. There remains considerable work to extend inspections to all remaining vehicles and, whilst this is planned, there are no current timescales for achieving this ahead of 31st March 2028.

The rationale for the inspection of all vehicles is that of public safety. Jersey's Road Safety Review, which was adopted by the Assembly in December 2021, had at its core the 'Safe System' approach to Road Safety. Periodic vehicle inspections are crucial to making the 'Safe Vehicles' aspect of this system effective.

In addition to road safety, the rationale also includes the requirement to meet the provisions of the United Nations' Vienna Convention on Road Traffic 1968, which was extended to Jersey in March 2019 following approval by the States Assembly.

- b. The policy position was derived from the Island becoming a signatory to the United Nations' Vienna Convention on Road Traffic 1968, which enabled free circulation of Jersey drivers in Europe post-BREXIT.

To comply with its terms, it was always clear that domestic legislation would have to incorporate the inspection of all Jersey registered vehicles, regardless of whether they travel internationally.

In November 2018, the States Assembly approved enabling legislation to establish vehicle inspections through an amendment to the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956.

In December 2018, the Minister for Infrastructure made the Road Traffic (Periodic Technical Inspections – General Provisions) (Jersey) Order 2018, setting out the operation of the PTI regime in more detail.

In terms of the scope of the technical inspections, this is determined within the Vienna Convention, but would cover the standard items included within a UK MOT.

- c. A number of mopeds, light motorcycles and minibuses do not pass the inspection, and as such these vehicles are found to be unroadworthy. This justifies carrying out these inspections from a road safety perspective.
- d. The system is not regarded as discriminatory. The current inspection regime on commercial and public service vehicles is rightly focused on those vehicles that present the most risk to the public and where good technical condition is an important factor.

The inspection of mopeds, light motorcycles and minibuses was bought in as an early step as these represent vulnerable road users and DVS was able to accommodate these inspections within its existing test centre. A high percentage of vehicles inspected by DVS as a result of defect reports, road checks or police impounds were either mopeds or light bikes, therefore it was decided this would be the next phase of inspections.

To inspect all remaining vehicles will require the implementation of arrangements to inspect a large number of vehicles per annum. There have been practical difficulties in implementing these arrangements which still need to be overcome. Recently, the date in the Periodic Technical Inspections Order to begin these inspections was updated to on or before 31st March 2028.

- e. The current intention is to implement the scheme as set out in the legislation approved by the States Assembly in 2019. This would see the scheme being extended to cover all the remaining vehicles as identified within the answer to part a, above.

2.28 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding GCSE results for 2024 for modern languages (WQ.295/2024)

Question

Will the Minister publish a breakdown of GCSE results for 2024 for all modern languages, as well as for English as a foreign language, if available, by school, including fee paying and selective schools; and will he further provide a breakdown of the total number of students for each school for 2024, and the number and percentage of those in each school who took an additional language (other than English)?

Answer

The table below summarises results by school for all modern languages. Numbers below 10 have had disclosure controls applied to protect personal data.

School Name	Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1	Grade U	Total
Grainville	<10	<10	14	<10	14	11	<10	<10	<10	<10	74
Haute Vallée	<10	12	<10	<10	12	<10	<10	0	<10	<10	54
Hautlieu	14	12	20	18	23	18	14	<10	<10	0	128
Jersey College for Girls	19	34	27	21	26	<10	<10	0	0	0	135
Le Rocquier	<10	15	13	11	14	<10	<10	0	0	<10	66
Les Quennevais	<10	13	<10	<10	18	<10	<10	0	0	0	56
Victoria College	<10	<10	<10	11	16	<10	<10	0	0	0	55

Academic Year	School Name	Number of Year 11 pupils	Number of pupils with ML results	Number of ML results	% of pupils with ML results
2023/2024	Grainville	131	53	74	40.5%
	Haute Vallée	115	41	54	35.7%
	Hautlieu	128	110	128	85.9%
	Jersey College for Girls	111	101	135	91.0%
	Le Rocquier	147	54	66	36.7%
	Les Quennevais	146	47	56	32.2%
	Victoria College	100	47	55	47.0%
	Total	878	453	568	51.6%

2.29 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Social Security regarding an individual’s social security contributions allocations (WQ.296/2024)

Question

Will the Minister provide a breakdown of where an individual’s social security contributions are allocated, by percentage, including the amount that goes into the States pension fund out of which social security pensions are paid?

Answer

The Social Security Fund is the fund that pays social security pensions. There is not a separate pension fund contained within the Social Security Fund.

The percentage allocations of an individual's Social Security contributions are established under the Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974 and are set out in paragraph 3 of schedule 1A and paragraph 3 of schedule 1B. The percentages are as follows:

Class 1: (working age employee)

0.8% of the person's earnings that do not exceed the standard monthly earnings limit, allocated to the Health Insurance Fund; and

5.2% of the person's earnings that do not exceed the standard monthly earnings limit allocated to the Social Security Fund.

In addition to the contribution paid by the employee, contributions are also made by the employer and are allocated as follows:

1.2% of the employee's earnings that do not exceed the standard monthly earnings limit, allocated to the Health Insurance Fund;

5.3% of the employee's earnings that do not exceed the standard monthly earnings limit allocated to the Social Security Fund.

2.5% of the employee's earnings that exceed the standard monthly earnings limit but do not exceed the upper monthly earnings limit allocated to the Social Security Fund.

Class 2 (working age individuals who are not employed)

2% of the person's earnings that do not exceed the standard monthly earnings limit, allocated to the Health Insurance Fund;

10.5% of the person's earnings that do not exceed the standard monthly earnings limit allocated to the Social Security Fund.

2.5% of the person's earnings that exceed the standard monthly earnings limit but do not exceed the upper monthly earnings limit allocated to the Social Security Fund.

The earnings limits for 2024 are:

- standard monthly earnings limit: £5,450
- upper monthly earnings limit: £24,850

2.30 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the cost of Operation Nectar and Operation Spire (WQ.297/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise the total cost to the Government of Jersey of the following –

- (a) Operation Nectar, in regard to the sinking of the L'Ecume II;
- (b) Operation Spire, in regard to the explosion at Haut du Mont ; and

will she further advise whether there are any outstanding costs associated with the above Operations anticipated over the coming year?

Answer

The table below details the spend incurred from commencement of the Government of Jersey response to the respective response to the incident to date.

	Cost incurred to Date (being 31 Aug 2024) £'000	Budget remaining 2024 £'000
Operation Nectar	2,889	798
Operation Spire	11,688	1,869

The budget for future spend will cover the following:

Operation Nectar:

- Future costs for the Department for the Economy include the ongoing storage of the wreck and any previously unidentified costs during this period including currently unknown costs relating to the future disposal of the wreck
- Future costs for the States of Jersey Police include resourcing for the ongoing Police investigation, including travel and accommodation, forensics and other experts.

Operation Spire:

- Future costs for the States of Jersey Police include resourcing for the ongoing Police investigation, including travel and accommodation, forensics and other experts. Costs are subject to potential charges.

2.31 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the cost of maintenance of the Havre des Pas pool (WQ.298/2024)

Question

Further to his response to Oral Question 104/2024, will the Minister advise the amount his department has spent on the maintenance of the Havre des Pas pool for each year from 2005 to date?

Answer

Following the change in accounting software, Jersey Property Holdings cannot go further back than 2016, however, the recorded figures are as set out in the table below.

2016	£128,000
2017	£168,000
2018	£114,600
2019	£18,906
2020	£60,714
2021	£108,800
2022	£136,265
2023	£99,373
2024	£142,752

2.32 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the Jersey Premium schools and colleges funding programme (WQ.299/2024)

Question

In relation to the Jersey Premium schools and colleges funding programme, will the Minister advise

—

- (a) how many pupils were in receipt of funding for each of the last five years, broken down into –
- (i) pupils living in eligible Income Support households;
 - (ii) pupils living in eligible ‘Registered’ households who have lived in the Island for less than five years who would otherwise be eligible for Income Support;
 - (iii) pupils who are or have ever been Looked After Children;
 - (iv) pupils with a parent/guardian serving in the Jersey Field Squadron; and
 - (v) pupils eligible under exceptional circumstances;
- (b) how many pupils are expected to receive funding this year;
- (c) the amount of funding allocated per pupil for each of the last five years;
- (d) whether the total funding allocated to Jersey Premium increases annually with inflation; and
- (e) what plans, if any, he has to uplift the Jersey Premium allocation in 2025, in addition to any inflation increase.

Will he further advise how many pupils in receipt of Jersey Premium are eligible for free school meals and how many receive free school meals?

Answer

- (a) Jersey Premium pupil numbers are provided below.

Academic year	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Pupils in receipt of Jersey Premium funding	2843	3239	3259	3223	3171

Numbers within each category have been rounded up to the nearest ten to avoid disclosing identifiable information, as the dataset includes some small numbers.

JP Category	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Pupils living in eligible Income Support households	2670	3060	3080	3040	3020
Pupils living in eligible ‘Registered’ households who have lived in the Island for less than five years who would otherwise be eligible for Income Support	70	70	50	30	20
Pupils who are or have ever been Looked After Children;	120	120	130	160	140
Pupils with a parent/guardian serving in the Jersey Field Squadron	0	0	10	10	10
Pupils eligible under exceptional circumstances	0	0	0	0	0

(b) This information is not available until the Education Department have completed the termly pupil census, at which point we will be in a position to confirm which of the eligible pupils attend each setting. Schools receive the funding in January each year.

(c) The rates used since 2017 are provided below with 24/25 UK rates for comparison.

UK 2024/25	Rates	2017 Rates	2018 Rates	2019 Rates	2020 Rates	2021 Rates	2022 Rates	2023 Rates	2024 Rates
1,480	Primary	£985	£750	£1,005	£1,060	£1,150	£1,345	£1,370	£1,490
1,050	Secondary (inc post 16)	£635	£480	£645	£680	£725	£955	£975	£1,060
2,570	CLA	£1,270	£960	£2,000	£2,300	£2,300	£2,345	£2,410	£2,595
2,570	Previously CLA				£1,500	£1,700	£2,345	£2,410	£2,595
340	Service Children						£310	£310	£345

(d) The amount of budget for Jersey Premium increases in line with pay inflation.

Approximately 75% of the JP budget is staffing and 25% non-staffing, therefore 75% of the budget is increased. The remaining 25% is increased based on non-pay inflation allocated by Treasury. The 2024 JP Budget is £4,778,000.

(e) For 2025 I will ensure an inflationary uplift as per the inflation process detailed in part (d) and as pay awards for 2025 will be 1% above RPI, I am confident the overall budget will remain sufficient to deliver appropriate benefits.

For 2026 I will be assessing any benefits or disbenefits of transferring the JP budget to Annually Managed Expenditure and if appropriate I will liaise with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to request that Jersey Premium is transferred to AME.

(f) The Department does not hold this data. Jersey Premium is not the criterion for eligibility for Free School Meals.

2.33 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the facilities available in Government funded parks and public toilets (WQ.300/2024)

Question

Will the Minister detail the facilities available, broken down by Parish, for all Government funded parks and public toilets, and the total costs to provide these facilities, including maintenance and capital costs?

Answer

Public Toilets

The table below shows a list of public toilets by name and Parish. The maintenance costs shown are for 2024 YTD and show planned preventative maintenance, reactive maintenance and capital costs relating to the toilets. The annual value of the cleaning contracts is also shown.

Parish / Facility

Grouville

Longbeach (Gorey Common) Car Park (58) & Public Toilets

St Brelade

Corbiere Public Toilets

Cotil du Grouin Public Toilets

La Haule Public Toilets

Le Braye Public Toilets

Les Creux Public Toilets

Midbay Public Toilets

Ouaisne Common Car Park (19) and Public Toilets

Red Houses Public Toilets

St Aubin's Promenade Cafe and Public Toilets

St Brelade's Bay Promenade (Underground) Public Toilets

Woodford Public Toilets

St Clement

Green Island Public Toilets

La Mare Public Toilets

Le Hocq Car Park (62) and Public Toilets

Millard's Corner Public Toilets

St Helier

First Tower Public Toilets

Liberation Station Transportation Centre & Public Toilets

Millennium Town Park Public Toilets

Minden Place Car Park Public Toilets

Patriotic Street Car Park Public Toilets

Pier Road Car Park Public Toilets

Public Markets Public Toilets

Sand Street Car Park Public Toilets

Snow Hill Grassed Land, Taxi Rank, JEC SS 40 & Public Toilets

West Park Promenade Public Toilets

St John

Bonne Nuit Public Toilets and Bonne Nuit STW

St Lawrence

Bel Royal Public Toilets

Coronation Park Public Toilets

Millbrook Public Toilets

St Martin

Anne Port Public Toilets and Anne Port Toilets SPS

Archirondel Public Toilets and Archirondel Toilets SPS

Gorey House Public Toilets

St Ouen

Greve de Lecq Public Toilets and Greve de Lecq 1 SPS

Les Laveurs Public Toilets

Plemont Bay Public Toilets

St Peter

Beaumont (Gunsite) Public Toilets

St Saviour

Howard Davis Park Public Toilets

Le Dicq Public Toilets

Trinity

Bouley Bay Public Toilets

(*) SPS = Sewage Pumping Station STW = Sewage Treatment Works

Maintenance Costs (2024 costs to date)	£
Planned Preventative	£5,542
Reactive	£56,956
Projects / Refurbishments	£39,152
	£101,650
Operating Costs	
Cleaning Contracts (annual contract value)	£261,741

Public Parks

Parks including those scheduled under the Policing of Parks (Jersey) Regulations 2005 are as follows:

Parish / Facility Description	Admin Dept
Grouville	
Longbeach Play Area	I&E P&G
St Brelade	
Beauport Headland	I&E Env
Le Cotil de Grouin	I&E Env
Les Creux Millennium Country Park	I&E Property
Les Quennevais Playing Fields	I&E Sport
Noirmont	I&E Env
Ouaisne	I&E Env
Portelet	I&E Env
Seafront Gardens St Brelade's Bay	I&E P&G
Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Park	I&E P&G
The Corbiere Walk inc Pont Marquet Country Park	I&E P&G
St Clement	
FB Playing Fields	I&E Sport
St Helier	
Glacis Field	I&E Sport
Liberation Square	I&E Infrastructure
Millennium Town Park	I&E P&G
South Hill / Mount Bingham	I&E P&G
Springfield Sports Ground	I&E Sport
St John	
Public Land on La Route du Nord	I&E Env
Sorel Headland	I&E Env
St Lawrence	
Coronation Park	I&E P&G
St Martin	
Castle Green Gardens	I&E P&G
Gorey Gardens and Walks	I&E P&G

St Ouen	
Les Landes	I&E Env
St Peter	
Beaumont Perquage	I&E P&G
St Saviour	
Grainville Playing Fields	I&E Sport
Howard Davis Park	I&E P&G
Trinity	
La Reste du Cotil des Vaux - Egypte	I&E Env
Le Parc de la Petite Falaize	I&E Env
Multi	
Les Mielles	I&E Env
Promenade and Gardens - St Helier to St Aubin	I&E P&G

Costs of running such facilities, where separably identifiable, are as follows:

	2024 Budget
I&E Inf. Parks & Gardens	£1.77 m
I&E Env. Rangers / land management / paths	£0.29 m
I&E Inf. Sport	costs not separately identified

In addition, capital works included in the programme for 2024 include £0.69 m for parks improvements including play equipment, security, irrigation and capital maintenance.

2.34 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding a breakdown of the allocation of the £6.7 million funding for P.74/2023 (Increase in revenue expenditure for agriculture and fisheries) (WQ.301/2024)

Question

Further to [P.74/2023](#) (Increase in revenue expenditure for agriculture and fisheries), as amended, will the Minister provide a breakdown of the allocation of the £6.7 million funding allocated in 2024 identifying –

- (a) each organisation which received funding;
- (b) for what purpose each organisation received funding;
- (c) what performance indicators, if any, are attached to each organisation receiving funding;
- (d) how funding spend is monitored within these organisations; and
- (e) whether there is any reporting on where and how funds are spent?

Answer

- a) It is not yet possible to provide a definitive list of organisations which received funding under the increased budget, as the majority of the funding is delivered via support schemes which remain open to applications. To date approximately 60 organisations have received funding, but it is expected that by year end up to 120 organisations will have received funding, and these will be reported in Q1 2025. At this point, the Minister will be able to

provide a breakdown of the allocation of the £6.7 million funding allocated in 2024 with details relating to question parts (b) to (e).

- b) The majority of funding is delivered from the Rural Support Scheme and Marine Support Scheme, which between them provide over 80 separately defined components, each with a designated purpose aligned with the provision of ‘public goods’. Payments are made in recognition of the delivery of these goods. Aggregated data will be published in Q1 2025 to report on the outcome of the 2024 schemes and how the funding has been allocated across the components of each scheme – this data is not currently available as the schemes remain active.
- c) Performance indicators are themselves a direct function of the manner in which funds are dispersed: for example, payments for cover crops to improve soil health are directly related to the amount of area used for those crops – data can then be used for year-on-year comparisons. There are therefore over 80 performance indicators related to rural and marine support schemes. In addition, each organisation is obliged to provide financial returns to the Department, which enables economic performance to be monitored; accreditation under independent environmental and social audits are also pre-requisites for access to funding and these provide performance metrics for a range of integrated farm management components which can be assessed on an individual or aggregated and year by year basis.
- d) In the majority of cases funding is directly related to the pre-defined delivery of ‘public goods’ or (for a small proportion of the budget) is directly attributable to investment ‘projects’ whereby funding is only delivered on receipt of evidence of project delivery. Provision of financial data also ensures funding is correctly recorded and recognised within the recipient organisation's accounts.
- e) A full report will be issued in Q1 2025 detailing the outcomes (expenditure and aggregated data)

for both rural and marine support schemes as delivered in 2024. The annex to annual Government accounts also normally include details of all grant payments made in any financial year.

2.35 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Social Security regarding the minimum wage being set as a ‘living wage’ (WQ.302/2024)

Question

In relation to the minimum wage being set as a ‘living wage’ will the Minister detail –

- (a) whether any calculations were undertaken to estimate the potential job losses that could arise and, if so, what figure was estimated;
- (b) what re-training and financial support will be available for those who are made redundant; and
- (c) the total budget allocated in 2025 and 2026 to manage the consequences of the move to a living wage?

Answer

To clarify the misunderstanding in the question, the target set by the Council of Ministers as part of its Common Strategic Policy is to raise the minimum wage to 2/3 of median wage by the end of this term of office. This is considered to be a step towards taking the minimum wage to a 'living wage'.

- (a) Detailed economic modelling has been undertaken to inform Ministers' decisions. A total of 15,000 employees are estimated to see higher wages. The economic modelling also indicates that there may be circa 120 fewer jobs after reaching the target of minimum wage at 2/3 median earnings compared to increasing the Minimum Wage by average earnings. It is likely that much/all of the reduction in job numbers will be in the form of fewer vacancies and lower growth in jobs. Given the current strength of the local labour market it is anticipated that any employee losing their job as a result of a higher minimum wage will be able to find new employment quickly and easily.
- (b) It is not anticipated that there will be any significant redundancies due to the increase in minimum wage. The annual £10 million allocation (see below) will include projects to support the reskilling of individual workers. Islanders with 5 years residency will also be able to use the services of the Back to Work team (which includes training and job seeking support) and receive financial support through the Income Support system (subject to eligibility).
- (c) Subject to agreement from the States Assembly, up to £10 million will be available in each of 2025 and 2026 to support employers and employees in the transition towards a living wage.

2.36 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding budget transfers (WQ.303/2024)

Question

Will the Minister detail –

- (a) any budget transfers from Capital to Revenue which have taken place in the last 12 months, including the relevant Ministerial Portfolio, with details of the reasons for this transfer; and
- (b) any budget transfers from Capital to Revenue (including revenue to capital) that are planned during 2025, including the relevant Ministerial Portfolio, with details of the reasons for this transfer?

Answer

- a. The Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019, requires that a report to the States Assembly is produced every six months outlining the decisions taken by the Minister under certain Articles of that Law, including budget transfers between heads of expenditure. The latest reports covering the six-month period to 31 December 2023 and six-month period to 30th June 2024 are available on the States Assembly website;

[Finance Law Delegation Report to 31 December 2023 r.32-2024.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

[Finance Law Delegation Report to 30 June r.134-2024.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

During the 12 months from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024, there has been one transfer from the Electronic Document Management Solution Project Head of Expenditure to the Cabinet Office departmental head of expenditure actioned under [MD-TR-2023-646](#), of up to £700,000.

More recently there has been a transfer from the Infrastructure departmental head of expenditure to the Road Safety Improvements Project Head of Expenditure of up to £1 million, actioned under [MD-TR-2024-590](#), signed in August 2024. The latter will be included in the six-month report for the period 1st July 2024 to 31st December 2024.

- b. There are currently no planned budget transfers from project to departmental heads of expenditure or vice versa, in 2025, however budgets are kept under constant review and monitoring and reallocations may arise if Ministers determine that this is needed within their portfolios (as provided for under the Public Finances Law).

2.37 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding reductions in budget within Technology and Digital services (WQ.304/2024)

Question

Will the Chair advise which Government roles or functions are subject to reductions in budget within Technology and Digital services in the forthcoming year?

Answer

The target in the proposed Budget 2025-2028 is to save six full-time equivalent roles in Digital Services in 2025 and a further ten in 2026.

No specific roles are identified in relation to this reduction; the preference is to achieve the target through natural staff turnover, including retirements and redeployments.

To meet the target, other savings are expected to come from reductions in consultancy spend and a review of non-staff budgets to remove unnecessary systems that are high cost in terms of software licences and maintenance.

2.38 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding French language tuition in schools (WQ.305/2024)

Question

Will the Minister provide –

- (a) the number of Jersey primary and secondary school students receiving French language tuition for each of 2004, 2014 and the current academic year, broken down into –
 - i. Primary school pupils;
 - ii. Secondary school students pre GCSE selection;
 - iii. Secondary school student at GCSE;
 - iv. A-level French students;
- (b) the number of hours of French language tuition each student receives per term, broken down by each group in (a) above;
- (c) the grades achieved by Jersey students in GCSE and A-level French language examinations for each of the last ten years; and

- (d) details of all other languages available to students, including Jersey-French, the level up to which these can be studied, and the amount of time allocated to non-French language tuition in schools?

Answer

Background (a) and (b)

The current Jersey Curriculum was launched in 2014. It was based upon the English National Curriculum in recognition of the progression required from KS1-KS3 in order for pupils to access their GCSE options given the reform of the GCSE examinations that was timetabled for 2016. The Jersey Curriculum was amended in several ways to reflect the Jersey context, whilst maintaining fidelity to the core progressions routes for all subject areas.

In Languages, the Jersey Curriculum Council approved a significant difference to England in that French was the only language offered as a compulsory option at KS2. As a result of this decision, the required length of study in primary school for **all children** moved from 2 years to four, doubling their exposure to French. In 2016 it was identified in a headteacher survey that teacher expertise in French was not consistent across all schools and that provision varied (mirroring the situation in England). To address this, as part of the French Experience, piloted in 2017 and developed to its current form in 2024, the Lead French teacher delivers termly CPD, in-school coaching and facilitates curriculum and teaching support to all teachers of French across the island, elevating the status of French in our curriculum and ensuring that the expertise to deliver it is in place, see [P45/2024 comments paper](#) for more detail.

In line with local authorities across England, the Education department do not hold school level detail on the curriculum provision across all Jersey schools in the format that has been requested. Each school timetable is likely to be slightly different, reflecting the needs of their unique cohort. Whether at GCSE, A level or in non-examination lessons the curriculum provision and timings will vary. As such, it is not possible to answer questions (a) and (b) as requested.

The Jersey Curriculum, as is also the case in England, does not stipulate timetabled hours of teaching for any subject outside of core PE. However, the curriculum is a statutory entitlement, so with the changes made in 2014, and with the teacher training offered, we can suggest that the majority of pupils in primary school would have received regular French lessons across years three, four, five and six.

(c)

Results below are taken from the CYPES Informatics “Assessments” database, which holds attainment data from 2018 onwards. We do not hold a full set of pupil attainment data prior to 2018.

NB. Users should take care when considering comparisons over time, as they may not reflect changes in pupil performance alone. This is particularly true for the years 2020 and 2021 where there were significant changes in assessment methodology due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.

GCSE French Language

Year	2 and below	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2018	6%	17%	16%	27%	9%	11%	9%	6%
2019	6%	11%	18%	27%	9%	14%	11%	4%
2020	1%	5%	18%	24%	13%	17%	12%	9%
2021	3%	5%	13%	26%	11%	18%	12%	12%
2022	2%	8%	6%	38%	9%	13%	14%	10%

2023	2%	13%	14%	27%	9%	13%	10%	11%
2024*	3%	6%	11%	28%	12%	16%	17%	8%

* 2024 results are provisional and include Government schools only.

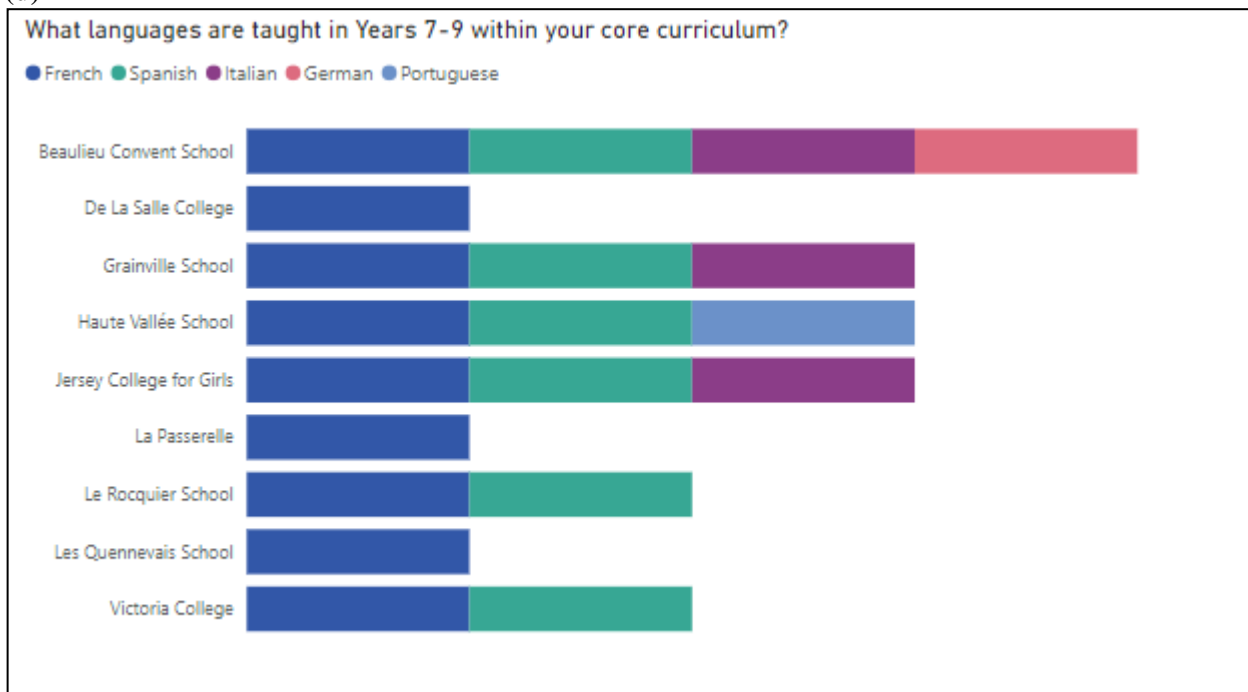
A Level French

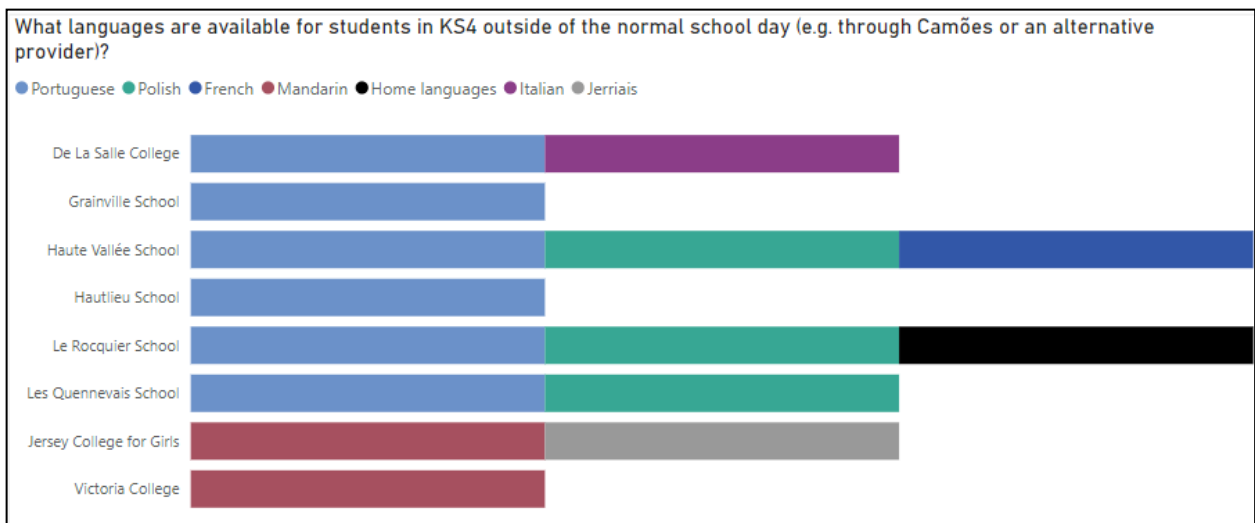
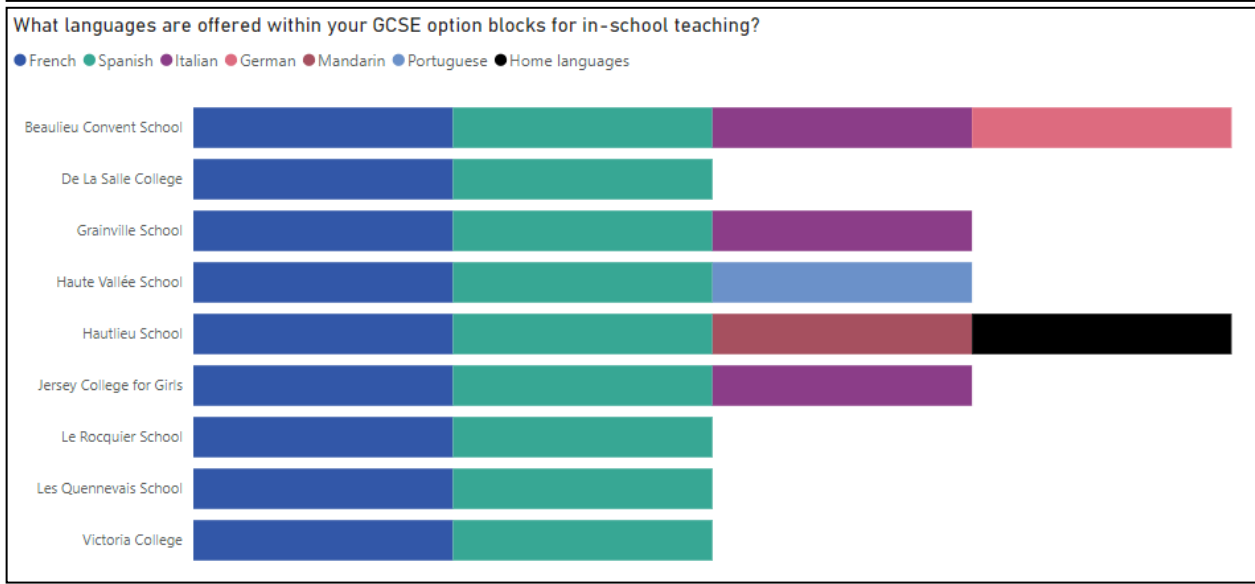
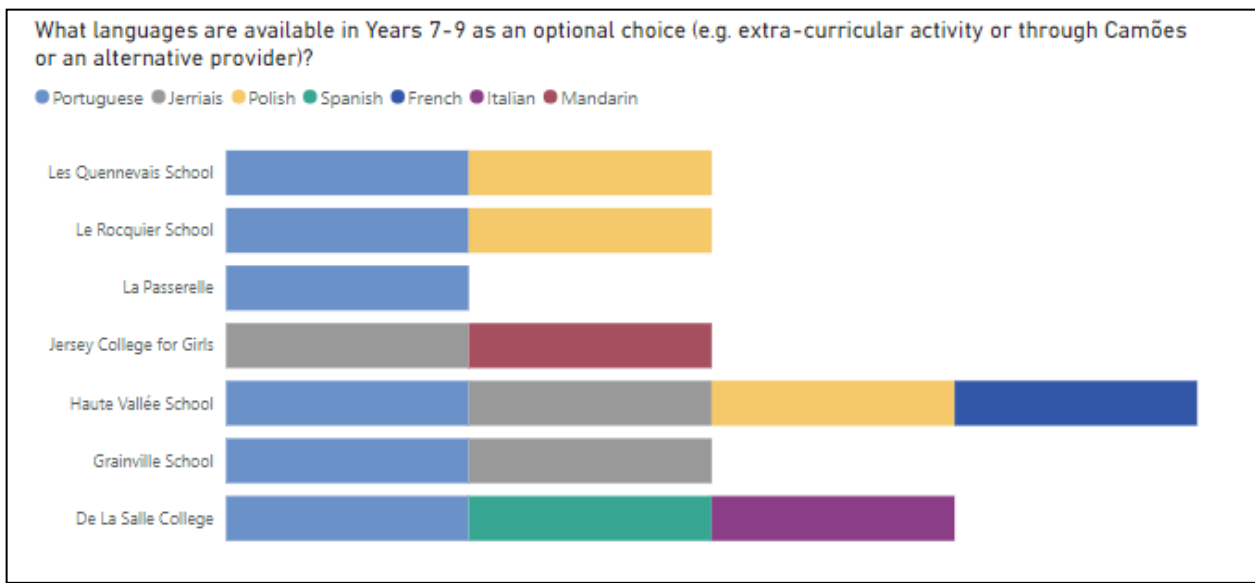
Due to the small number of students taking A Level French, on average 20 students per year, disclosure controls have been applied to protect personal data and we are unable to provide a full grade distribution. Therefore, below is the percentage achieving A* to B grades.

Year	A* - B
2018	65.4%
2019	58.3%
2020	83.3%
2021	87.0%
2022	80.0%
2023	63.2%
2024*	76.5%

*2024 results are provisional and only for Government schools, Hautlieu, JCG & VCJ

(d)





Jersey French - Jèrriais

The current model for delivering Jèrriais in schools is by a team of six centrally employed teachers across both primary and secondary schools. They predominantly introduce the language through the

Alentou d'Jèrri (Around Jersey) primary school programme which takes a cross-curricular approach that combines language learning with input on Jersey history, geography, culture, folklore.

A small number of schools invite a teacher to deliver Jèrriais language lessons in the day to children and young people who request it, usually in small groups or 1:1, and one primary school offers lessons to all classes in years 2-6. If a pupil wishes to undertake more formal lessons in Jèrriais they can opt to join lessons outside of school time, in a Pallion, and there are currently seven of these, four in primary schools and three in secondary schools (see charts above).

2.39 Deputy L.M.C Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Children and Families regarding the Children Young People and Families' Plan 2024-27 (WQ.306/2024)

Question

Further to the publication of the [Children Young People and Families' Plan 2024-27](#) in May 2024, will the Minister detail in a table format –

- (a) what progress, if any, has been made to date to implement each of the actions contained in the plan; and, if none, provide an explanation why;
- (b) what funding and resources have been allocated to each of the actions in this plan; and
- (c) the planned time frame for completion of each action?

Answer

- a) The Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2024-2027 provides an overarching framework behind which government programmes and strategies can align to promote and support the wellbeing and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

The plan is intended as an enabler for joint working and commissioning of services from the private and voluntary sectors who play a vital role in children and family's lives. The programmes and strategies referenced in the plan provide the delivery mechanisms for action which then contribute to improving children's outcomes.

Results from the next Children and Young Peoples Survey are due for publication in Spring 2025. These will provide a timely update on children and young people's experiences in the key areas identified in the plan. The survey results will inform a data dashboard which is being developed to provide better insight of key children outcomes in childhood.

- b) There is no separate allocation of funding for the plan. The individual programmes of work referenced in the plan are funded via their own ministerial department. Funding allocated to these programmes will be contained within the proposed [Government Plan \(2024-2027\) budget](#) under either an existing head of expenditure or if an additional resource resulting from CSP commitment.
- c) Governance of individual programmes and actions identified within the plan remains with the relevant lead government department and Minister.

The oversight of the Children, Young People and Families' plan is undertaken by the Children's Outcomes Executive Committee (COEC) as set out in its [terms of reference](#). This approach is consistent with the [Children and Young People \(Jersey\) Law 2022](#).

The Children's Outcomes Executive Committee will be assisted in their monitoring role by the School Council Network which will continue to progress action on key themes identified and [reported](#) on during the review of the plan.

2.40 Deputy L.M.C Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Children and Families regarding duty bearers relating to the Children (Convention Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022 (WQ.307/2024)

Question

Further to the [Children \(Convention Rights\) \(Jersey\) Law 2022](#) coming into effect earlier this year, will the Minister advise –

- (a) when the responsibility to have due regard for children’s rights when decisions are being made will be extended to other named duty bearers including certain charities, arms-length bodies of the Government of Jersey and the Parishes; and
- (b) what support and training, if any, has or will be provided to current and future duty-bearers?

Answer

(a) The Children (Convention Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022 came into force on 1 January 2024 for 3 categories of duty-bearer: Ministers, Elected Members and States Assembly Bodies.

The final category of duty-bearer, for which the Law is not yet enacted, is Public Authorities. These are set out in Schedule 1 of the Law and currently comprise the following:

Andium Homes Limited

Autism Jersey

Family Nursing and Home Care (Jersey) Incorporated

Jersey Cares Limited, also known as “Jersey Cares”

Jersey Child Care Trust

Jersey Society for the Provision of a Children's Resources Centre, also known as “Centre Point Trust” and “Centrepoint”

Jersey Sport Limited

The parishes

I plan to bring forward a Commencement Act, which will extend the Law to Public Authority duty-bearers, before the end of the current political term. Leaving a gap between the first and second phases of enactment will ensure that any learnings from Phase 1 can be used to inform the training and support offered to Public Authorities between now and the remainder of the Law coming into force.

Public Authorities took part in the consultation which was undertaken when the Law was developed and have been kept informed regarding the planned phased enactment.

- (b) The decision to enact the Law in 2 phases was made to ensure that sufficient support could be provided to all duty-bearers at the appropriate time.

In March, I published the [Children’s Rights Scheme](#), the Statutory Guidance required by the Law.

For the duty-bearers to whom the Law currently applies, as well as officers who support them, 7 in-person training sessions and one online webinar have been delivered, which covered approximately 170 key individuals within the Government of Jersey.

An eLearning module, focused on when and how to conduct a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) is available to all duty-bearers and staff via the government's online training platform, Connect Learning.

Direct support has been provided to duty-bearers and officers in respect of 32 separate CRIAs since the Law came into force in January. This support is provided by officers in the Children's Policy Team and continues to be available to all duty-bearers and those working on their behalf.

In advance of the extension of the Law to Public Authority duty-bearers, officers will engage with each of them to ensure an appropriate level of support is available. The detail of this support has yet to be determined, but is likely to include:

- familiarisation with the requirements of the Law;
- training on the due regard duty;
- resources such as templates for use by duty-bearers;
- access to the CRIA eLearning or similar resource; and
- ongoing officer support.

Officers will continue to liaise with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to the best approach to offer further expert advice to Public Authorities as necessary.

2.41 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for External Relations regarding legislation relating to consumer lending (WQ.308/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, he has given to introducing legislation relating to consumer lending, and whether he would seek to introduce such legislation during this term of office?

Answer

A draft law is due to be lodged with the States Assembly by the end of Q4 2024 for debate in early 2025. The legislative proposals are by way of amendment to the Financial Services (Jersey) Law 1998 and the introduction of consumer credit business as a new category of business for regulation by the Jersey Financial Services Commission (JFSC).

The draft law is well advanced and has been the subject of considerable consultation with industry. A 3-month consultation on the draft legislative proposals took place in the summer of 2023. Following this, government undertook a programme of further engagement with industry in early 2024 and a response paper was published in May 2024 setting out amendments to be made to the legislative proposals post consultation and based on feedback received. A further 4-week consultation on the amended draft law proposals is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks, before lodging.

It has been noted that despite the active engagement of most industry that will be affected by the proposed legislation, some sectors, notably, the retail and motor finance sectors and private lenders, have been less willing to engage than others, despite tailored outreach to those sectors by Government officials. I encourage those sectors to engage with Government officials to ensure that their views are considered prior to the law being debated.

2.42 Deputy L.M.C Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding hate crime consultations (WQ.309/2024)

Question

Further to Oral Question [133/2024](#), will the Minister provide details of –

- (a) what areas her planned consultation on hate crime will be focused on;
- (b) whether she intends to uphold former Minister Connétable Len Norman's 2021 commitment to include sex and gender as a protected characteristics in the proposed Crime (Prejudice and Public Disorder) (Jersey) Law;
- (c) her discussions with the Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police in relation to hate crimes; and
- (d) whether the States of Jersey Police will be recording data on crimes motivated by hatred?

Answer

(a) The consultation has not yet been developed, but I expect that it will consider at least-

- The proposed form and detail of the offences;
- the protected characteristics and any specific exemptions to the activities that constitute hate crime in each case;
- the balance of rights between free speech and harmful material; and
- real or designed case studies intended to help clarify the meaning of the legal wording.

I hope that the widest possible cross-section of the public will share their views on the principles behind the legislation as well as the specific proposals, in order to allow us to gauge whether the planned treatment of hate crime is in line with expectations.

(b) I have not yet reached a final decision on this point. I think that in principle, sex should be a protected characteristic because the expression of hatred against women or men, simply of the grounds of their sex, is as objectionable and harmful as hate acted upon or expressed on the grounds of any other characteristic.

However, I note that the Taskforce on Violence Against Women and Girls did not recommend including sex as a protected characteristic, although it made numerous recommendations for legislative improvements to protect women and girls, all of which I am progressing.

Furthermore, there are a number of complexities arising from the inclusion of both sex and/or gender, which need further careful consideration.

Members will appreciate that these are extremely complex questions which are still being worked through, and I will be very interested to see the consultation responses on these points.

(c) I meet with the Chief Officer regularly to discuss a wide range of issues, and to be briefed on operational matters, including hate crime.

(d) The States of Jersey Police record data for reported incidents and crimes that have occurred which feature a hate element.

This includes any criminal offence, or non-crime incident, which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's (actual or perceived) race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or against a person who is (or perceived to be) transgender.

The control room when completing an ilog (reported incident log) will finalise the log with the relevant prejudice classification as below. This is taken from the National Standard for Incident Recording as defined by the Home Office which the States of Jersey Police follow as best practice.

Prejudice – Racial
Prejudice – Religion or Belief
Prejudice – Sexual Orientation
Prejudice - Transgender
Prejudice - Disability

Crime files where there is a hate related element also have flags that the Officer can select – these are contained within the victim nominal.

LGBT Motivated?
Faith Motivated?
Age Motivated?
Racially Motivated?
Disability Motivated?

2.43 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding calculations for the transition to the living wage (WQ.311/2024)

Question

Will the Chief Minister provide the calculations undertaken to identify the figure of £20 million, which has been allocated to support businesses with the transition to the living wage in 2025 and 2026 and will he further provide a full breakdown of the evidence base and any associated information used to support these calculations?

Answer

The living wage policy was subject to a full peer-reviewed economic impact assessment. Work was undertaken to calculate the estimated cost of the policy to payrolls across the Island, and the figure of £20m was identified as the amount required to support businesses with the transition to the living wage.

Two economic models of the UK Government’s Office for Budget Responsibility were used in the calculations, as well as inputs from Statistics Jersey, such as wage distribution by sector, gender and size of business.

The calculations included data of employees currently earning a salary that is less than the proposed living wage and also the consequential pay increases throughout the labour market as the wage for other roles increases even though they already earn above the proposed living wage but below the median wage. The calculations result in an expected static cost (cost to business without any behaviour change) and an assumed cost following behaviour change by businesses.

The calculations are a set of formula and equations that sit within spreadsheets. Even within the spreadsheets the data and equations require a level of interpretation and would be meaningless without explanation from the team that built the model. The spreadsheets are working documents used by economists and are complex to interpret. For this reason, they are not included in this answer but, as always, the Chief Economic Advisor is happy to provide a private briefing to Scrutiny and States Members, if necessary, on the calculations and the logic used to reach the impacts.

Further work is now ongoing to ensure that the support package is targeted towards increasing productivity and protecting competitiveness. More details will be published as part of the budget process.

The economic advice was that, to avoid extra inflationary pressure, the support should not be a direct subsidy to business and ideally would be less than the total cost to businesses

2.44 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding the increase in the living wage in 2025 and 2026 (WQ.312/2024)

Question

In relation to the increase in the living wage in 2025 and 2026, will the Minister explain –

- (a) what calculations, if any, were undertaken with regards to potential increases in Social Security income from this change, and if such calculations were undertaken, will she provide these;
- (b) what increases or decreases in Income Support payments, if any, were considered as part of the decision-making process; and
- (c) what consideration, if any, was given to –
 - i. further funding that may be required after the two-year period, and the potential source of such funding; and
 - ii. ensuring that the Social Security Fund receives the full grant for 2027 onwards and has no negative impacts from the reduced funding in 2025 and 2026?"

Answer

- (a) A full peer reviewed impact assessment was carried out by the Economics team, which highlighted the likely impacts of the transition to a minimum wage set at 2/3 of the median wage. Having announced that the minimum wage will rise to £13 per hour from the 1st April 2025, the assessment indicates that there will be approximately an additional £1m in Social Security contributions in 2025. For 2026, I have not yet announced what the new rate will be but would expect a further increase in income that year. These calculations do not take into account the additional income that would have been received in respect of an uplift in the minimum wage in a normal year.
- (b) As part of the impact assessment mentioned above, the impact on Income Support costs was also estimated. The impact of a higher minimum wage is likely to increase household incomes for some households such that they no longer qualify for Income Support payments. It may also lead to job losses and additional or higher claims for Income Support from other households. As the labour market is currently tight, it is most likely that displaced workers will be able to find new roles. However, in the unlikely event that those losing jobs do not find new employment, the combined effect of Income Support increases and decreases is estimated at an additional £300k in 2025.
- (c) i. The commitment made in the Common Strategic Policy, as approved by the States Assembly, is to increase the minimum wage to 2/3 of median earnings by the end of this Government in June 2026. The temporary funding for 2025 and 2026 is provided to support this transition towards a living wage. I have no plans to provide further funding beyond the two-year period.

ii. The amendment to the Social Security law ([P.62/2024](#)) ensures that the full grant into the Social Security Fund will be made in 2027 and future years. Subject to States Assembly approval, the Fund will receive £20 million less over the next two years compared to the underlying formula for the grant. This small reduction, relative to the overall size of the Fund (more than £2 billion), will have no noticeable long term negative impact on the overall health of the Fund.

2.45 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the tender process for construction of the hospital facilities (WQ.313/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise when the tender process for construction of the hospital facilities at Overdale will be published, and where details of the tender will be made available?

Answer

The formal market engagement for the Overdale Acute hospital facilities is due to commence by the end of September 2024. This will mark the start of the tender process, albeit the purpose of this first stage - the Prior Information Notice (PIN) - is to notify the market of the upcoming procurement activity including the tender as well as inform it. It is anticipated that the full tender process will take approximately nine months, including the PIN.

The PIN will be issued through the Channel Island Tenders and Find a Tender services and inform Main Works Construction suppliers and other associated suppliers that the Government of Jersey wishes to commence market engagement and consultation. It will invite suppliers who would like to engage with New Healthcare Facilities (NHF) Programme to express interest and register to participate in market engagement and take part in a series of webinars to understand more of the specific details and requirements. The NHF team will also inform the Jersey Construction Council of the issue of the PIN as well as the usual communication channels of the Government of Jersey.

NHF is a programme of projects and there will be other procurement activities that will also be taking place in relation to the wider Overdale site during Q4 2024. These are for smaller works and services and so could be anticipated to last one to three months, depending on the scale and scope.

2.46 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding residency requirements for employees of the States Employment Board (WQ.314/2024)

Question

Further to the response to [Written Question 273/2024](#), will the Chair advise -

- (a) whether it is a contractual requirement for employees of the States Employment Board to be resident or ordinarily resident in Jersey, and if it is not, why not;
- (b) the process by which authorisation is granted for individuals who do not reside in Jersey to be engaged by a Government department, through any structure, and who grants authorisation;
- (c) how many contractual arrangements are currently in place with external consultants or agency workers across Government departments, and provide a breakdown of these by department;

- (d) whether there is a policy or guidance in place which sets any limits on the type of role or work which can be undertaken for the Government by an individual who does not reside in Jersey; and
- (e) whether he is considering a review as to whether the current arrangements where individuals are employed by the Government of Jersey, through any structure, whilst not being resident or ordinarily resident in Jersey are appropriate, and if not, why not?

Answer

- (a) Yes, it is a contractual requirement for employees to reside in Jersey.

The only exception being for periods of up to 6 weeks, as well as various other conditions applying, including that the role can be performed satisfactorily in the period. The individual's Manager and Chief Officer must agree in any such case.

- (b) There are various mechanisms for contracting individuals, as outlined below.

- Employment by the States Employment Board, including both fixed term and permanent contractors: Appointments must conform with the requirement that the employee be Jersey resident (as well as all other standard appointment procedures).
- Employment by the incorporated overseas offices, where necessary to support the government in promoting Jersey externally. Approval is by the relevant Accountable Officer as detailed in the published supporting documents to the Public Finances Manual (as well as all other standard appointment procedures).
- Consultancy arrangements: All new arrangements are agreed by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Agency and contingent labour arrangements: All new arrangements are approved by the contracting Department, unless compensation exceeds £100,000 in which case approval is by the Chief Executive up to £150,000 under powers delegated by the States Employment Board, or otherwise by the States Employment Board.

- (c) All consultancy and contractor relationships are detailed in the P59 Reports. The 2023 report is due to be published shortly. There is no contractual obligation for contractors to reside in Jersey. Our priority is to reduce our reliance on consultancy by providing opportunities for career development to our employees who are contractually obliged to reside in Jersey.

- (d) As stated in (a) above, employees of the SEB are required contractually to reside on Island. There is no policy or guidance in relation to residence for the other contracting arrangements outlined in section (b) above.

- (e) The current arrangements for employment are satisfactory and appropriate – States Employment Board employees should be resident in Jersey, except for exceptional circumstances – and the States Employment Board and Chief Officers will support appropriate conformity.

In terms of wider contracting arrangement, Ministers have committed to reducing reliance on consultants, and agency staff, and bringing work in-house developing our own resident workforce wherever practical.

2.47 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding social housing provider licences (WQ.315/2024)

Question

Further to the response to a [Freedom of Information request](#) which reported that as of the 1st of August 2024, of the 8,817 rented dwelling licences that had been issued, none had been to any of the social housing providers, will the Minister confirm whether all social housing providers have now had licences issued, and if not, why not?

Answer

As of today (2nd October 2024), social housing accounts for 37% of the total issued licences. The department does not specifically hold data regarding whether the licence was issued to a social housing provider or a private landlord. As such, the department cannot confirm for the questioner whether all social housing providers have had licences issued.

It should be noted that the department is unable to divulge specific information as we do not publish details of licence holders, and that the objective of the scheme is to licence rented dwellings and improve standards of dwellings island wide, not by a specific landlord or provider. However, I am able to share that all licences that have been applied for, have been issued. The total number of licences issued, as of 30th September 2024, is 17,525.

2.48 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Children and Families regarding a new youth facility on the Ann Street Brewery site (WQ.316/2024)

Question

Will the Minister advise the level of funding included within the proposed [Budget \(Government Plan\) 2025-2028](#) for the provision of a new youth facility on the Ann Street Brewery site, whether this funding has changed and when he anticipates delivery of the facility?

Answer

My Assistant Minister, Deputy Ferey has been the political lead with the support of officers in CYPES who have been working with officers in the Department for Infrastructure and Environment, Treasury and Exchequer, Commercial Services, and the CPMO. Officers have produced a clear and detailed business case, delivered a presentation to the Council of Ministers on proposals and met with the Connétable of St Helier and Parish officials to keep the Parish up to date with proposals.

The business case clearly highlights the need for such a youth facility, with the increase of housing within the town area and that the town has experienced a decline in Youth Centres with the closure of Aquila and Seaton Youth Centres many years ago. The children and young people of St Helier must have the same access to youth work opportunities as those in other Parishes.

We will soon be entering negotiations with commercial organisations, and for this very reason I am not at this stage able to disclose the value of the project until contracts are agreed and signed.

With reference the anticipated delivery of the facility, we would hope this would open early 2028.

2.49 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for External Relations regarding assessments of variable and fixed residential mortgage rates available in Jersey against those offered in the UK (WQ.317/2024)

Question

What assessment, if any, has the Minister carried out comparing variable and fixed residential mortgage rates available in Jersey with those offered in the UK; and will he explain the reasons for any differences, and advise what action, if any, he proposes to take to ensure Islanders are able to access similar rates to those in the UK?

Answer

A review of mortgage rates available in Jersey was carried out as part of the Fiscal Policy Panel's Housing Market Review published in April 2024. The report set out various possible reasons for the differences in rates between Jersey and the UK, including ringfencing, the relative scale of lending activities increasing costs, the number of lenders in the industry, riskiness of loans at higher loan-to-income ratios or the differing focus of lenders' activities. Whilst there are different considerations in the pricing of Jersey products when compared to products offered by their relative banks in the UK, the Minister would expect firms to ensure that their products are fairly priced, and that the benefits of rates cuts are realised by customers. The Minister continues to have conversations with banking institutions about these matters.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

I would like to raise my concerns about the answer to the written question, if it is now the time.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, I was about to announce first that Deputy Jeune has indicated that she considers the answer provided to Written Question 276 to be not relevant to a question and under Standing Order 12(4)(b) a ruling will be made before 9.30 a.m. tomorrow on that issue. Yes, Deputy Gardiner.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like also to raise the response to Written Question 311 which required calculations and there is not sufficient information in answer for this question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much. You will receive a ruling by 9.30 tomorrow morning. Yes, Deputy Warr.

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

I am not happy with the response to Written Question 315. I specifically asked for social housing providers who had been issued licences, and there is no mention of that in the answer.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You will receive a ruling by 9.30 tomorrow. Thank you for that.

3. Oral Questions

3.1 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the CCTV system at the Havre des Pas Lido (OQ.174/2024):

Will the Minister advise whether the C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television) system at the Havre des Pas Lido is currently working; and if it is not, will he advise how long the system has been out of service and confirm when C.C.T.V. will be restored?

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

I thank the Deputy for the question and also for his time last week when we discussed the future of Havre des Pas. I am grateful for the notice he gave me then of this question. We share similar aspirations for the site. The C.C.T.V. operated by Jersey Property Holdings at Havre des Pas located

on the restaurant is not currently working and will need to be replaced. I have asked that this matter is dealt with as a priority. Issues were first identified and resolved in March, but the system was again found not to be working in June. There is other operational C.C.T.V. in the area, which can be redirected to cover different areas, including the road and the Lido. As promised when we met last week, I commit to keeping the Deputy updated on this and other related matters.

3.1.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Given that the States of Jersey Police maintain all the C.C.T.V. cameras in the Havre des Pas area, would it not make sense for them to take over the running of the Lido cameras so that this area can be better supported by their officers? Are there any reasons why the situation cannot be changed before the end of this year?

The Connétable of St. John:

It is not something that I have considered, but it is something I am willing to consider. We are currently reviewing all of our C.C.T.V. and are in the process of going out for offers to tender for our C.C.T.V. That is why there has been some delay.

3.1.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister advise if he is aware if there is any liability or any insurance challenges that we might need to be aware of that are mitigated by a working C.C.T.V.?

The Connétable of St. John:

I am not aware of any implications to our insurance whether there is or is not C.C.T.V.

3.2 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for the Environment regarding reprioritising the progress of the Food (Jersey) Law 2023 Regulations (OQ.171/2024):

Further to the response to Written Question 270/2024, will the Minister consider reprioritising the progress of the Food (Jersey) Law 2023 Regulations, including the labelling of allergens in food, given that restaurants and cafes in Jersey, unlike in the U.K. (United Kingdom), E.U. (European Union) and U.S.A. (United States of America) do not have to provide allergen information; and, if not, will he explain why?"

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

I would like to thank the Deputy for her question. We have been talking about this issue for quite some time. Like her, and every Member of the Assembly, I am keen to progress the subordinate legislation under the Food (Jersey) Law 2023 as soon as possible. My officers have already commenced work on moving this legislation forward. I have prioritised this work. I continue to prioritise it so that these laws can, subject to the approval of this Assembly, come into effect in 2025.

3.2.1 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Could the Minister confirm whether law drafting is underway yet?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot confirm that to the Deputy at the moment. It would be wrong of me to say one way or the other.

3.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Will the Minister confirm whether businesses that provide fresh food or sell hot food like pasties, *et cetera*, will be covered by this law and will consumers be able to know what is in those products that they are buying?

[9:45]

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, those changes will be covered. It is important that we get all these laws right for Jersey. They have to be fit for purpose, workable and deliver what they are intended to do. Once my officers are working with law drafters, and I will confirm back to the Deputy officially where we are, I will be sharing these with stakeholders, including the Deputy's Scrutiny Panel and the Food Allergy Group, for comment and revision and, if appropriate, bringing them back to the Assembly.

3.2.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

When the Minister says they will be covered, does he mean that there will be a requirement for those types of food to be explicitly labelled with allergens and ingredients, or will there be an exemption for that type of food?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is my belief that there will be no exemptions, and that if there are allergens - there are a number of allergens, 14, I believe, which need to be covered - those will have to be listed.

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

Can the Minister give any estimate of when we might be seeing regulations change around this area of the law?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot, other than to say, and repeat what I gave in my first answer, which the Deputy may have heard, that it is my priority and, subject to the approval of this Assembly, that it will come into effect in 2025.

3.2.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I will try to be more specific than, than I have been so far. When is his estimate of when we can see this legislation?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am not going to make promises that I cannot keep to, but on the basis that this will be passed in 2025, I imagine that the Deputy will have something to look at early in the new year.

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

2025 has 12 months in it. Could the Minister indicate, if the instructions are not yet with the Law Drafting Office, when precisely they will be?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

If they are not yet with the law drafting, they will be as soon as possible. I need to remind the Assembly that there are lots of things to consider here. New labelling requirements are one important aspect of the regulations, but there are other elements that are necessary to bring the food laws up to date, and those include the licensing of food businesses, enhanced food hygiene and food safety requirements, and indeed the rules around the enforcement itself.

3.2.7 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Can the Minister really not give any specific indication of when the instructions will be with the Law Drafting Office?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot, and I can only apologise to the Assembly for not having more information on this issue. We have spent some time, and will continue to do so in the coming weeks, about the prioritisation of the amount of time we have with law drafters. I believe all Ministers have been asked that question. There is no point in this Government setting out a whole list of things we intend to do to find in a few months' time that we do not have time to do that. So, we are reprioritising the amount of time we have with law drafters and making sure that those top priorities are actually given the time needed. But again, I apologise to the Assembly for not having more information about the specific subjects, and I will get back to everybody and let them know exactly where we are.

3.2.8 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Very unfortunately this August a 13 year-old girl died after a sip of Costa hot chocolate, which has milk, due to the failure to follow allergies processes, as was reported following the incident. What actions, training, checks, can be done during the next 6, 8, 12 months before the law will come in place to minimise the risk of these incidents in Jersey?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

There are a number of things my officers can do and are doing to try to make sure that while we wait for the updated law to come in that members of the public are covered. I would say to the Deputy that despite the lack of specific legislation it is nevertheless illegal for businesses in Jersey to falsely claim a product does not contain a specific food product. This includes the 14 allergens that I referred to before, and we have successfully prosecuted one food business under this, under the charge of selling food which was not of the nature demanded by the purchaser.

3.2.9 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I thank the Minister for his answers and look forward to the confirmation about the law drafting time. Would the Minister agree that the current reliance on international legislation which covers imported food leaves a huge gap of unregulated food in Jersey, potentially resulting in injury or death to local residents and visitors?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

While it is unfortunate that we are not up to quite the same speed as the U.K. or the E.U., I cannot agree with the Deputy that there is a huge gap. There is a gap, and it is one that we aim to fill as soon as we possibly can. But as I said, there are ways for us to make it better. We are doing that through encouragement, through other means. It is illegal, as I said in the previous answer, to claim that something is not contained in certain food when it is actually there. I cannot agree whole-heartedly with the Deputy, but in the first part of her final question, I will get back to her and other Members with a proper breakdown of where I am with the law drafting on this.

3.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Housing regarding data available on the total number of private sector rental properties available in Jersey (OQ.186/2024):

Will the Minister detail what data is available to him regarding the total number of private sector rental properties available in Jersey and whether he has any specific targets or benchmarks for what would constitute an acceptable number of such properties to meet Islanders' needs?

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

I thank Deputy Ozouf for this question. The 2 main datasets that exist to give us a picture of how many private sector rental properties there are in Jersey are the census, which gives a breakdown by bedroom size and across all different types of tenure for housing in Jersey. But, of course, the further away we get from that moment in time the less of an actual picture that dataset provides us, and we are aware that there have been several significant developments in that time which will include

private sector rental properties. We do also have the Rented Dwellings Licensing Scheme, which is still in its transitional period, although as time goes on we can begin to rely on that more as an accurate and up-to-date picture of how many private sector rental homes there are there. There has so far been over 17,000 licences given for those who have applied, which is not far off what we thought the picture was for private sector rental homes, so hopefully that shows that it is working. In terms of targets or benchmarks for what would constitute an acceptable number of properties to meet Islanders' needs, I do not have a figure like that, and I actually do not think it would be useful for me to come up with a figure like that because the passage of time would extremely quickly make it irrelevant and it would constantly be a moving target. We have from Statistics Jersey the Jersey's *Future Housing Needs Report*, which gives breakdowns of what types of homes, what sizes of homes we would need into the years in the future based on particular population growth scenarios, so there are a series of different pictures. But the one thing that that does not bear in mind is potential policy changes which would change what the need for private sector rental homes is. If we built too much social housing I would want to widen the Gateway criteria even further and that would therefore reduce the need for private sector rental homes. I want us to have more schemes to support first-time buyers and every private renter you turn into a first number that is one less private sector rental home that you would need. For what I would consider an acceptable number, that will always be a moving number and so I do not think it is useful for me, as a Minister, to give that kind of number. But I hope that answer is helpful to the Deputy.

3.3.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful for the Minister's answer and there are a number of supplementaries that follow; it is probably better done in written form. The first supplementary that I wish to ask is: the Minister kindly mentioned the number of 17,000 homes that are on the new registered scheme for rentals. Could he please explain where that data comes from, because it is a surprising number based upon the dwelling house loan statistics, which he quite rightly says, which there is an expected number of 10,739 qualified private rentals, *et cetera*. Maybe he misspoke.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

He certainly did misspeak because of course that number that I gave also includes social housing units, so I apologise for not separating those 2 numbers when giving that.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not know whether that is any ... he has put me off my train of thought because 17,000 is the wrong figure.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You have had your supplementary.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Fine, but it was on an erroneous information.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you want to give the correct figure? Do you have it?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The equivalent figure that I would have from the census would have just under 11,000 qualified private sector rental homes, which goes up closer to 15,000 when you include unqualified and staff accommodation and that kind of thing as well. I apologise for misspeaking in my previous answer.

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

The number of qualified private rental units stood at 7,806 in 2011 and that number increased in 2021 to 10,739 units representing a 38 percentage change increase. Does the Minister believe that this increase is acceptable and if not, why not?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Those figures are correct. That is what happens between 2011 and 2021, and for that period in our history an increase of 38 per cent in qualified private rental homes will have had some impact in helping satisfy demand for housing in the Island. But I have been clear, I would like Jersey eventually to get to a point where social rental housing surpasses private rent as the second biggest tenure of housing on the Island, with of course owner/occupation being the first part of that. In the coming years, I would like to see the increase predominantly with social housing rent. In that same time period, the total number of social rental homes only increased by 3 per cent, and that would be where my priority would be in the future.

3.3.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Can the Minister for Housing confirm what percentage change increase would be desirable for social housing units and when would he look to introduce such a figure and when would that objectively set?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Again, it is not a clear timetable or clear number that I am putting on, it is more of a high aspiration that I would like us to get to that point. Andium have been very effective in the last few years in planning to build more homes. If we wanted to get social housing to surpass qualified private rent without actually reducing the number of qualified private rent homes at the moment, that would require a jump of 100 per cent, which is obviously very ambitious and probably not deliverable, which is why I am not saying it ought to be a target set in stone but more of an aspiration for us to eventually get to. It is not the kind of thing you achieve in a short period of time; it is the kind of thing that might take decades. But it is where I would like us to get to and Andium are certainly very capable at helping us deliver that.

3.3.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Does the Minister have to hand a rough estimate of what support is given to private landlords for people who cannot afford their private rentals? I will leave that as my first question.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If the Deputy is asking about income support that is paid out to tenants who live in the private sector to assist them with their rent, I believe the figure is somewhere within the region of £9 million to £10 million a year.

3.3.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Obviously that £9 million to £10 million will ultimately go to private landlords. Does the Minister believe that it would be much better spent if some or indeed the aspiration of all of that money were going to Andium, which is entirely States-owned, so the money could be recycled rather than going into the pockets of private landlords paid for by the Jersey taxpayer?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The short answer to that is I agree, and the Minister for Treasury and Resources and other officials in the Treasury Department will know that I am very often saying to them that I would want Andium to keep as much of its return that it provides to Treasury, which is in the region of about £30 million a year. Of course, the more of that they can keep, the more that they can do, the more that they can develop and the less that we may need to rely on private sector rent for housing those people and that is the aspiration I want to get to.

[10:00]

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

The Minister mentioned policy changes in his initial answer. Does the Minister know if the availability of private rental properties has decreased since the rise in stamp duty for such properties was introduced?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No. Since that increase was introduced though it does enable Statistics Jersey to track now how many homes are being bought for the purpose of letting them out, which they were not easily able to do before. I am not aware of a recent estimate that they have produced of how many private rental homes there are now versus what it was 2 years ago before that surcharge was introduced. But it is the case that there are still homes being bought that are for the purpose of letting out, where the buyer is just paying the stamp duty and getting on with it. The numbers of course have reduced of how many of those ... we presume the numbers have reduced in terms of how many of those transactions are happening, but some are still happening, so there are still some people buying properties to let them out.

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

I think from the numbers that we were quoted earlier I could probably work it out myself by listening back, but for clarity, is it possible for the Minister to say of the private sector rentals what proportion are considered unqualified or licensed? Does the Minister consider this to be sufficient?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The number I gave was about half the amount and that includes different types of unqualified accommodations, so some of that will be staff accommodation, some of that will be lodging houses, *et cetera*. Let us be frank, there is a shortage of registered accommodation and that is making life difficult for some people who are coming to the Island who are not granted housing status through some other means. So, we do need to have conversations about whether we ought to be actively delivering new registered accommodation. I have had some conversations with the States of Jersey Development Company to see if there are ways that that can be incorporated into some of their future plans. Or we can find mechanisms to reduce our reliance on registered housing by helping those who currently have registered status, get some kind of status to be able to access the qualified private rental market. But if we are going to do that, we have got to be very careful about it and make sure that we have gone through the numbers and modelled what kind of impact it might have, depending on how far we go. We are not in a position yet to say exactly how far we would go, but work is being done behind the scenes to model that to see if there are tweaks we can make.

3.3.8 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

The Minister must have read my mind for what my follow-up question was going to be about the ... does he believe that steps should be actively taken to increase the supply there. I am slightly confused about which way the Minister's policy preference would sit there. Could he perhaps expand on that? Does he believe that we should be changing policy and creating more unqualified units?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I do not see it as either/or, partly for the reason that because of the Control of Housing and Work Law there has not been a lot of new registered accommodation provided in that time because of the limits that there are on it, which means as time goes by the registered accommodation that we have in Jersey becomes aged and not as nice as the newest homes that are built. So, I am absolutely in favour of being able to build some more so that we can have nicer homes for people to come and live in if they have registered status. But at the same time there are tweaks we can make to our system of entitled status that could make it more accessible to the rental market for some of those who come to

the Island. I am cautious that that has got to be done carefully so we do not overwhelm any part of the market, but I want to see both happen, but they are of course very different mechanisms.

3.3.9 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

I am grateful for the Minister to share his aspirations and I would like to probe it a bit further. Would the Minister advise if a world without private sector landlords is his long-term aspiration?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No.

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

From the response the Minister gave to Deputy Andrews on the balance of private properties built comparing with the social housing, from the recent fiscal policy report on housing, we have seen that there is no social housing built in Trinity and St. John's. Are there any plans to build any there?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

She has caught me slightly off guard. I cannot remember exactly what sites were allocated in the Bridging Island Plan for new homes in those. I believe that there are some, and I know the Constable of St. John is keen to show me around some. We were meant to go yesterday but were put off by the weather, and I was not on-Island because of the weather I can say as well. So that is an even better alibi. But, yes, I believe that there are some looking in those Parishes, and I am happy to keep up to date with the Constables of those Parishes to make sure we get the best out of them.

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

Is the Minister not able to give a specific number of licensed rental properties rather than a rounded 17,000? Of that number, can he state how many were inspected for compliance with standards before a licence was granted?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

For his information, the number was not 17,000 as corrected by the Minister.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think the Minister can answer the question himself.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No, Deputy Bailhache's question was about the licensing scheme, which includes both, and that exact number as of yesterday is 17,525. As for the number that have actually been inspected, I am delighted to tell the Deputy that that scheme is actually not within my Ministerial remit. It is for the Minister for the Environment, who is probably more up to date on that than I am. But I have been given high-level numbers for helping to answer these questions.

3.3.12 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The purpose of my question related to what I understand to be the colloquial understanding of private sector rental properties, therefore not social housing, and while you have allowed, quite understandably, Sir, questions in relation to unqualified housing, my oral question related to the understanding of social rented private sector rentals. Can I just summarise, to be absolutely clear, the Minister is saying that he does not know how many private sector rental properties are currently available, whether that has changed, and in the answers he gave to Deputy Ahier, he does not know whether the stamp duty and other changes has made a difference? Finally, can he confirm that what he said was that he wanted the number of private sector rental properties to reduce?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I want as many Islanders as possible to be able to buy the homes that they live in so that they do not need to rely on private sector rent. I think that most Islanders would consider that an appropriate direction of travel but there will always be a need for private sector rent in some shape or form and we ought to have the best offer as possible for those for whom that is appropriate. But I want to support Islanders into buying their own home and I want to support our social housing providers into providing more and better accommodation so that we can widen the Gateway as much as possible, and we have already been doing lots of that. If the Deputy wants to make an intervention.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

My question related to the private sector market not social rented. I am asking about the private sector rental market and so any answers that relate to growing the supply of other things may be interesting but my question related to what the Minister's policy is for the private sector rental market and his answers are displaying that he wants to reduce it but he does not want to say it.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

He asked a number of questions in his final supplementary that crossed a wide variety of issues and if he does not think that me saying what the place of social housing in our wider housing offer is relevant then I do not think he understands his own question that he asked, because of course it is relevant what proportions of different tenures are on offer and whether we have more or less private rental, the answer of whether we have more or less social rental is completely relevant in answering that question. I would like us to get to a situation where there is less need for private sector rental accommodation because more Islanders have been able to afford to own their home. That is an aspiration I believe most Jersey people have and one which I believe in and support. Part of his final supplementary question asked about knowing the exact availability of private sector rental accommodation at the moment. I do not know what the exact number is because it is constantly moving. Some people decide at one moment in time even if they own surplus properties that they are not going to be offering them. There are developments that are being built all the time, some of which have been bought that are being put out to let. We can go on *places.je* if we like and see how many private sector rental homes are available at the moment. It is a constantly moving number so I cannot put an exact one on it but we have got various different data sources that help us give a picture.

Deputy M. Tadier:

May I raise a point of order? I note that Deputy Ozouf very skilfully managed to get a second supplementary which should have been his final.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, he was asking for, I think ... his point was that he had not had an answer to the questions he was asked. At least that is what I thought he was going to make.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could I ask in that case there should be a point of order to say I do not think my question has been answered correctly and then wait for the ruling from the Chair otherwise I think the premise will be that we have 2 final supplementaries, which I think is incorrect.

The Deputy Bailiff:

It is, you are right. Thank you very much.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Point of order, Sir. I made a very clear question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

This is not a point of order though, is it?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Well, I want to make a point of order, Sir. Could you please rule whether or not, and maybe after consideration, the question was answered in the way which it was framed, because you have allowed a number of supplementary questions which do not relate to the underlying purpose of the question? I understand why there is some confusion, but I was quite clear, I thought, and I would welcome some advice about how this could be conducted properly because my answer still remains unclear.

The Deputy Bailiff:

A lot of questions were asked arising from the original question, and overall, on balance, my view is that your questions were answered.

3.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the implementations of the recommendations contained in the Jersey's Fiscal Policy Panel 2024 Annual Report (OQ.179/2024):

Will the Minister advise whether she intends to implement all of the recommendations contained in the Jersey's Fiscal Policy Panel 2024 Annual Report, and if not, will she indicate which will not be progressed and explain why?

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

The F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel) report was only issued on 24th September, a week ago today. It is important that the recommendations are properly considered and deliverability assessed before I can make any firm commitments. I think it is fair to say that we have set out strategies in our current Budget to address some of those recommendations and the panel have welcomed some of the approaches taken in this Budget. Some of the recommendations however will have to be implemented through future Budgets. So, while I might recommend them, it is a matter for the Council of Ministers, and indeed the wider Assembly and possibly future Assemblies. For example, the F.P.P. recommends restraint in current spending and the Council of Ministers has clearly stated our ambition to curb the growth in public service expenditure. However, all Members have a part to play in this. Our efforts to constrain expenditure would be undermined by amendments to the Budget that result in greater expenditure and greater deficits. We are extremely fortunate to have individuals of such high calibre on the Fiscal Policy Panel and I would emphasise the value that I put on their advice. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the panel again for their ongoing work and, in particular, for this report.

3.4.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister in her response did not mention inflation. The F.P.P. report states that: "... there are emerging signs that domestically-generated inflation may become more entrenched. A Budget that increases the growth in day-to-day spending is likely to push up inflation ...". What actions is the Minister taking to slow her expansionary fiscal policy over the coming year, and will she be addressing this in her final Budget next year?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not agree that the Budget is in any way expansionary. The Council of Ministers and the Government have set out a clear ambition to curb growth in the public sector. We have a clear plan to do that. It must be balanced against immediate pressures and we are absolutely cognisant of the impact of additional spending on inflation, and that is why we are trying to reduce it.

3.4.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

I have compared a Government Plan that we voted here in December 2023, an allocation to transfer to Central Reserve that we decided to do in 2025. That time we voted for a £62,188 million to transfer to Central Reserve. What has happened with the new Budget that has been lodged? The Council of Ministers are asking to transfer £34 million, which is a reduction of 45 per cent of transfer to Central Reserve, compared to what we decided a year ago. Would the Minister consider to bring in an amendment and to increase transfer to Central Reserve based on the latest report of F.P.P.?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not have the Budget in front of me. I cannot remember that particular point.

[10:15]

The Central Reserve covers a number of things. If it is reduced, it is again in line with trying to reduce spending and addressing a prudent approach. If she would like to confirm the detail, I can respond to her separately, but I do not have the Budget in front of me and I do not have a photographic memory of it.

3.4.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would welcome clarification as to why our transfer to the Central Reserve would be reduced by 45 per cent. But what steps, if any, would the Minister consider to take in 2025 to increase our Central Reserve?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

We already have. Our Budget for this year will set out transfers to the Central Reserve. That is our Budget for 2025. Further reserves for future years will be considered over the course of next year. I am afraid that I am struggling to understand the question. The Central Reserve is, I believe, a reserve to meet inflation and central costs. It is not the Strategic Reserve and Stabilisation Fund, which I believe is the focus of the F.P.P. work.

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

If the Government is not deploying fiscally expansionary policies, is the Government deploying fiscally contractionary policies?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I do not believe that we are. The message is very clear from the public, and indeed now from the F.P.P., that we must try to limit current spending. That is a difficult thing to do because everybody wants us to spend money. Ministers have focused very clearly in the 2025 Budget on C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) and delivering things that will have an immediate impact. We have reprioritised other spending and departments have been asked to prioritise the matters that are most important to them. We are not withdrawing services; we are continuing to focus on the important services that the public need.

3.4.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Is the focus on maintaining the size of the Government, or is it about seeing a reduction in the size of the public sector?

Deputy M. M.E. Millar:

I think we are confusing several elements. We are focused on reducing the size of the public sector. We have been clear about that. This is now turning into a question about the Budget and not the F.P.P. report, but we have been very clear that we are trying to reduce the amount of reliance on consultants, for example. We are reducing extraneous layers of management. We have already discussed that. We have a recruitment freeze to try and stop additional recruitment. We have

cancelled a large number of jobs that are sitting there unfilled and unfunded, so we are trying to reduce spend while still providing essential services.

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

Remaining strictly within the oral question that Deputy Ahier asked, the Minister was not entirely clear. Is she planning to produce a report on the Fiscal Policy Panel's 2024 annual report and can she confirm - and again I have asked this and other Members have asked this - will she explain and provide a detail of the reports that are going to come out before the Budget, including the F.P.P. ... any amendments or reports?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

We will respond to the F.P.P. report, but I am not anticipating issuing any further reports. I have said again that if the Deputy would like me to direct him to the reports that he feels previous Governments have issued that we have not, we will consider that. But I am not going to create reports where none have previously been issued.

3.4.7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Could the Minister kindly say when she will be providing, or the Council of Ministers will be providing, their report on the F.P.P. 2024 annual report? When will it be provided?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I do not have a timescale for that just at the moment.

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

The Minister balks somewhat at Deputy Ahier's description of the Budget as an expansionary Budget. But if I could quote from the F.P.P.'s analysis of the Budget that we are to consider in November, they say that there is 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. Does the Minister disagree with this finding of the F.P.P.?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I believe that our spending is less. There is an increase, of course, but my recollection is - again, I do not have the number in front of me - the increase in spending is about 5.4 per cent and the previous Government Plan was, I think, 9.4 per cent.

3.4.9 Deputy K.L. Moore:

How will the Minister deal with this position where she is at odds with the findings of the F.P.P., who say very clearly that there is a 3 per cent increase on the previous Government Plan?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not recall the previous Government having a great deal of ... it did not necessarily respond fully to previous F.P.P. reports. We produced a Budget before the F.P.P. report, we have tried to get that in early. Our response to the F.P.P. report, which covers some very high-level issues, will be developed over the next year and the year after.

3.4.10 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Recommendation 3 of the F.P.P. report says: "The panel recommends that further immediate action be taken to improve the balance of the Stabilisation Fund. That could take the form of a commitment to investing a proportion of cyclical tax revenues into the Stabilisation Fund, as well as a commitment to invest a proportion of upside Pillar Two revenues." Will she commit the Government to following that course of action?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I am not going to make a commitment here, but the F.P.P. have recognised our efforts to increase the Stabilisation Fund. They have welcomed that we have an intention to invest £41.6 million of our base case Pillar Two revenues into the Stabilisation Fund, but the Stabilisation Fund cannot be increased overnight unless we did a significant cut in the delivery of public services. We have also said that we will invest surpluses of up to £25 million from the Consolidated Fund, and we will consider further investment of further revenues in due course as we see how Pillar Two evolves.

3.4.11 Deputy J. Renouf:

I note that the panel says that it recommends further immediate action to improve the balance of the Stabilisation Fund. Can the Minister for Treasury and Resources confirm that she is rejecting that recommendation?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I am not rejecting it. We have set out a plan. We will consider further what we can do and all those Members who are keen to curb ... I am hoping therefore that all Members who are so keen on us building that fund and investing funds will not be bringing forward amendments to require further spending to this Budget.

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

Does the Minister consider that plundering £20 million from the Social Security Fund to assist with the introduction of the living wage is consistent with the recommendations of the Fiscal Policy Panel?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The Deputy will know that I disagree with his characterisation of ‘plunder’. There is no money being taken from that fund. The Fiscal Policy Panel did not discuss the Social Security Fund, they discussed the Strategic Reserve and the Stabilisation Fund, which are quite different.

3.4.13 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The panel highlights concerns about the economic growth, concerns about productivity, concerns about inflation, concerns about house prices in the housing market generally, concerns about the labour market, concerns about Strategic Reserves and the Stabilisation Fund. What will the Minister do to assuage the F.P.P.’s concerns, and does she have any other concerns about our economic outlook herself that they may have missed?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I do not think anybody is particularly surprised by the things that the F.P.P. have said. We all know that we have to reduce spending, and that is what the Budget of 2025 is aiming to do. It has set out a plan to increase our Strategic Reserve, and it has set out a plan to increase our Stabilisation Fund. Also, in the context of Pillar Two, the F.P.P. have indeed welcomed this Government’s approach to the handling of future Pillar Two funds. and it is important that we continue to deal with that money carefully and cautiously and not as a windfall that is there for the grabbing for any particular purpose that Members have in mind. We must deal with that carefully, and that is part of our ongoing strategy of using those funds wisely to invest specifically in the ongoing economic productivity and competitiveness of this Island. It is very important that, going forward, we continue to work on competitiveness of the Island, and we again have set out a plan to utilise a significant proportion of our base case Pillar Two funding that we anticipate on competitiveness of our Island so that people know Jersey is open for business and is ready to grow.

3.5 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding recommendations outlined in “Getting it right first time: orthopaedics and theatre efficiency review” (OQ.180/2024):

Following the publication of the *Getting it right first time: orthopaedics and theatre efficiency review*, will the Minister provide details of what progress, if any, has been made to meet the recommendations outlined in this review?

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

I am pleased to confirm that the Surgical Care Group, that is the group with responsibility for implementing the recommendations, has already prioritised them and has commenced work on 11 of the 36 which were made following the review. I would be very happy to furnish the Deputy with a copy of the priority list detailing the various elements of the work that are already in progress, if that would be helpful.

3.5.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I thank the Minister for that offer and gratefully accept, as I am sure will the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel. The recommendations identify a need to have greater expertise in delivering system changes and driving greater efficiency. With the departure of the chief officer, is the Minister confident that he has the right skills in his management team?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I think I have to say a straightforward yes to that.

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

Recommendation 22 called for a rapid review of the ophthalmology pathway. Has that been started and when can we expect that to be complete?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Offhand, I could not say whether that is one of the 11 that is started or not. I have to be honest with you, this is an efficiency review, it is a review of a department that has been highlighted as having notably good practice, and so it is not something at this point in time that takes up a huge amount of my concentration because there are other matters that are, in my view, more of a priority. I cannot answer that question, I am afraid.

3.5.3 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Given that the question has been asked on the floor of the States Assembly, could I request that the information the Minister offered earlier is sent to all States Members, please? Could I add to the question, because recommendation 22 referred to cataracts theatre appointments, is the Minister aware if they are currently ongoing in Jersey as well as those that are being undertaken in the U.K.?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

My understanding is to a limited extent, to the best of my knowledge.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The other part of the question was: are you prepared to share that information with all Members?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Most certainly, yes.¹

3.5.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

¹ [HCS Advisory Board - Papers - Part A - September 2024.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

- Pages 113 to 116 - Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) Report and Action Plan
- Pages 117 to 143 - Getting It Right First Time Orthopaedics and Theatre Efficiency Review

I would like to ask the Minister what progress has been made for establishing a full multidisciplinary team for orthopaedic surgery which should include the use of dedicated physio resources and a full patient pathway?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

As I say, there are 11 of those recommendations already underway; I do not carry around with me an intimate knowledge of those areas. There is a good team at work there and they are doing that. If there are a collection of people that are interested in this, I am very happy to get the head of the Surgical Care Group to give them a briefing if it is occupying a lot of people's concerns.

3.5.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

A different one, would the Minister confirm if he had read the report?

[10:30]

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Yes, I certainly have.

3.5.6 Deputy K.L. Moore:

The Minister described this review as an efficiency review, which indeed it is, but he said that he has greater priorities than simply dealing with efficiency. Given that efficiency has an impact upon patient care and also costs, what greater priorities does the Minister have and how will he ensure that they are delivered to the benefit of the patients in our care?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I do not recall saying that I did not consider efficiency to be a priority. In fact, as the Deputy will know, I am trying to go through a redesign of the entire health service to make it more efficient. What I do know is that in large organisations if you have got good people doing their job and they have 36 efficiency recommendations, you generally tend to leave it to those people to implement those recommendations to make those efficiencies.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Question 6 was Deputy Jeune's. Is the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development content to answer that question in writing?

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

Absolutely, no problem.

3.6 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the annual savings detailed within the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025 -2028 (OQ.184/2024):

Further to the annual savings detailed within the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028, will the Chief Minister advise the rationale and decision-making processes behind the determination of proposed savings and advise which heads of expenditure are to be targeted for reduction in order to achieve them?

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

The Budget includes £47 million of savings over the next 4 years and sets out both the rationale and how the savings have been apportioned. In recent years, Members will know that public spending has been growing at unsustainable rates and the Budget includes steps to curb this growth. The Fiscal Policy Panel, in their most recent report, has also highlighted those challenges. This includes greater focus on reprioritising existing spending to deliver our C.S.P. priorities as agreed by the Assembly.

The Budget was developed by the Council of Ministers in a series of workshops, some 10 in total. Decisions were agreed at these workshops and formally agreed as a package at the end of the process, which manifested in the Budget. All departmental heads of expenditure are contributing to savings but with more weighting towards offering protection to front line services. The savings are needed to curb growth in expenditure while funding our priorities and maintaining balanced public finances.

3.6.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I thank the Chief Minister for his answer, but would he consider improving the degree of transparency about his approach to improving public sector efficiency? We have limited detail on the risks associated with this approach and we cannot find any evidence of any Ministerial plans that allow Assembly Members to also consider and assess the impact of some of the suggestions and decisions that he has just referred to.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The details of where the savings proposed are, are clearly set out in great detail in the Budget, almost line by line. The risks of curbing the growth in our expenditure are far less than not curbing the growth in our expenditure, as highlighted in the Fiscal Policy Panel. There is a lot of detail that has gone into this. Ministers continue to work with their officials on a daily basis to make sure we are managing public finances and reprioritising in a way that this Government considers to be in the best interests in the Island. This Government is open to providing more detail to States Members whenever requested. It is possibly more effective to write to us or come and see us. We would have meetings, we will arrange meetings for States Members or groups of States Members where they are specifically interested in certain detail. That offer is of course remaining open for the duration of this government.

3.6.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

One of the proposals in his Government Plan or Budget for an area of savings is to reduce the spending on arts, heritage and culture and rescind the one per cent for arts in that to reduce its budget effectively. Could I ask the Minister, in that decision-making process was any consultation done with the arts, culture and heritage sector to tell them that in the next few years their budget will be reduced?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I believe that question would be better directed to the Minister with responsibility for that, and I understand he is working very closely with that sector. The proposal in the Budget - by the way, I was a supporter of the one per cent for art - but given the financial challenges we are facing in the future, was to peg the one per cent and apply R.P.I. (retail price index) cost of living to it on an annual basis rather than linking it to the total head of expenditure. Considering we have been seeing exponential growth in the cost of running the health service, for example, we might see the one per cent for art being inflated to a level that was more than anticipated. This is not an effort to try and curtail the spending to art, it is just a measure to keep it at what we think is a realistic and very good, albeit very much-increased, level from when Deputy Tadier brought the original proposition.

3.6.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister accept that this example of a clear States decision in 2019 which is subtly being rescinded in this Budget is a wider example of a risk that his Government is proposing cuts on the back of a substantial lack of consultation, first of all, with the Assembly that voted for that, but also with the wider constituency and industry that is going to be experiencing those cuts?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, I do not agree with that because in my view, and I am prepared to be corrected if I am wrong, a cut is when you reduce spending in something. We are not planning to reduce our investment in the

arts, which is incredibly important to the Island; on the contrary we have seen significant growth in that sector. What we are trying to do in a lot of areas is curb the growth, and I will explain that. That means we are not going to allow the growth to be as much as it was previously forecast to be, so we are curbing the growth. That means we are not going to cut the funding, we are just going to increase it at a slightly more realistic level in relation to our finances. That is pegging it at its current level and then applying cost of living to it every year. It is not cutting it, it is just curbing its growth. I am quite happy to keep explaining that until it sinks in.

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

In the last 5 Government Plans there was £256 million approved in growth bids. I want to know whether the Chief Minister is going to do anything about this and will he then increase the number of efficiencies in future Government Plans as well?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

What we have decided to do is reduce the growth bids - the current growth bids - in the 2024 Budget, by 20 per cent to help curb the growth, so that is allowing 80 per cent of the previously-agreed growth to continue. The Budget we have lodged I think dovetails into the current Fiscal Policy Panel because it is a plan that does curb growth, it starts to deliver savings, it starts to reduce the cost of staffing and reducing the number of roles. It deals with putting money into the Stabilisation Fund and the Strategic Reserve. The Fiscal Policy Panel report, which is very helpful, does remain positive about Jersey's strong financial potential, but it is stark in other aspects of what we need to do. On the back of that, we will pay careful attention to it, consider carefully what the response should be, but I suggest we are going to have to, when we come to next year's budgeting, work that around more closely the advice of the Fiscal Policy Panel.

3.6.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

There was mention of £47 million of efficiency savings across the Government Plan. Some individuals may think that does not really go far enough, so what does the Chief Minister have to say to those voices?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think it is important we keep it under review because times change. The economy changes, the backdrop changes, the geopolitical situation is changing, we are living in a challenging world, so we have to be prepared to revisit our spending on an annual basis. I think that is why our process works well; so, yes, we remain alive to that fact. I think the success of Jersey will depend on us in the future listening to expert financial advice and it will also rely on the collective endeavours, not just of the Government, but of this whole Assembly, to respond to that and make sure we do the right thing after careful and thorough debate.

3.6.6 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Following the answer from the Chief Minister to Deputy Wilson when being asked about the transparency, the Government Plan was cited. If we are looking through the Government Plan, a reprioritisation of previous growth funding, we have only one line saying: "Revenue expenditure growth funding totalling £3.1 million allocated to Government Plan 2024-2027 has been reprioritised according to the objectives." It would be helpful to have an understanding how it was reprioritised. If I am going down, I have cuts from the departments but not per project. We do not have Ministerial plans, I understand; we now have departmental plans. Would the Chief Minister consider further clarification in writing to the Assembly or publication of the departmental plans ahead of the Budget debate to help with transparency to understand the numbers in the Budget?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We can certainly look at that. As I reiterate, the Government remains open to providing at any time any further detail that any Member may wish to see. We would rather react and do it that way than providing reams and reams of additional information, the majority of which might not be required. I repeat the offer to any Member seeking further information to make contact with either the Treasury or the relevant Minister or myself and we will provide whatever granular detail is required.

3.6.7 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister consider publishing departmental detailed plans ahead of the debate for the benefit of the public and all States Members?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, some of the departmental plans, I understand, have or are about to be published, and the target is to make sure they are all published in time for the debate.

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

The Chief Minister has repeated a stock phrase this morning 'curbing the growth' but words are sometimes easy, actions a little harder. As I read to the Minister for Treasury and Resources earlier, the Fiscal Policy Panel have found that compared to last year's Government Plan this year's represents a 3 per cent increase in expenditure of £103 million which is net of a proposed savings programme that he talks about of £47 million. Could the Chief Minister provide the Assembly with the rationale and the facts around this curbing the growth programme which is, in effect, an increase of 3 per cent on expenditure?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

As the Minister for Treasury and Resources mentioned, we have reduced growth in the overall Budget, which was running at 9 per cent down to 4 per cent. The 3 per cent figure that is alluded to is factual but that is a lot lower than it could have been. We had to work extremely diligently in the 10 workshops I mentioned before to reprioritise. If you strip out the increase in the Health budget that we have applied, and we were to strip out or to make allowance for the 8 per cent or 9 per cent - I cannot remember the exact figure - increase in the payroll in line with the very high R.P.I., if you strip those figures out the Budget would have been very similar or reduced somewhat. What we have had to do to curb the growth is reprioritise and if we had not have reprioritised, it would have been a lot higher than it is now. As I have said before, this is a start in a process of bringing our public finances back into line and producing an annual report which is manageable and sustainable for the Island and not carrying on as we have in the past.

[10:45]

The F.P.P. also pointed out that we had ignored their advice over the last 2 or 3 years in relation to the Strategic Reserve and that is something which this Budget starts to address.

3.6.9 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Sorry, I smile because of course the Chief Minister was the Deputy Chief Minister under the Le Fondré Government which had ignored the Fiscal Policy Panel's recommendations. The question was about the rationale and I ask again, because it was not answered in the previous answer, where is the rationale from the Chief Minister?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

In recent years public spending has been growing at unsustainable rates and the Budget we have lodged takes steps to curb this growth. It includes a greater focus on reprioritising spending to deliver this Assembly's priorities as outlined and supported in the Common Strategic Policy, as well as balancing the books and delivering sustainable public finances. I am not sure what else I can say to that, we can all learn from the past. I am not going to pass blame to the previous Government. I take

full responsibility for all of my time in the States, for what we got right and what we got wrong, even in the most challenging of times. Like I say, getting this right, putting our finances back on the right track is going to rely on the collective endeavours of this Assembly. I urge Members to work together to achieve that.

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

May I ask the Chief Minister in advance of the Budget whether or not the Government will be providing Members with the detail of where the savings are going to be made which basically break down the figure that is in the Budget? I cannot remember what it is, but is he going to provide the detail of where the savings are going to be made?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I maintain that the detail is listed in the Budget. I repeat my offer to the Deputy and other Members, if they seek further granular detail on a specific area, then ask us and we will provide that. As the Minister for Treasury and Resources said, we are not planning to produce a raft of reports, many of which might prove unnecessary. We prefer to direct our resources in a more productive way, but I just want to reiterate the invitation. Please, if there is any further information that is not in the Budget, which itself is a hefty, detailed document, then let us know and we will provide the answers.

3.6.11 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am very happy to take the Chief Minister's offer, as other Members I think are completely unclear of what are the actual implications and what the savings are going to be and how they are going to be delivered. I am willing to take up that; I think a number of other Members are. There is a Scrutiny Panel looking at the Budget. Will the Chief Minister stand by and bring his Minister for Treasury and Resources and other Ministers with him to explain to Members what we do not understand, which is what and how the savings are going to be delivered?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Of course I will try and help. Can I, in the first instance, refer the Deputy to page 106 of the Budget which sets out the expenditure cuts for every single department?

3.6.12 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I accept Budget lines are in the public domain but transparency is more than producing a set of figures. I think what we are trying to ask the Chief Minister is if he could provide the context for the benefit of the public, as well as members of the Council of Ministers and Members of this Assembly. Can he advise what compromises were made as a result of the decision-making processes and how these have impacted upon the Government's risk profile and the delivery intentions of his Ministerial colleagues and in which portfolios the impact of these savings will result in cuts to services and which ones?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The business of Government at any time involves compromise and reprioritisation depending on the direction and the strategies and the policies of the existing Government and their Ministers. All I can say is the Budget process, and all the workshops and meetings we had during that, I felt was productive and successful, where disagreements and juxtapositions were worked out in a democratic way and we came to a good, balanced position that the Council of Ministers could support unanimously when presenting the Budget. I am not aware where there have been any compromises at all in our work, in our calculations, that provides any risk to Islanders. On the contrary, in fact, we have redirected savings to front line services, including increases in the Health budget, increases in Education, we are redirecting money to affordable homes, we have reduced G.P. (general practitioner) fees. We are putting that money into areas that help Islanders in these challenging times and that is the aim of the Budget. I have not identified ...

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

A point of order, please.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not going to give way until I finish my answer ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, it is a point of order. What is your point of order?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I have asked a question about what compromises, and I have not had an answer to that question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

He said there are no compromises; he has given you that answer. Chief Minister, is there anything else you want to say?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, thank you.

3.7 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding Condor Ferries bookings (OQ.188/2024):

Will the Minister advise what assurances he has sought or received from Condor Ferries that existing bookings will be honoured or fully refunded in the eventuality that Condor are not awarded the Channel Islands passenger and freight operator contract and as a result, cease to operate?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question. As the Assembly knows, we are in a procurement process at present. However, should Condor's contractual relationship end next year, I fully expect the company and the stakeholders to have made adequate provision for continuity of services through to expiry of the operating agreement on 27th March 2025. I continue to seek adequate assurance on this point from the Board of Condor and wrote to them recently on precisely this point. I do sincerely hope that Condor and its shareholders, Brittany Ferries and Columbia Threadneedle European Sustainable Infrastructure Fund, will provide this assurance to me.

3.7.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Could the Minister clarify when he wrote to them and how long he has been waiting for a response?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I wrote to them on 23rd September.

3.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding curbing public sector growth (OQ.187/2024):

Will the Chief Minister advise what further plans, if any, he has to curb public sector growth beyond the current Civil Service Grade 11 and above recruitment freeze?

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

May Deputy Ferey take this question in his role as Vice-Chair of the States Employment Board?

Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair, States Employment Board - rapporteur):

The short answer is there are currently no plans to extend the recruitment freeze to further grades.

3.8.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

There has been much attention about head count and payroll expenditure reduction; however, what actions is the Chief Minister taking, alongside the Council of Ministers, to reduce non-payroll expenditure?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

As well as the £15 million payroll savings for grades of 11 and above, there is also looking at not relying on consultants, as has been the case in the past. Also, we currently have 1,000 vacancies that have been removed from the system. This allows us to report more effectively on actual vacancies across departments and get a clearer picture of where our workforce is.

3.8.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

As we heard that it was confirmed there is no freeze on recruitment for grade 11 and under, would the Assistant Chief Minister clarify if it includes people who are retiring, taking redundancies or being promoted from the front line from grade 11 and under to grade 11 and above? Would these positions be advertised and recruited?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank the Deputy for the question. It applies across the board for grade 11 and above but, of course, front line services and essential roles are excluded from that freeze. Yes, there will be some exclusions on that recruitment freeze but broadly it is to make sure that we continue to make those payroll savings and that we are able to redeploy staff who find themselves wanting to move from one department to another, and allows us to make better use of the workforce.

3.8.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will try again and I will try to be more clear, grade 11 and under, not 11 and above, people retired, taking redundancies, moving up the grade. Will all positions for grade 11 and under be open for recruitment or is there a freeze as well there?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Yes, I think I made that clear in my answer to the initial question that grade 11 and under are unaffected.

3.8.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The position with regard to grade 11 and above is that there will be a recruitment freeze. What work has the Government done to ensure that critically-important projects, risks and so on are not handicapped by the fluke occurrence of somebody leaving who is occupying a role where currently critical work is being done on, for example, matters that might attract considerable risk to the Government if they were to leave and not be replaced?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank the Deputy for the question. Critical and front line services are particularly excluded, so there are lots of safeguards in place to ensure that where work is critical, particularly to the work of the Government over this next 2 years, that they are excluded from that freeze.

3.8.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I just confirm, does that mean they are excluded in that they would not be allowed to take redundancy should they wish to go or excluded in the sense that if they are allowed to go that there will be recruitment allowed to fill in behind them?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

It is both of those things, but I would just like to reiterate that anyone can ask to be released at any stage. That would include grade 11, above and below, and those will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Question 10, Deputy Doublet will put to the Minister for Social Security.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think Deputy Doublet is at her doctor's appointment she mentioned earlier.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, she may be. Thank you very much.

3.9 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the current waiting time for a laparoscopy (OQ.172/2024):

Will the Minister advise the current waiting time for a laparoscopy, the number of patients on that waiting list and how many of those are waiting for surgery to diagnose or treat endometriosis?

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

Taking those questions in the order in which they were asked, I can inform the Deputy that the current median waiting time for a routine referral for laparoscopy is 29 weeks. At the end of August there were 376 people waiting for a laparoscopic procedure, and that is across general surgery and gynaecology. Of these patients, 12 were recorded as waiting for surgery to diagnose or treat endometriosis. The median waiting time for these patients is 23½ weeks and all of these are defined as routine referrals. Given that these waiting times are longer than we might like in an ideal world, it might also be helpful to mention that the median waiting time for an urgent referral is 3½ weeks.

3.9.1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

I appreciate the information from the Minister. Endometriosis affects one in 10 women of reproductive age and often has a significant impact on their daily lives and physical and mental health. The U.K. has made it a priority as part of its Women's Health Strategy. What is this Government doing to help those Islanders who are impacted by reducing those waiting lists and improving pathways?

[11:00]

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

This is a very difficult one. There are a number of different ailments that require priority. It is safe to say that anybody that requires an endoscopy could be deemed to be a priority, so I cannot say that we are doing anything specific in this particular area other than to try and make the service more efficient. I would say again that for more urgent treatment it is 3½ weeks, and if it is more urgent than that, then it would be even swifter.

3.9.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can the Minister therefore confirm that he does not expect those waiting lists to change substantially during the course of this remaining term of Government?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Sorry, could the Deputy repeat the question?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Could the Minister confirm that he does not expect to see those waiting list delays change during the term of this Government?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Well, I am certainly hoping they can be improved. I could not be specific as to the extent to which they might be improved, but we are certainly looking to improve them.

3.9.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

Could he therefore explain what measures he thinks are being taken now or are planned that will improve those waiting times?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

These can only be improved by just general improvements in the efficiency of the service and the staff available.

3.9.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister consider when he says “urgent”, 3½ weeks is fast enough when you live with incredible pain and it might be also symptoms for other diseases as well?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I do recall saying in my first answer that in an ideal world it is not a perfect scenario. The Deputy used the term in “incredible pain”. I do not think anybody at the hospital would leave somebody in incredible pain for 3½ weeks. I did try and explain that if it is extremely urgent then it would be virtually immediate, that is the way the priorities tend to work.

3.9.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am not sure if the Minister would be aware, with incredible pain there is no choice as to go to A. and E. (Accident and Emergency). Maybe because of this very, very strong pain people come into A. and E. and we have increased stress on A. and E. instead of addressing this as a more urgent normal procedure outside of A. and E.

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

As I said in my earlier response, I think we can make that case for almost anybody suffering from any ailment. The truth of the matter is that the service is under quite a lot of pressure and we are doing what we can to improve the overall performance of the departments.

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

I noted that the Minister said the average wait was 29 weeks, it is 31 in the U.K. Members are aware now that we spend more *per capita* than most in the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) on healthcare. What is his target for a waiting list which would be acceptable given the resources that we are putting, and how is he going to make efficiencies or other changes to reach that target?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I think I have to correct the Deputy, I am not certain that we do spend more *per capita* than the rest of the O.E.C.D. In fact, I think on a *per capita* basis we are slightly below the average. In terms of specifics for endoscopy, once again these are drilling down into individual areas and I do not have a specific plan for endoscopy any more than I do for the dozens of other areas, other than the fact that we are trying to make the whole organisation more efficient in a number of ways.

3.9.7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think it is a laparoscopy; I know what an endoscopy is because I have had one. Is he really saying, I understand the point that he makes that he ... I am not asking to have a debate about the issue of Government spending, all we know is we spend a lot on healthcare. Is he saying that he does not have what a good looks-like target is for laparoscopies?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I am very happy to say I do not have a target for that particular procedure any more than I have a particular target for anything else other than to improve all elements of the service to the greatest extent possible.

3.9.8 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Would the Minister commit to reviewing the pathways that are in place for the diagnosis, treatment and maintenance of endometriosis and provide an update to Members in due course, including perhaps looking at the options that are available for working with community settings to help in this area?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

This may not be terribly popular but I am reluctant to commit myself to any particular thing by virtue of a question that is asked in the Assembly. I will make the point again that we are doing what we can, where we can, right across the piece. As I say, it becomes difficult for the staff involved if every time somebody stands up and asks a question that I will make a commitment in that particular area. I will just continue to say that we will do our best in all areas.

3.10 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding a reduction in public sector spending (OQ.176/2024):

Will the Chief Minister detail any tangible actions he is considering to deliver value for money and a reduction in public sector spending, and advise what reductions he has implemented to date?

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

The following tangible actions have been instigated to curb public expenditure: reprioritisation of growth budgets and reducing reliance on consultants and other third-party labour and thus curbing spend on this expensive resource, a staff vacancy freeze, alluded to in a previous question from August until March 2025. We are not bringing in additional resources and only using existing resources wherever possible. Encouraging departments to think hard about what activities they undertake and to align with agreed corporate priorities and key services. In respect of future plans for savings and value for money, these will be delivered under the following theme: review of the arm's-length organisations and regulatory organisations, reducing the office footprint, reduction in roles through removing management layers and extraneous activity, and reduction in consultancy, as I have already alluded to. As I said before, the reprioritisation in growth funding and the overall curbing of growth during the life of the Budget we have presented.

3.10.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

It is interesting that the answer was using the resources and curbing growth and reprioritisation; we hear this a lot. Cutting costs is just about the numbers. I would like to bring the attention of the Chief Minister to the line in the Budget: 'Departmental net revenue expenditure.' In December 2023 we approved here for 2025 £1,050,000,000 - just above £50 million. For this year, for 2025 for the same departmental revenue expenditure, the Council of Ministers is requesting £1,147,970,000. Would the Chief Minister explain the increase by £100 million in departmental revenue expenditure?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I wonder if the Deputy could direct me to the relevant page in the Budget so I can look at the table she is referring to.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It is page 42 in the current Budget and 40 in the previous Budget. Sorry, apology, 49 in this Budget.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure I have the right one. I am looking at page 41 of the Budget.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Sorry, it is my eyesight because it was a screenshot. Apologies, Chief Minister. If you are looking for page 41, it is departmental net revenue expenditure. We can see that in 2024 it was £1,057,000,000 and the same line asking for £1,147,000,000 for this year.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure I am going to have time to go through it line by line and explain. I wonder if the Deputy would allow me to come back to her.

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, I do not think we can ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

No, I think that I am happy for the Chief Minister to look into this, and we do have questions without notice.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, this might come back to haunt you later on this morning. [Laughter]

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I expect it will. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any other questions arising from this question?

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

This is all part of a picture of Members wanting to know some detail. The Chief Minister previously in another question relating to savings, of which this is another one - which just indicates the fact - he pointed out that he was referring to page 106. The problem is, and again I think this is where the current question is going, where is the detail, what does it mean, and is he going to come forward with Ministers to explain what these numbers on pages, either 104, 105, or the previous page, what do they mean? Because we do not understand them and there has to be also a level of trust. I hope the Chief Minister would agree that there has to be a high level of trust in the Government delivering them?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I refer the Deputy to my previous answer, the large amount of detail there is in the Budget, the savings proposals as outlined in the table on page 106. I do not think any Budget in the past, even when the Deputy was the Minister for Treasury and Resources for that period of time, published separately what would be hundreds and hundreds of pages of granular detail if you wanted a line-by-line breakdown of all of these figures. Which is why I extend the invitation to Members, if there is a specific area they would like to see more detail on, provide us with the specifics and we will provide

the answer. We are not going to spend time and resource producing hundreds or potentially thousands of pages of information that might not be necessary.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I do remind Members under Standing Order 10(8): ‘A question shall not raise an issue which, in the current session, has been decided by the States, fully answered, or to which an answer has been refused.’ It is contrary to Standing Orders to ask a question that has already been answered in the session.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Your ruling just now indicates that we are not allowed to ask questions when it has been answered but if the answer does not satisfy Members in this democratic Assembly because it is not clear, surely we can press the Ministers. I am just trying to make sure that I am not incurring your wrath by asking the question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, if the question has been fully answered, you might not like the answer or agree with the answer, but if the question has been fully answered, in this case by the Chief Minister saying: “Well it is all on page 110” whatever it was, then we have got that answer twice. There is no point in asking the same question again. Firstly, it is contrary to Standing Orders but, secondly, we do have 21 questions to get through and ultimately other Members will suffer because their question simply will not be reached. We need to bear the framework in which these questions are asked in mind. A supplementary?

3.10.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Chief Minister was kind enough to refer to my tenure as the Minister for Treasury and Resources when we have delivered savings; he was part of that. Does he accept that the current explanations that are being given of the numbers that are put on in page 104 are insufficient for current Members to have the confidence to vote in favour of them in the Budget? I maybe summarise my question: is the problem really the lack of this Government not producing departmental plans which means effectively we just do not know what departments are doing?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, because we are producing departmental plans and they will be available. Some of them are available now. This Budget is running with the format the Budgets have been running in for many years. We have tried to put in as much information as possible. Of course, we are going through the Scrutiny function at the moment, which is scrutinising these figures in greater detail, and we are engaging in that fully. If there are any specific lines or specific areas that Members would like more detail on, then please speak to the relevant Minister, the Minister for Treasury and Resources or myself to articulate the information they want and we will provide it.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Can I raise a point of order very politely? I am quite serious. The Chief Minister just said he is going to produce departmental plans. In this Assembly, on the record, they have previously said they are not. I am so sorry, scrutiny is difficult, asking questions is difficult, but it is like trying to scrutinise a blancmange or an eel with Vaseline, it just keeps on moving.

The Deputy Bailiff:

A point of order is the purpose of seeking an order from the Chair so ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The point of order, he previously said ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Please do not speak over me.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry.

[11:15]

The Deputy Bailiff:

What order are you seeking? What ruling are you seeking under Standing Orders?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The ruling I am seeking is the Assembly has previously been told there are going to be no departmental plans issued by departments. The Chief Minister has just said now that there are. Are we to expect that the words of the Chief Minister are the previous ones or the ones that he has just said?

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is not a point of order, Deputy, you know it is not.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Well, I am trying to find out the facts.

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, no, we are not having a ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

He clarified the question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Sorry?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think I understand the question. The Deputy, I think, is mixing up, we said we are not going to produce departmental business plans and Ministerial plans.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You have answered the question, we cannot have a free-for-all, Chief Minister. Chief Minister, we cannot have a free-for-all. Are there any other questions arising from this question? A final supplementary, Deputy Gardiner?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will follow up later.

3.11 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding sustainable healthcare spending (OQ.182/2024):

Further to the Jersey's Fiscal Policy Panel 2024 Annual Report which concluded that 'the rate of growth in healthcare spending is not sustainable', will the Minister explain how he intends to ensure that healthcare spending is sustainable going forward?

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

I think the conclusion of Jersey's Fiscal Policy Panel is generally accepted by all concerned. As a consequence, I and my Ministerial colleagues are looking at a range of measures to improve the situation. Firstly, and as I have alluded to earlier, we are in the process of redesigning the structure of the entire health service in Jersey in order to make it more efficient and, as a consequence, more cost-effective. Work is also underway to address ways of increasing the number of people who utilise private health insurance. In addition, we are looking to introduce a range of measures to focus on illness prevention. This will involve encouraging lifestyle changes from childhood, a better patient monitoring using technology, more vaccinations and other various initiatives. This should help to reduce health costs in the long term. This will require more money in the initial stages, and that is something that will have to be dealt with and addressed when the work is complete. However, these measures alone will probably not be sufficient to deal with the issue of above-inflation increases in the cost of healthcare, so early in the new year we intend to start work to consider various options to increase the amount of money available for healthcare funding.

3.11.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I thank the Minister for the response. Given that whichever way you look at it this is going to involve some very difficult choices going forward for society, how does the Minister intend to engage the Island in the debate about future healthcare spending?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I accept what the Deputy says, this is going to be extremely difficult. We have not really got the time or resource to start that work before the new year. When we do, we will be defining ways when we have got a clearer idea of what is going to be required, that is the point at which we will start the whole process of consultation. We have not worked out that consultation yet but we will be developing it as we go.

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

Along with the efficiency review that provided the Minister for Health and Social Services with clear recommendations for improving the efficiency of the health service, there is also the financial recovery programme which has set forward a clear plan to make savings, consistent savings, year on year going forward. Will the Minister confirm that he is committed to delivering on the financial recovery programme?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

Yes, we are committed to doing that to the fullest extent possible. I think it is possibly proving a little bit more difficult than we anticipated because while it is going on, the cost of healthcare continues to rise above the cost of inflation. It is a bit of a losing battle but I certainly accept that we will be doing everything we can to reduce those costs.

3.11.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

The F.P.P. pointed out that health spending will soon reach 27 per cent of government spending which they commented puts us at the very top of the O.E.C.D. league table and is a level more commonly seen in relatively high tax Nordic countries. Is the Minister content to see Jersey travel in this direction and, if not, what other ideas does he have to solve the funding gap?

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I think the public of the Island expect a decent health service, so the likelihood is that we are going to continue to go in this direction, and it is going to be very difficult. We are a jurisdiction where we are trying to attract people to come and work here, we try to attract people to invest here, and to bring staff to work here, as much as anything for the benefit of Pillar Two taxation. I think it is very important for us to have as close as we can to a world-class health service. It is something I think we are going to have to pursue regardless of however painful that turns out to be.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Question 14, Deputy Warr will put to the Minister for Infrastructure. The Minister is absent, is the Assistant Minister prepared to take the question? Thank you very much.

3.12 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the three pedestrian crossing proposed on Rue de L'Étau (OQ.175/2024):

Yes, I understand the Assistant Minister is taking this question, and a very humble question, thank you, after all of what has just gone by. Will the Minister provide an update on the 3 pedestrian crossings proposed on Rue de L'Étau, including the timeframe for approval and installation?

Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Infrastructure - *rapporteur*):

Rue de L'Étau is a Parish road but the Road Traffic (Pedestrian Crossings) (Jersey) Order 1982 requires that all pedestrian crossings, whether on Parish roads or States-administered roads, are approved by the Minister for Infrastructure to ensure that crossings are constructed to the correct standards and have been thoroughly assessed through best practice safety assurance processes. The crossings on Rue de L'Étau have been proposed by the Parish of St. Helier's Roads Committee. They have been technically assessed by road safety engineers and the Minister will be signing the Ministerial Decision for their approval this week. The timeframe for their construction will be a matter for the Parish as the responsible by-roads authority.

3.12.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I thank the Minister for that answer. The underpass in the area was reopened in February this year, which has helped to alleviate the traffic levels on Rue de L'Étau. Why has it taken so long for the approval of the road crossings? How can future requests made by the Castle Quay Residents Association be more quickly expedited?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I do not think that the timetable for this is unduly long. The Parish initially consulted with the department in December 2022. Officers from the Infrastructure Department undertook an initial site visit the following month, in January 2023, where a number of technical issues were raised. Parish officers went back to their designers and subsequent revisions were made and the application went to the department on 13th August this year, so the timetable has been quite fast in terms of the department.

3.13 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding reforming the planning service (OQ.183/2024):

Further to Written Question 293/2024, will the Minister provide details on the progress being made in reforming the Planning Service, which is one of the Government's 13 strategic priorities?

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

I am fully committed to delivering real change in reforming planning services. When I took on the role it was made very clear to me the challenges of the planning process and how it was affecting our community and the environment. Putting those recommendations of the MacKinnon Review into action has required my team to carry out a wide range of reforms, including cutting waiting times, improving customer service and boosting efficiency. I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of them from the top to the bottom because their efforts have all clear results. Of the most noticeable changes has been a 30 per cent reduction in the number of pending applications, that is applications within the department waiting determination, and that shows our growing speed in

handling of applications. We have also raised the percentage of determinations made within our own targets from 59 per cent in January to over 90 per cent by the end of August. The average time to validate new applications has also improved, falling from 10 weeks to just 2 weeks, a sharp 80 per cent improvement. We have also launched the Planning Industry Partnership Board to work closely with stakeholders by publishing quarterly statistics to give a clear picture of our performance. I remain focused on delivering all these reforms to make sure the Planning Service stays effective, efficient and able to meet the needs of the Island.

3.13.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

The aim I think stated in the Government's strategic priorities was to get Jersey building again. In answer to Written Question 287, it was recently revealed that while there were 615 approvals for planning for new homes in 2023 and so far this year there have been about 644, only 108 buildings this year have had commencement certificates issued against them. Is the Minister proposing to do anything to deal with the problem of planning permissions that are given but not built?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

That is a very interesting question, one that I tried to grapple with when I was previously Minister for Planning back in 2014. It was myself who reduced the time that you could spend before you started building from 5 years to 3 years. My intention with that decision was to try to encourage people after they had been given an approval to get building. It is still a problem and the changes I made back then have not seemed to have made much of an improvement, I have to say to the Deputy. People are still putting applications through, we are improving our performance, the approval rates are rising, but that in itself does not allow or does not mean that people will start building. The cost of building, the cost of materials, the cost of finding people to do the building, the cost of inflation, it is all having an effect. We have a number of applications that have been improved which I would desperately like to see getting built out. But it is difficult as a Government to force people to build once they have got an application approved.

3.14 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding plans announced In June 2024 to ban the sale of disposable vapes in Jersey by April 2025 (OQ.173/2024):

Will the Minister provide an update on the plans announced in June 2024 to ban the sale of disposable vapes in Jersey by April 2025, including the work, if any, undertaken since June and advise when Members might expect a proposition to be lodged for debate?

The Connétable of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Infrastructure - *rapporteur*):

The drafting for this legislation is in the final stages of drafting and we anticipate it will be ready for lodging within the next month. It has been overseen by a working group including officers from our Policy, Waste and Recycling, Trading Standards, Customs, Health Improvement and Regulation teams. Consultation has also taken place with the relevant parties.

3.14.1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Thank you for that answer and the work that is underway; we look forward to that coming forward. Can I just clarify, does that mean that we are still on target for April 2025 or is that date likely to change, given that previously I think we have been looking at a proposition for debate in October?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

There is a chance that draft legislation will be lodged in time for the final sitting of the year; otherwise, a debate will take place at the first sitting of the new session next year. The Assembly

will certainly be given the opportunity to approve the legislation well before April 2025, but it will then be subject to the usual process for Royal Assent and ratification, which is outside of our control.

3.15 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for the Environment regarding public comments in relation to turning derelict glasshouses into housing sites (OQ.181/2024):

Further to his recently reported public comments in relation to turning derelict glasshouses into housing sites in which the Minister is quoted as saying: “In certain circumstances a proposal could be made to allow some development in exchange for major environmental gains for Islanders”, will the Minister define what those ‘certain circumstances’ would be?

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

I have published, as the Deputy knows, supplementary planning guidance in August of this year, which defines the circumstances where the exceptional development of derelict or redundant glasshouses might be permitted. Time does not permit me here to outline all the detail of this guidance, but I would refer the Deputy to it. I will just finish by saying the term ‘exceptional circumstances’ describes the situation in which there is a very special case for departing from a strong policy presumption. Exceptional circumstances are, by definition, unusual and often unique and, as such, it is not possible to list situations that may be regarded as being exceptional from a planning perspective.

3.15.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Would the Minister therefore consider that significant health and safety concerns would form part of those exceptional circumstances?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am sure that significant health and safety concerns would form part of it, but it would have to be one part of a number of other parts. I just remind the Assembly: redevelopment is only going to be supported if the site is significantly blighting to the local environment; if the benefits of removing glass and subsequent landscape restoration not only substantially outweigh the impact of any new development, but also significantly enhance the landscape; where the development will have satisfactory access to foul and surface water disposal; and most importantly, where the proposed development represents the absolute minimum form of development that will fund the clearance of the glass and secure appropriate landscape restoration.

[11:30]

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

The question about derelict glasshouses into housing sites has been effectively, I think, ducked and said that we do not want housing sites on them. May I ask the Minister, in the context of the question on derelict glass-housing sites and the context of major environmental gains, whether he considers that the cannabis farms that are now on former derelict glasshouse sites have improved the environmental situation of Jersey and the agricultural industry? In other words, are we getting more of them?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am pausing only to think of the 3 specific sites which I have in my mind where we have approved or we have had applications for cannabis production. One is still derelict and has not been developed; one was a continuation of existing use of a site that was not a derelict glasshouse; and one was a combination of the 2, where some areas had become disused but not derelict and has been revamped. Certainly, if a producer or anybody wants to come forward with a plan to grow cannabis in an existing

glasshouse site, whether it is redundant, derelict or still in use, or just there waiting to be used, that would certainly be considered as the other application. The point of the question here is the use of redundant and what the 'exceptional circumstances' might be to take that glasshouse out of glasshouse production and turn it into something else.

3.15.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

My understanding is that the cannabis industry is far from the Atlantis fantastic future growth scenario that it was, and that actually a number of, I understand it, that cannabis producers are ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Ozouf, I do remind you that this question is about turning glasshouses into housing, not to other uses.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Yes. Basically, there is an underlying point here. There is an application that is a current part-derelict site in St. Lawrence that cannot expand for cannabis because it seems to be in trouble. Is he going to allow it potentially for housing, and under what circumstances would he allow housing? Because I think that is the underlying question that the Deputy is asking is, can glasshouses ... under what circumstances will they allow housing? Because we have tried cannabis and that is not working; will he go back ... to think back to the housing requirement, which is more important?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am not going to give any reference to any specific site or any potential application that may or may not be in the department at the moment. But what I would remind the Deputy is that the Island Plan policy does allow, in exceptional circumstances, the redevelopment of derelict glasshouses for other uses including residential, and I have highlighted a few of those there. I am not going to repeat what I have already said, but what I would say to the Deputy is we have not very long ago had a Bridging Island Plan debate. Housing sites were proposed and glasshouse sites were proposed; some were accepted, some were rejected, but it is this Assembly which sets the housing sites which will be developed in the next Island Plan, being a draft Bridging Island Plan, whatever it may be. Housing sites which come forward outside of the Island Plan process have to meet very, very specific criteria which is listed in the supplementary planning guidance and policies within the Island Plan.

3.15.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister accept that, in the slightly longer term, it might help move the debate forward if an audit were to be undertaken of all the glasshouse sites in the Island, to try and find out how they relate, for example, to existing services, how they relate to the transport network, what planning history they might have, what their suitability might be for alternative uses, and that this might mean that we could approach the debate in a slightly more finer-grained way?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I think I am correct in saying that when I was Minister previously, I did exactly that. I can certainly recommend a document where a number of glasshouse sites were looked into and the work that the Deputy has suggested was done. I can see no reason why that work would not be updated again before the next Island Plan debate, which will hopefully be in the next 3, 4 years' time. I can only share the frustration of many other Islanders, and I am sure Members in the Assembly, that building on a greenfield site seems an interesting proposition where we have redundant, derelict, dangerous glasshouse sites around the Island which are serving no useful purpose. But there are policies within the Island Plan to deal with these sites, and unless those policies are changed ... there is a process for turning these sites into housing and that process has to be very carefully followed.

3.15.5 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Following a previous question, how many derelict, dangerous glasshouse sites do we have across the Island currently that do not have future plans, and what square footage do they cover?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot give the Deputy an answer to that, but I can say that some are very, very large sites. If you go out to the market to test for derelict, dangerous glasshouse sites, you will come back with some sites which are no bigger than this Assembly. It is a very big range of sizes, but I will attempt to find out some information, if it is available, and get back to the Deputy on that point.

3.15.6 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you, it would be helpful. Another question, the Minister mentioned the next Island Plan; I know the Bridging Island Plan will finish in 2025 next year. Can the Minister update on when we will debate this next Island Plan?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot give a date to the Deputy, but what I can say is there are a number of things which need to be done before we can have our next Island Plan debate. It is an extensive list; some have been completed, some are in completion, some are yet to start. There are a number of things which the draft Bridging Island Plan debate said that, before we have the next Island Plan debate, we will need to do this work. Water strategy, for one, is one that I am concentrating on, but there are a number of others. I do not envisage the next Island Plan debate ... certainly it is due in 2026, but I would think it would be at least 2 years, maybe even longer. The reason I - just if I might have the time, Sir, to say - normally Island Plan debates are driven by housing demand and it is clear that the housing sites that were passed in the draft Bridging Island Plan will fulfil our requirements further than 2026, which at the time we felt that would be the date we would need another Island Plan debate.

3.15.7 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Bridging Island Plan has not changed, but the Minister has changed and so has the message. Whereas the emphasis used to be: 'There is a strong presumption against change of use', it sounds like the current message is: 'We might make an exception.' Is this not simply encouragement of bad behaviour and reinforcing the message that if you leave your glasshouse sites derelict for long enough, you might be able to cash in with a change of use application?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Absolutely not is the answer to that question. Regardless of who the Minister might be, the policies in the Island Plan do not change. There may be a slight difference in the way that the terminology and Ministers speak, but the presumption is in the green zone there will be a presumption against an approval of an application in the green zone. That is the policy. It does not matter which Minister it is. I cannot say more than that, other than to emphasise there will have to be exceptional, exceptional circumstances for a greenhouse site - derelict or dangerous or both - to be approved for housing. If it was approved for housing, it would not be approved for the whole of the site because the policy is very clear: just enough development to cover the cost of the rest to be returned to the environment, to be turned to green and for the benefit of the Island.

3.15.8 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask then, why is the conversation always about turning glasshouse sites into housing, when actually what the Minister could and should be doing, I would argue - I would ask if he agrees - is actually saying: "These are agricultural and horticultural sites. Please restore them to glasshouse use, otherwise we will enforce planning on these sites to make sure that they are put into use, and if not, possibly even compulsorily purchase them off you."

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Compulsory purchase is something that I certainly would not be in favour of; that would lead the States Assembly into all sorts of difficult decisions, but I take the Deputy's point on board. How far does the States want to go down the way of enforcing people to use their greenhouses, enforcing people to use their gardens or their fields or their buildings or their shops? Force people to keep shops open when they have decided to close them? There is a reason why we have so many greenhouse and glasshouse sites on the Island that are not being used anymore; it is because the business of greenhouse growing is not profitable anymore. Maybe that is something that myself and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development might discuss, to come to the Assembly for another millions and millions of pounds with subsidies to maybe get greenhouse growing back on its feet. But the cost of production, the cost of the competition is just not viable. I think I will leave it there.

3.15.9 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Following a consultation, there were a small number of amendments to the supplementary planning guidance when one makes a comparison against the draft supplementary planning guidance that was published by the previous Minister. Could the Minister commit, for transparency's sake, to publishing the findings of the consultation process?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I will, but I am a little bit surprised that they are not in the public domain at the moment. I think they probably would be, but I will look and see. I have to bear in mind, of course, that in publishing anything one would need to have the privacy of those people who responded ... have to think about that and there will certainly, I would think, be some redactions that may be necessary, but I will look into that and see what we can do.

The Deputy Bailiff:

If Members are content, Deputy Doublet now wishes to ask question 10 of the Minister for Social Security.

3.16 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Social Security regarding progress of the conclusions to the Family Friendly Post-Implementation Review: Report and Ministerial conclusions (OQ.191/2024):

Further to the publication of R.68/2024, the Family Friendly Post-Implementation Review Report and Ministerial Conclusions, will the Minister update the Assembly on the progress, if any, made to date in respect of the further actions identified in the Ministerial conclusions to the survey, as itemised in the report, and any other changes to policy or legislation in this area that have either been made or are planned?

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

The main conclusion of the post-implementation review was to address issues of effective communication and training. As I said in my original Ministerial response, the Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service, has a vital role to play here and, upon asking for an update on what they have been doing, I know that they have organised and continue to organise free training sessions and to promote awareness-raising on social media platforms and also mainstream media of parental leave provisions in the Employment Law for the benefit of both employees and employers. I have no current plans to bring forward additional legislation relating to parental leave rights at this stage, because I understand that the legislation is currently working well.

3.16.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Many of the respondents to the consultation stated that they were not able to access the full extent of the rights because they could not afford to do so. Can the Minister outline what plans she has to support those families who require more of the leave to be paid?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I understand that for very many families they would not be able to make best use or the type of use that they may want to make out of the flexible working arrangements because of cost. Currently, birth mothers can access 6 weeks' paid leave from their employer and also parents can share the 32 weeks of parental benefit. In making any changes to that, I would need to consider employment legislation as a whole and how any changes that I would be making to employment legislation would indeed affect employers as well as employees. I did - as the Deputy will be aware, because I updated her Scrutiny Panel - ask for a cross-jurisdictional review of where we sat with employment legislation. I came to the conclusion that making changes in relation to parental rights was not the top priority, so I am at the moment focusing on other priority areas including, of course, raising the minimum wage.

[11:45]

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

In my work as chair of U.N.I.C.E.F. (United Nations Children's Fund) Baby Friendly Initiative and Breastfeeding Guardian for Jersey, it has also come to light that although the legislation is in place, not too many expectant or new parents know their rights in this matter and neither do all employers know all their related responsibilities or have it established appropriately in practice. What exact measures does the Minister intend to take to equally raise awareness of all those, and also assure compliance with the related legislation in the workplace?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank Deputy Kovacs for raising awareness and for all of the work that she does in relation to raising awareness of breastfeeding. To answer her question, as I said in my main answer, following the post-implementation review I did commit to working closely with J.A.C.S. (Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service) to ensure that employers and employees do get communications. I will also promise now - today - to also follow up with the maternity services as well, with the Minister for Health and Social Services, to ensure that people, when they are expecting a baby, are fully cognisant and aware of what rights they are eligible for. I am very aware of the importance of breastfeeding and the need for flexible workplaces to encourage and promote breastfeeding and ensure that breastfeeding mothers do have the right provisions in place. I will always have my door open to the Deputy to discuss ways in which we can further improve that.

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

The family friendly measures were brought in to improve outcomes such as the birth rate, the number of women engaged in employment, and also the reduction of the gender pay gap. The Minister says in her answer that she is content that the legislation is working well. Could she therefore describe what she believes are the causes of our current severely declining birth rate?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am afraid the causes of the severely declining birth rate is not something that is part of my portfolio or something that I feel qualified to comment on at this particular point in time, but perhaps the Deputy would like to raise the question with myself and perhaps other relevant Ministers at a later date.

3.16.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister give some more detail on something that she mentioned at the same hearing that ... the panel initially raised this, where she mentioned that she was looking at the income support rules for families who perhaps own their own home and may be able to benefit from income support to access this leave for a longer period of time.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Income support is of course a different benefit to the parental benefits. Perhaps what I can update the Deputy on is I have asked officers to look at eligibility with regards to parental benefit, specifically in relation to contributions records and the relevant quarter. I have not yet started or commenced any work in relation to income support and people on mortgages, although I do continue to look in very much detail at our current income support legislation.

3.17 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding concerns raised by the subsequent significant increase in cost of living and related hardship (OQ.190/2024):

With regards to the concerns expressed by the Fiscal Policy Panel about the Island's current and rising rate of inflation, will the Minister advise what actions and policy options, if any, are being considered to address concerns raised by the subsequent significant increase in the cost of living and related hardship? I should say that I asked for either the Minister for Treasury and Resources or the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, who has stepped forward to answer the question.

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

As the Deputy will appreciate - I have no doubt - Jersey's ability to manage inflation directly is limited as we do not have our own monetary policy. The Government, however, is committed to use those available policy levers where it can to manage inflation. To this end, the Common Strategic Policy sets out that we will keep fees, duties and charges as low as possible to avoid creating an inflationary effect. Members will have seen that in the Budget, where the duty rises, et cetera, are extremely low. As far as helping those cope with rises in the cost of living, matters such as the minimum wage rise are part of that, as are those attempts to mitigate any inflationary matters around that.

3.17.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I really appreciate the Minister absolutely differentiating from imported inflation versus domestic inflation. He said he does not have policy options; he does have some policy options, I think, or the Government does. Policy options are relating to supply side, increasing productivity, reducing local price pressures, increasing sectors of capacity such as housing, utility regulation, competition. Can he give me some indication of his enthusiasm or otherwise to deal with what I think he would recognise is a very potentially serious issue? The issue is domestic inflation, not imported inflation.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I thank the Deputy for outlining his particular concerns and they are concerns that I have myself. I think while it is possible to distinguish between domestic and imported inflation, there is a reality which is that the vast majority of inflation in our Island is imported, if we look outside of the housing market aspect of it. If you remove the housing market side, then most of the rest is imported. To that end, of course, we do have the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority and certainly in the year ahead we will be bringing forward changes to the Competition Law to help the authority address matters that the Deputy has talked of. With regard specifically to supply side, that is exactly one of the reasons why we have gone to a contract for ferry services in this way and have undertaken a thorough tender process, because we understand as well that even just the cost of shipping to the

Island adds inflation to the prices that we pay. Developing closer economic ties with Normandy and Brittany, as many Members will know, is something that I have been focusing very closely on. One of the key drivers of this is to create a southern supply chain that can provide a greater choice in products and prices for Islanders, as well as increase the length of time that many goods spend on the shelves. Because at the moment, again, one of the places that Islanders pay cost is because there is a decreased amount of time on the shelf life because fresh goods and time-limited goods will pass from Europe all the way up into the U.K. and then come all the way back down again to the Islands, thus losing shelf time; that increases cost. From the perspective of the minimum wage, I have seen this increase in the minimum wage as an opportunity to really push the importance of businesses in Jersey increasing productivity and providing an opportunity, through the mitigation measures that I will be unveiling in the coming weeks, to really provide businesses with the opportunity to invest in themselves in many different ways to increase their own productivity. A lot of that will be in technology investment; the aim is to reduce the need for any individual business to rely on employment to the extent that they do at the moment. There are other measures, as far as the domestic side is concerned and the demand side is concerned, such as providing preschool meals for primary school children, which in themselves will reduce the cost of living for households in the Island. But there is no doubt that I agree with the Deputy that focusing on the supply side is absolutely vital, and that is why I am so focused on developing a southern supply route because at the moment this Island imports inflation from the United Kingdom and has absolutely no control or alternative means of changing that in any way. By creating a southern supply route, we will help provide that choice and mitigate that inflation that we import from the U.K.

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

What impact, if any, will increasing the personal income tax threshold have in the forthcoming Budget and what impact will that have on inflation and our domestic economy?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Increasing tax thresholds, which is something that the previous Government also did, enables Islanders to have greater purchasing power. In itself, that will have likely - and I have not checked the figures, so this is my own personal opinion - a very marginal inflationary impact. But it is, I believe, marginal and the ability for Islanders to have more money in their pockets, I think at the moment, after years of suffering through higher prices, I think is a really important one. Because it is also important to note R.P.I. is beginning to slow down; the rate of growth and the rate of inflation is slowing down and that is a very important point to note.

3.17.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am, I guess, somewhat disappointed by the Minister's answer. I draw his attention to a 2006 report on barriers to entry for France. I will send it to him if he has not got it. I think he is saying that basically opening up southern routes in France is a solution to inflation. My question really was ... and I understand there is not an explicit breakdown in the domestic versus non-domestic inflation in the F.P.P.'s recommendation, however, they are clear that there is domestic inflation arising. I would welcome, perhaps, the opportunity of discussing it with the Minister and the Ministerial colleagues about the importance of it because there is a lot of experience from the past that has been used to depress domestic inflation and the F.P.P. is warning this Assembly and him and other Ministers that there is a rising inflation which is going to erode the pound in people's pockets. It does appear to me - and I do not know whether he agrees - that there is not enough emphasis given on that eroding of the pound in people's pockets domestically arising.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not wish to disappoint the Deputy. That would be the last thing I wish to do today, but in so much I agree, and I apologise for not being expressive enough to have shown that previously. There

is no question in my mind that Islanders have experienced a significant increase in the rate of inflation. The latest inflation statistics, which are a couple of months old now, and I do wish we had them more often, do show and do point to the possibility that underlying inflation is becoming a feature of the economy and that does concern me a large amount. The reasons for that are wide and varied. There is imported inflation through the U.K. There is also ... and when we talk about Government, there are ways of making life so much easier for Islanders and for businesses in this Island just by becoming a much more user-friendly Government. For instance, last Assembly I was asked about procurement processes. By ensuring that businesses do not spend very long lengths of time on things like a procurement process or a planning process, et cetera, we reduce the cost of living in this Island in another way. It is the same with Islanders. Every time that as Islanders we are forced to divert our efforts into dealing with a bureaucracy or dealing with delays in delivery of services, that increases the cost of living in this Island. These are the things which are very difficult for us to deal with directly but are really important to understand. I do believe it is important to deal with the supply side. Brexit has forced a wedge between us and the European market. That is something which is not in the interests of this Island, in my opinion, at all and I am doing everything I can to try to make sure that we can reconnect with the European market, which is absolutely, I think, a vital route for alternative goods to come to this Island at alternative prices. I cannot say whether they will all be cheaper, of course I cannot, but at the moment we have a supply chain which is entirely lacking resilience because it is one supply chain - there is no other route to this Island - and it is a supply chain which is entirely prone to the whims of whichever Government is in the United Kingdom and the way of their policy choices. Therefore, I believe it is absolutely vital that we empower this Island to have a greater choice of goods and services that Islanders can then buy and are able to make choices. Price will be one of those choices as well as quality.

[12:00]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. That brings the period for oral questions on notice to an end. So, under Standing Order 63(9), questions 19, 20, 21 must be answered in writing by the relevant Minister as soon as possible by response to the Greffier for distribution. We now move to questions to the Ministers without notice and the first period of questions is for the Minister for Children and Families.

Please note, Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Mary and Trinity was *excusée* for this meeting of the States, so was unable to ask her oral question OQ.178/2024 of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. The Minister has provided the response that he would have given had Deputy Jeune been able to ask her question:

Question

In relation to Social Enterprises, will the Minister advise what Government support currently exists, what future support, if any, is being considered, how Social Enterprise status is verified, and how any impact is measured?

Answer

Government support for social enterprises has historically been ad hoc across various departments. In order to better coordinate government support my ministerial delivery plan includes the commitment to develop a social enterprise framework and pilot elements of the framework in 2024. We are working with Jersey Business on the pilot and there is now an open call through their website for businesses to submit an expression of interest to join the SEE (Social, Environmental and Economic) Enterprise Pathway.

A SEE Enterprise is defined as a business endeavour or project which is currently or has the future potential to contribute holistically to multiple Island Outcome Indicators across the economic, social and environmental categories – whilst generating at least 51% of its income from trading activity.

The purpose of the SEE Enterprise Pathway is to provide a comprehensive framework of support to make it easier to startup, develop and scale businesses that will have a positive impact on the Jersey community and environment.

Once a business has received SEE Accreditation, they will gain access to benefits including:

- Business support.
- Membership of a network of social entrepreneurs.
- Social enterprise training.
- Guidance through regulatory processes.
- Access to subsidies and forms of financial support.
- Structured introductions to investors.

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

3.18 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement asked a question of the Chief Minister regarding the Government’s risk appetite and plans for the strategic reserve (OQ.185/2024):

Further to the publication of Jersey's Fiscal Policy Panel 2024 Annual Report, and the comments therein in relation to the Strategic Reserve Fund, will the Chief Minister explain the Government’s risk appetite, the plans for the strategic reserve and advise how this is reflected in the Proposed Budget (Government Plan 2025- 2028)?

Written Answer provided in accordance with Standing Order 63(9)

The Fiscal Policy Panel is very clear about the importance of the Strategic Reserve to Jersey’s financial resilience, and the need to maintain and grow this fund because Jersey’s reputation relies on sound, long-term financial management. The Government’s risk appetite is generally low. The Treasury Minister sets the investment strategy, further to advice, and balances the risk and returns on various types of investment, while also taking into account the immediate needs of Islanders and the need to invest in Jersey’s infrastructure. In line with the FPP recommendation, the proposed Budget sets out a plan to increase the value of the Strategic Reserve, achieving 30% of GVA in the median to long term.

3.19 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour asked a question of the Chief Minister regarding the Gender Pay Gap Report 2023 (OQ.189/2024):

In relation to the Gender Pay Gap Report 2023, will the Minister advise what work has been undertaken to ascertain whether actions to address this have been successful, and in particular, specify what actions are being taken in relation to Departments where large gender pay gaps exist?

Written Answer provided in accordance with Standing Order 63(9)

Where gender pay gaps exist across Departments, this issue will continue to be addressed through Departmental Strategic Workforce Plans, which will address workforce pay gaps in all diversities,

including gender. We continue to review our talent attraction approach, using job-specific selection criteria to ensure fairness and inclusivity. We advertise roles with transparent pay ranges and an openness to flexible working arrangements.

As a result of these measures:

- The gender pay gap has significantly decreased in Children, Young People, Education and Skills since 2022.
- A decrease has also been seen in Justice and Home Affairs, Economy, Non-Ministerial Departments and the Treasury and Exchequer.

Caring responsibilities still fall predominantly to women, so we have introduced a flexible working policy, and parental leave policy for public servants to address challenges of caring for others while fulfilling a job, as this often impacts women's ability to take up higher paid roles. In the Public Sector, minor changes in the composition of the workforce, especially in higher-paid roles, can substantially change the headline median gender pay gap, month by month and year by year. Therefore, a whole system approach is required rather than a focus on individual departments.

3.20 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North asked a question of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding aftercare provision in the community to enable timely patient discharge from the hospital (OQ.177/2024):

Will the Minister explain what plans exist, if any, to ensure there is sufficient aftercare provision in the community to enable timely patient discharge from the hospital?

Written Answer provided in accordance with Standing Order 63(9)

Sir, at the present time we have approximately 30 individuals waiting to be discharged from hospital. I think this is probably common knowledge, but I must say, it's far from ideal.

In the majority of cases, people are waiting in hospital for access to nursing home beds and specialist dementia care, both of which are currently in short supply. That said, ongoing collaboration between the government and the care sector, has resulted in some efficiencies being made, so we have seen a reduction in the time taken to notify and allocate home care packages. We've also developed an excellent multidisciplinary discharge team at the hospital, and they're now meeting weekly to oversee and support timely discharge planning.

As far as appropriate dementia facilities are concerned, the New Hospital Facilities team are looking to prioritise them on the Health Village site in St Saviour. But in the meantime, further efforts are being made to improve the situation, wherever possible. These include work to develop a Telecare system to support people at home; work to increase capacity of specialist dementia care in the community, as part of the Dementia Action Plan and a review (and further development) of the models of community services provided by HCS and its partners.

I hope that answers the question to the Deputy's satisfaction, Sir.

4. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Children and Families

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

Looking after children with additional needs can be very difficult. Is the Minister aware that there are current difficulties in providing adequate short break services to families for children with additional needs?

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

I am aware that there have been some issues with being able to provide all the services that are required. We have a relatively small number of people looking after that service and their time is obviously allocated by need but I am more than happy to look into the matter further.

4.1.1 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I thank the Minister for that answer. The Minister has acknowledged that there is limited capacity across the service. What is he doing to increase that capacity to ensure respite for exhausted families?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

As I said, I am aware there are a limited number of people. To immediately change that is difficult, so as part of this, I will consult with the director of Children's Service to see what we can do to extend the current number of people who are part of that service.

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

Since the retrospective change of use for 1 Castle View was rejected by the Planning Committee in March and then an appeal of that decision was dismissed earlier this month, what are the Minister's next steps for finding suitable accommodation to replace this dwelling with an alternative class J residential home?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Thank you for that question. I was of course disappointed that the appeal was rejected. We must always consider the needs of the child and the implications of the U.N.C.R.C. (United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child) on the rights of the child to have a home. One of the immediate remedies would be of course to continue the appeal by judicial review, but that is not a course of action that I would wish to take. I have taken legal advice on the matter, and I have to say that that confirms my own view that of course what took place was entirely consistent with the Planning Law. So, I have a meeting arranged for later this week in which we will discuss how we take the matter forward. The options are of course that we could put in a further planning application or a new planning application taking into regard that the reasons the appeal was dismissed were purely with regard to parking matters.

4.2.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Will the Minister learn lessons from this event when seeking to open future children's homes?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Absolutely because the history of this application is that initially officers were advised that they did not require planning permission to change of residential home to a registered children's home and, of course, that was incorrect and it was some months later that a retrospective application was lodged. The outcome of that led to the appeal. In future, of course we would ensure that before attempting to move a child into a home that that home has the appropriate planning approval. I have some concerns with the existing Planning Law that perhaps it should not differentiate between a child in care and a child who is not in care. For instance, if the current property was let to the parents of a child, they could move into that without any question and no planning approval would be required.

If the same child is in the care of the Minister, it becomes a children's home and therefore it requires planning permission, and I feel that that is not fair.

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

I have noted that several fostering campaigns have taken place this year. Could the Minister let us know whether these have been successful and if so, does the service now have sufficient foster families to meet its needs?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Thank you very much. That is a very interesting question in the fact that we have had a very successful campaign. If I run through that we have had ... during part of that time we have had 59 fostering enquires from which 34 families asked for an initial visit from the service. Now, it is interesting that after that it drops to 5 families who actually took part in training. So, there is a tremendous effort in those fostering campaigns. It quickly reduces to around 10 per cent of the people going forward to take up those positions. We are doing substantially better than the U.K. where initial responses only result in 6 per cent of applications, so 94 per cent of the people who make an initial enquiry drop out. The position now is that the number of fostering families has risen from 36 to 39. However, while that is very positive, I have to say there is a but and the but is that we have to be able to match the children who require placements with the families. Many families of course looked forward to having a younger child and it is our adolescent/teenage children where we really have a gap. So, we have a large number of foster families but not necessarily all of them wish to have a teenager, and that is something that we are still working on. So, yes, we have had some very positive results, but for the older children we have more work to do in our campaign and the campaign for families who will specialise in teenage children will be repeated again before the end of the year.

4.3.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

So, how does the service support the teenagers or support the foster families?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I would say that support of the families has improved, and that has been recognised by the meetings we have with the Jersey Fostering Association and in fact those meetings are part of the support. I have quarterly meetings with the Association. I also encourage, if necessary, for foster families to contact me directly. They may not wish to have the matters raised in a meeting and so I am equally happy that they contact me directly. We now have 7 fostering social workers with 2 more to be recruited. We have a full number of managers - that is 3 managers - and we have a new head of service. Between them they have very much improved the service and the support for the families. Nothing is perfect though. There are always lessons to be learned. Earlier in the year we had problems with payments, with the support of the staff at Liberty House. That was rectified with their colleagues in the Payments Department - I think that falls into Treasury - but the other thing that we are working on is something that is used in the U.K. and that is called Mockingbird, where groups of foster carers support each other in a cluster. They are supported by the social worker, and this would also bring in support from C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and other parts of the Children Services.

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

In an answer to a written question from myself, the Minister has stated that the further extension of duty-bearing responsibilities with regards to the Children Convention Rights Law will not now be extended to public authorities until the end of this political term. Can the Minister explain why this timetable has been extended from the end of this year, please?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I think that that is purely due to the demands on the law officers. We have many other pieces of legislation which need to be lodged or brought forward in this term, and I do not think that is the only bit of legislation which may be delayed slightly. I am still very committed to doing that and it is purely, I think, due to resources.

4.4.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can the Minister give a more precise date that he envisages bringing this Commencement Act to the Assembly please?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I am sorry, I cannot do that at this point, but clearly I will try to keep the Deputy up to speed with our progress if she wishes to contact me.

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

Could the Minister confirm what reductions in public sector growth are impacting on his portfolio and how he intends to mitigate any risks arising from the lack of growth in Children's Services?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Thank you for that question. It is a challenge. As with other departments there was a 20 per cent cut in the previous growth and that inevitably leaves us looking for savings to make up for services that we funded in the past. What I cannot promise is that ... you cannot promise that it will not lead to some services not being available and I sincerely hope that that is not the case but it is still something that I am working on.

4.5.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

The Minister has indicated that there may be some need for further growth or even cuts in his services to meet the demands of children and families, as we have just heard, in relation to fostering and more notably young people's mental health services. Given the concerns raised by the Fiscal Policy Panel in relation to the Island's medium to longer-term finances, what consideration is being given to how the approach to financial prudence would impact upon Children's Services over the medium to longer term if growth is constrained?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I think we are looking for ways to use our resources more efficiently. I think that is something that is relatively early with the new director of Children's Services having some initial plans. I would consider the running of the children's homes one area where we can be more efficient in the use of our funds and not reduce the service. For instance, there are Government properties that we could use and in fact are doing. We are working with partners, such as Andium, looking at how they could build and lease us properties, which would be a cheaper alternative to us purchasing those properties and having the ongoing cost. So, it is early days but what I would not ... as I have said before, the last thing I want to see is any reduction in our services, so we have to be more efficient.

4.6 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The C.S.P. says that the Government will: "... further build on the recommendations from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry 2017, by delivering on our Corporate Parenting duties as set out in the Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2022." Can the Minister detail what he is doing to deliver this?

[12:15]

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Well, of course, we are all corporate parents in this Assembly and, as we have already alluded, those duties will also be taken up by a number of the Parishes, arm's-lengths bodies and various other

organisations. So, it is an ongoing process but what I would like to see is more training in corporate parenting. I am not sure that the role of the corporate parent is necessarily considered in all cases when decisions are being made. I see that from time to time and I think: “When that decision was made did anyone really consider the rights of the child?” So, I think it is an ongoing process. Being a corporate parent is always at the forefront of my mind.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, that brings the period to an end. I must remind Ministers of their obligations to answer questions concisely, if at all possible, with an overall limit of 90 seconds in mind. We now move to the Minister for Children and Lifelong Learning.

5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

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

Less than half of applications for post-graduate bursaries are successful. Indeed in 2024/2025 only one full bursary has been awarded. Can the Minister offer an explanation for such a low success rate?

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

Thank you for the question. There is a priority around post-graduate qualifications in terms of the funding. I am surprised that only one application was successful, and I will go and look whether that is an accurate figure because I think there were some other issues around that. There is a process for post-graduate qualifications that we do not fund already. There are some that are funded if they lead to a professional qualification and if they are identified as needs for the Island. I think it is very important that that prioritisation happens. It would be lovely to fund every single post-graduate course that students want to do, but to do that we have to have a fairer tax system, something I am a proponent of.

5.1.1 Deputy H.M. Miles:

Will the Minister undertake to review/revise the application process to better support students who are not able to access this important source and indeed the only form of Government funding for post-graduate study?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So, there is a process. Changing the process to make it more open, to make it more usable, if there is money left over then it should be spent - I would accept that - but the process itself is a process that has been consistent through the years, and it does depend a great deal on what the post-graduate qualification is for. There are also other methods of funding via ... I know some students are creative in the U.K., for example, with Master’s degrees for particular areas that they get funded. Yes, we can look at it again but, as I say, it is a pot of money that is limited and there will always be a limitation as to what can be funded in terms of post-graduate qualifications.

5.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Does the Minister consider that it is time to look again at whether children at G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) should be required to take at least one foreign language?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy for the question. If we, as an Assembly, determine what is in the curriculum, we have to recognise what would be taken out of the curriculum and so, in doing that, we all act as headteachers. I would rather leave that to the professionals who know their students. Languages are an option in every single school and can be chosen. If you make a language compulsory, it may not

fit the wishes of some students in particular and you will have to remove something else from the curriculum. Now, what will that be? Will that be something like the D.E.C. (design, engineer and construct) course which has been incredibly successful in our schools and is leading to a development in the construction industry, for example. There is a limited curriculum, and we have to think about what is best for our students in the long term and so, yes, we can look at that again, but I think that schools would want to have control over their curriculum and tailor it to the needs of their students.

5.2.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I am not sure that what I am suggesting would take anything out of the curriculum. What it would do is in the same way that we make a certain amount of maths and English compulsory because we recognise that they are fundamental to people's education, that we would do the same with foreign languages. We would say that it is fundamental to a child's education that they should speak some language. I wonder whether the Minister could not look at it from that point of view and say whether he does not think from this Island's point of view that it would be better to have students all studying a foreign language at G.C.S.E.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I must point out a reality to the Deputy, if you make a language compulsory it takes up curriculum time. There is no empty curriculum time. So, if you make that compulsory for all students, some students who do not want to do a language at G.C.S.E. now will have to do it and therefore not do something else. Either that or you extend the school day or you do the language after school or before school, but there is a limited time and the curriculum is absolutely rammed because of the changes that have happened over the last few years. I am afraid it is unrealistic to say you can just simply introduce a compulsory language while having no effect elsewhere on the curriculum, and that is a choice that will have to be made.

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

The A-level exam results in Jersey had a pass rate of 96 per cent compared to 97 per cent in England and those with an A and A* grade were 25 per cent in Jersey compared to 27 per cent in the whole of England. Does the Minister believe that this is a cause for concern?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Two things: first of all, the final A-level results are not published yet because there are still re-marks, et cetera, so it takes some weeks for exam boards to publish final results. So, we have to take those results with a pinch of salt, and they may change. Second thing is a very important point for us - and this would also be the point if our results were about 5 per cent above the U.K. - we have a very small dataset. We are comparing a small dataset of our A-level results with a very large dataset of A-level results in the U.K., and you have to be extremely careful. To be within 2 per cent above or below a large dataset like that is probably statistically significant to say they are virtually the same, so it is really difficult to compare in that way. It also depends on what A-levels were taken. If some are more popular than others that might skew results one way or the other. It is a very complex piece of data, so I would be very careful of making broad statements from those pieces of data.

5.3.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Does the Minister believe that our A-level students were affected by the teacher's strikes?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Strikes will of course affect education, which is why I am very pleased that they are not there anymore, and we solved them within a couple of days.

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

Referring back to a question that Deputy Renouf asked, whereas the legal language of Jersey is English and French, there is a proposal before the Assembly for a bilingual school and the Minister has kindly answered a written question on the teaching of French. Is the Minister satisfied that, given what I have said previously, the standard of French in our schools is acceptable?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Acceptable is a good word, is it not? Acceptable is very difficult to define because it is something that can be acceptable to one and not to the other. Our language teaching in schools, particularly in primaries, has developed and is the only curriculum time for a language that is emphasised. No other language is compulsory at that time. In secondary schools it is compulsory until key stage 3 and then it is an option of French and other languages throughout our secondary schools. Indeed, some schools moved away from the compulsory language because of the need to provide a more broad and balanced curriculum for the needs of the young people and our economy into the future. I think there is a difference between just G.C.S.E. languages and the use of a language. I really do not believe that the resources that we have to go to a bilingual school - and it would be 3 or 2 bilingual schools - is the most effective way to engage in language acquisition, whatever it may be and whatever acceptable is defined as.

5.4.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

My question was pretty open and maybe the wording used 'acceptable', but I am going to restate it. Is the Minister satisfied that given our cultural identity and the legal second language of Jersey ... I could answer this question in French under the law because it is our second legal language. Does he think that the level of French that is outlined in his written answer is good for Jersey, good for the Island, based upon other Minister's priority of links to France, our proximity to France, is he happy with it and does he think we need to do something about it?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There is always room for improvement in any delivery of a curriculum but one has to also be realistic about what is being delivered and the demands of everything else that is in our curriculum. We also have huge demands for multilanguage learners. I think it is 16 per cent of our population are speakers of Portuguese. If there was to be a bilingual school perhaps the most sensible school would be Portuguese. Now, if you are talking about our cultural heritage, it is wider than just children speaking French in schools and there is a curriculum that we deliver. Am I happy with the level of French? Would it be nice for every single child to speak fluent French? Well, I suppose so if that is the way you see our cultural heritage but what is going to go from the curriculum? There is criticism of literacy, of numeracy, of social skills of our children - unfounded I would say because of the work that is going on all of the time - and it seems to me that schools have become the scapegoat for inadequacy in political decisions that have been made over many, many years, and I really find that is a real shame.

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

Can the Minister advise when he is going to publish the Play Strategy and indeed act on the recommendations within it?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, I cannot, but I will get an answer to the Deputy as soon as I can.

5.5.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can the Minister advise what level of priority he has given to this work? Given that the Play Strategy was complete can he commit to publishing it before the end of this year please?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am not going to make any commitments on the hoof until I look at the detail of that Play Strategy. Obviously we have priorities within the C.S.P. around nurseries, around school meals, and in development of lifelong learning, which are really important to us. A Play Strategy is of course important; unfortunately, what I am not going to do is make everything a priority, which seems to have been a sort of cultural habit previously. So, we have to look at it carefully but I am quite happy to engage with the Deputy and to provide as much reassurance as I can that I see it as an importance as well.

5.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Will the Minister comment on the memorandum of understanding that has been signed between Jersey and Rennes Business School earlier this year and whether he thinks that is a positive development in education as an option for students in Jersey?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, it is a positive development.

5.6.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Minister take to emphasise the availability of courses being provided by Rennes Business School, which are also available in English, as an alternative for students who may not wish to go to the United Kingdom for their business courses?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I am quite happy to promote that. I think Rennes Business School were at the Careers Fair and the Skills Show, so that does happen, and it is interesting that those courses are available in English.

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

Without funding for an apprenticeship scheme what plan does the Minister have to encourage vocational skills and in-work training?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I simply do not agree with the Deputy when she says there is not funding for an apprenticeship scheme. There are currently 390 current apprenticeships happening as we speak and there are 28 higher apprentices happening at Highlands College. I am a bit tired of people talking down at our apprenticeships and the way that they are working because there is some fantastic work going on there, providing for the needs of the Island in a whole range of apprenticeships. From greenkeeping to bricklaying to play work to early years to hairdressing to beauty to childcare, civil engineering, childhood studies; and the list goes on. It is about time we gave credit for our Highlands provider for the work that they are doing. So, there is funding, there will be continued funding, but it will be targeted and we will get Skills Jersey working with the college to do the right thing at the right time for the right reasons.

5.7.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think the Minister missed the in-work training part of my question and what he will do to assist those businesses who would like to have apprentices working with them but cannot afford to do so.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

First of all, if there are any businesses who feel they cannot afford to have an apprentice I urge them strongly to contact Skills Jersey because there are schemes available and there is an encouragement to take on these apprenticeships. The cost of the apprenticeship is very, very low and I will oppose any increase to that cost because I do not think that is the right thing to do at this time for our economy, but those apprenticeships are available.

[12:30]

One of the issues is that businesses are facing challenging times. I recognise that but we have to come up with some sort of co-operative approach whereby we can train for the future. The other option then is to simply import and constantly have a process of recruitment which in the long term is more expensive than taking an apprentice and training them ourselves. So, I think there are ways we can do that. I will leave it there because there might be some more questions.

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

As a Member of the Council of Ministers is the Minister frustrated by agreeing to a lack of financial growth in education services, and what compromises did he make in agreeing to the Budget set out by the Government?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Of course I am frustrated that the Education budget is not doubled because it is the most important remit in the entire Council of Ministers; but I may have a slight bias in my opinion there. There is growth for education. One of the problems we have had in the past is that in past Governments growth has been defined which all it did was reset the balance. When £6 million of growth was given to schools all it did was pay off their debts, and the narrative around growth was wrong. The growth that we have now is targeted towards specific areas of early years education, of enabling children to have a hot meal inside them at lunchtimes which is a good thing, and to develop lifelong learning processes which will be constructive and useful for this Island. So, yes, there could always be more money but we have inherited the Government Plan from last year, I have inherited the budget for this year; let us see what we can do with that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. That brings that period of questions to an end and I move to the third period of questions to the Chief Minister.

6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

6.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Chief Minister leads a Government that will see health spending rise above any other O.E.C.D. country as a proportion of expenditure and above the O.E.C.D. average as a percentage of national income. Does this worry him and, if so, what does he propose to do?

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

It does not worry me, and the Minister for Health and Social Services is alive - as is the Council of Ministers - to the increase in cost of healthcare brought on by a number of factors; the high inflation, rising cost of medication, staff shortages leading to the engagement of agency staff which add to the cost of the health service. We have in the Budget asked for extra money to go to Health which I hope the Assembly supports, but we will be watching closely with the Minister for Health and Social Services the budgets moving forward to make sure they are appropriate and continue to deliver the best possible health for Islanders that we can. Of course, the investment in the new hospital, which we hope will come online in 2028, will help to alleviate that.

6.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

At the briefing that the Fiscal Policy Panel gave they pointed out that the levels of health expenditure in Jersey were more appropriate for a high tax Scandinavian jurisdiction, Nordic jurisdiction. Given this is the level we seem to be heading at, is the Minister content to see us move in that direction of higher taxes to pay for our health service?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, I would not support higher taxes to pay for the health service, if that was the question.

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

Can the Chief Minister confirm that policy resources have now been found to prioritise a full modernisation of Jersey's outdated Termination of Pregnancy Law during 2025?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I believe they have, I am pleased to see, and the Minister for Health and Social Services did confirm that at the beginning of last week.

6.2.1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Will that resource be a temporary policy resource or permission for the recruitment of a permanent policy officer?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I simply do not know the answer to that question but I can find out and come back to the Deputy.

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

There have been a number of senior departures from Government recently. Is the Chief Minister aware of any more departures on the way?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am aware that there will be more departures; there will be more redundancies in line with the strategy that this Government have set out. I do not know who they will be or where they may be; that is a role that the chief executive is leading on as he restructures the senior management of the public sector.

6.3.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I am glad the Chief Minister raises the topic of restructuring. Usually that begins at the top. Does the Chief Minister have a plan yet for restructuring the top tier of Government?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That is included in the current strategy in relation to the work the Chief Executive is leading on to examine and refine the senior management structure. There is no particular plan or additional strategy other than that we have outlined. I have no other strategy other than to support our chief executive in his duty that we have asked him to deliver savings on the payroll.

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

My question is about the housing market. In all the questions I took from the Minister for Housing that he is not concerned with the number of private sector rental properties, I think I am right in saying that he prefers to see more first-time buyers - fine - and he wants to see more social housing - fine. But he did not seem to worry about the number, did not know the number, of private sector rental properties or the impact of States decisions like the 3 per cent surcharge and other regulatory matters. Does the Chief Minister have any concerns about these issues and is he going to take this issue quite seriously with the scale of numbers of private sector rental accommodation that is available, occupied by Islanders, needed by Islanders, and does he agree that we need to crowd it out?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure what the Deputy means by 'crowd it out'.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Reduce it.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I did listen carefully to that question and I am aligned with the Minister for Housing on this issue. It is one of our 13 priorities to provide more affordable homes for Islanders and that is not just to buy but it is to rent. I think the private sector does play an important part of that. But in relation to looking medium to long term, the Deputy knows one of the big challenges - probably the biggest challenge this Island has - is the falling working population and the fertility rate. It is important that we provide more affordable homes for young families. I believe the majority of young local families want to be able to afford to buy their home and pay a mortgage rather than paying rent for the rest of their life, and that is the strategy we are following.

6.4.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Can I just be absolutely clear that the Chief Minister is saying we all know the Housing Needs Assessment, we all know we need more homes - everybody knows that, supply is important - but is he actually saying he agrees with the policy of contracting the private sector rental market?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We do not have a policy to contract the private sector rental market. The opening sentence in my answer was that we believe that private sector rental is an important part of this Island's offering and it is an important part of our economy. So, there is no plan or strategy to reduce that; the strategy is to increase the availability of affordable homes for Islanders to buy. Now, that could lead to a reduction in private sector rental. It could do because it makes sense if we do the sums that if more people are going to own their own homes then less people are going to rent them.

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

Could the Chief Minister clarify, there was a £3.5 million allocation of funding which has now been cut for Le Squez Centre. I understand that funding is now being provided for the St. Helier Youth Centre. Has this been simply a case of prioritising the St. Helier Youth Centre over Le Squez; could he confirm one way or the other?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think this is a case of rescheduling. The Le Squez youth work is extremely important but we have identified we have almost a complete lack of facilities in the north of town. So, it was deemed that we would prioritise the new youth centre in town slightly ahead of Le Squez. But the plans are in there to do Le Squez; it just means it will be delayed slightly. But it is of no less importance and, like I say, I think we have highlighted the fact that there really is a dearth of youth facilities in the north of town and we need to address that first.

6.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The States Assembly - and I think the Government by extension - has come under attack by a number of tabloid reports in both the print and T.V. (television) media about questioning the value of our Parliament's adherence to interparliamentary bodies. I think that can also go for intergovernmental bodies when it comes to the value that they bring and the attendance at conferences. Would the Chief Minister have a view to put out on whether our membership and participation of these bodies is, on balance, a good thing for Jersey and, if so, explain why?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think it is an important part of our role within the parliamentary democracy that we share with other countries; not least those in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The interaction we have with fellow assembly members and fellow parliamentarians, whether it is at a senior government level interacting with other Parliaments and visiting each other's jurisdictions, is important. I think

it helps us better understand how other jurisdictions work. We learn off that; we bring that learning back in and it is also an opportunity to share what we do, share our unique parliamentary democracy, our unique systems with other jurisdictions. As long as we do that in a prudent and appropriate way, which I believe we do - we carefully consider what we go to - I think it is a good thing and we will continue to support it.

6.6.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Chief Minister follow up by saying whether he thinks there would be reputational damage for Jersey in the wider sense if we were to simply say we do not want to be part of this and refuse invitations because Members started to get worried about some negative public reporting on it?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

In this difficult world we live in we do not want to isolate ourselves; we want to engage proactively with as many jurisdictions as we can.

6.7 Deputy J. Renouf of St Brelade:

The Common Strategic Priorities also say that the 13th commitment is to meet the Island's commitments to address the climate emergency through the implementation of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap. Could the Minister express how he feels the Government is achieving this?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We have accepted that the commitment to meet the Island's commitments to address the climate emergency through the implementation of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, which is progressing. I think we are due an update at some stage in the near future at Council of Ministers. But we accept that as a priority, as agreed in the Common Strategic Plan, and I am relying on the Minister for the Environment to provide us with regular updates; notwithstanding we know that it is going to be a challenge to meet the targets that are set out. But I have always stated it is better to have a target and not quite get there than not have a target at all and get nowhere, but I would like to reassure Members that the commitment remains as stated in the C.S.P.

6.7.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I wonder how the Minister squares that with the decision not to implement the increase in the fuel duty that is the mechanism by which the Carbon Neutral Roadmap will be delivered.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think with the current contribution from fuel duty that will still provide significant resources. Again, we have had to balance our view on that with the challenges Islanders are facing with the rising cost of living and R.P.I. So I am afraid we have decided as a Government that it is more important to bear down on that at the moment and after we get through this difficult economic period we will look at how we readdress the funding of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap then. But in the meantime I think it is important we assist Islanders with the cost of living.

[12:45]

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

In answer to an earlier question the Chief Minister - referring to the Budget - said it was the start of bringing our public finances back into line. What are the next steps and what is the long-term plan?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I was trying to look at some figures that looked at the actual expenditure from 2021. Expenditure reduced from 2021 to 2022 but then increased to over £1 billion in 2023. I will be responding to an earlier question clarifying from Deputy Gardiner in an email during the lunchtime recess that says the growth in the Budget is largely down to the increased pay awards and the increased Health budget.

If we strip that out there would be no increase on the previous year. In light of the comments and the advice from the Fiscal Policy Panel, I suggest the Government and ultimately this Assembly is going to have to review those budgets and how we allocate spending in future years. That is something we are going to have to do over the course of the next 12 months.

6.8.1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

What would the Chief Minister say to those who may suggest that in terms of not just budgeting but policy as well this Government is maybe focused on the short term rather than the long term?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I say just the opposite. The reason why we are not spending, spending, spending is so we have a chance to remain prudent in the longer term. That is why we are not taking for granted any increases in tax through Pillar Two revenue and we are being as prudent as we possibly can. But we know there has to be room for more prudence, as we have just seen in the rather stark report from the Fiscal Policy Panel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Chief Minister. That brings that period of questions to an end. Are Members content to adjourn now?

[12:48]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:15]

PERSONAL STATEMENT

7. The Bailiff made a statement regarding his retirement.

7.1 The Bailiff:

Before we move on with the business as set out in the Order Paper I have an announcement from the Chair. I wanted Members of the Assembly to be among the first to know that following the request I have made to Buckingham Palace I have received the gracious permission of His Majesty the King to retire from the office of Bailiff in October 2025. My last day presiding over Court will be 17th October and I will formally retire 2 days after that. The 17th October is the anniversary of my swearing in. By that date I will have had the honour and privilege of being Bailiff for exactly 6 years; have been a Crown Officer for over 17 years; and I will be less than 2 months short of my 69th birthday. There will be time for appropriate farewells in due course of course and I am looking forward with enormous enthusiasm to my last 12 months in office. **[Laughter]** But I wanted to make the announcement now to allow an appropriate period for the appointment of my successor and for any other necessary arrangements to be made. Thank you. **[Approbation]** I must confess I was slightly worried about approbation at the news of me going but I am going to take it in a somewhat different spirit. **[Laughter]** Thank you.

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

8. The Chief Minister made a statement in response to the States of Jersey Complaints Board's report on the Jersey Lifeboat Association suspension.

The Bailiff:

Anyway, we now move on to the next item of business and that is a statement to be made by the Chief Minister regarding the States of Jersey Complaints Board Report on the Jersey Lifeboat Association suspension.

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

I want to begin by saying it is extremely regrettable that this matter has been allowed to persist for such a protracted period of time, involving, as it does, the Island's volunteer lifeboat organisations, Ports of Jersey and the Government. The report of the Jersey Complaints Board provides a detailed account of the procedural and administrative concerns that have been expressed as part of this long-running disagreement and makes clear the strength of feeling of all those who have been involved. Since the event detailed in that report, all parties have made renewed efforts to ensure that there are strong working relationships between all the organisations concerned. A water safety forum group has been reconstituted by Ports of Jersey. It met in May for the first time and includes members of all search and rescue organisations. The aim of that group is to improve communication and create better cohesion, collaboration and understanding across the maritime rescue community. Since taking office in January, I have visited both lifeboat teams at their harbour bases, met their volunteers and toured their vessels. Their dedication to duty is unquestionable and both teams expressed a desire to move forward positively and collaboratively. As all Members know, Jersey's maritime environment can present some of the most challenging conditions and we must not lose sight of that. Our maritime rescue capability is critical to Island life and both the Jersey Lifeboat Association and the R.N.L.I. (Royal National Lifeboat Institution) are crewed by some of our most courageous Islanders. **[Approbation]** We all recognise that when it comes to safety of lives at sea, we must ensure there is absolute clarity of understanding between the maritime organisations. Only with that clarity can we maintain the highest standards of governance, transparency and accountability. The Government acknowledges the findings of the States of Jersey Complaints Board and we have carefully considered their 3 recommendations. With respect to communications between the Harbourmaster and Minister, we accept that all parties need to have a clear understanding of procedures and responsibilities, both legal and practical. Should roles and requirements require further explanation in order to avoid similar disputes in the future then further discussions should be undertaken and, if necessary, the Public Service Obligation Agreement with Ports of Jersey could be amended. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development will continue to meet regularly and as required with the Harbourmaster, who reports on a range of maritime activities, including those undertaken by the Jersey Coastguard. Finally, careful consideration is being given to the recommendation that complaints related to maritime public service obligations should be heard by the Minister. It is critical that alongside ensuring appropriate accountability conflicts of interest must also be avoided and the Minister will provide an update in due course. The dedication to duty of all lifeboat teams is unquestionable. I know all parties share a desire to move forward. As the States of Jersey Complaints Board acknowledges in its conclusion, progress has been made to ensure the Jersey Lifeboat Association remains a core asset in local search and rescue operations. I am confident that Islanders are well protected in our coastal waters as a result. This series of events has caused much disruption, has persisted for a long period of time, and for that I am sorry. Given what we have learned from the past and the strong progress that has been made by all involved, I hope we can now move forward in a renewed spirit of co-operation. To those men and women who regularly put their lives at risk to go to sea in the most treacherous conditions to save others I would re-emphasise my apology. Jersey is extremely grateful and proud of what they do. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

There is now a period of 15 minutes where questions can be asked of the Chief Minister on any matter relating to the statement just made. Does anyone have any questions of the Chief Minister?

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

As a boat owner, I am grateful to the Chief Minister for finally getting a grip of this issue which has been dividing the maritime community for far too many years. Different Chief Ministers, dare I say it, have taken a different approach, but finally to get this resolution and get it off the table, if you like, is a great achievement. I thank the Chief Minister.

The Bailiff:

Did you have a question?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would he agree, Sir. [Laughter]

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would, thank you.

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

There were false allegations made against the coxswain and, of course, that was the reason why the Complaints Board investigated the matter. I want to know whether the Chief Minister is of opinion that those who fabricated certain information about the coxswain have been held to account.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am reluctant to go back and revisit a lot of 'who said this and who said that'. I want to draw a line under it. That is why I have apologised to all involved. I hope we can move on. Thank you.

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

I too thank the Chief Minister for his statement in which he has acknowledged the findings of the panel, including the statement that the suspension of the declared facility status of the Jersey Lifeboat Association was excessive, unjust and oppressive. Does the Chief Minister agree that it would be conducive to future harmony if Ports of Jersey themselves were to acknowledge that mistakes were made and ideally that an apology for the wrong should be made?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Again, I am aware of the strength of feeling and that is why, in my role as Chief Minister, I have apologised. I have apologised on behalf of the Government and I have apologised on behalf of all government organisations involved, as far as I am concerned. I do not think there is any profit or anything to gain from revisiting what perhaps should or should not have been done in the past. To reiterate, I hope we can move on. I am encouraged by the fact that so much progress has been made now between Ports of Jersey, Harbour Authority and the lifesaving assets. Things seem to be moving forward in a very positive way. I will do everything I can, as this Government will, to ensure that continues.

8.1.4 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

The Chief Minister has been very gracious in issuing his apology. My question was whether he agreed that it would be conducive to future harmony if Ports of Jersey themselves were to issue an apology to the party that they have wronged?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The Ports of Jersey is an incorporated organisation with its own board, it is a matter for them, but if I can speak honestly, if I was a chair or the chief executive of the Ports of Jersey I would probably be looking to do something along those lines in the interest of moving forward together. However, that is a matter for them.

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

What steps have been taken to address the procedural and administrative concern raised in the report of the Jersey Complaints Board regarding the suspension of the Jersey Lifeboat Association?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

As I have alluded, in the statement I responded to the 3 recommendations that were made; if I can refer the Deputy to that.

8.1.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

How does the Government plan to ensure clear understanding of procedures and responsibilities as well as transparency in the accountability among maritime organisations to maintain the highest standards of governance?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That is through the Minister's ongoing relationship with the Harbourmaster.

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

If I may just push the Chief Minister very gently on the point that Deputy Bailhache made. I do think having lived through this issue, and I welcome the Chief Minister's statement, would he be in agreement - he is sitting next to the Minister for Treasury and Resources who is the shareholder representative - Ports of Jersey is somewhat odd, because it has 2 Ministerial accountabilities, as he will know, as the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, but either way would he undertake to hold a discussion with the shareholder representative in order to get out of Ports of Jersey a written response at the request of the Government to acknowledge the failures and make the apology that Deputy Bailhache was asking for? There are processes, they are available, he is sitting next to the Minister who is a shareholder representative, he can do it; is he willing to do so?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am certainly happy to discuss the matter with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, but I want to re-emphasise, I really would like a line drawn under this so everybody can move on. Again, Ports of Jersey, if they have been listening in or listening to public sentiment, will be aware of the public sentiment and I hope they will act accordingly in line with the findings of the report and in the interest of continuing to move forward and build on their relationship.

8.1.8 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Very gently, assuming, without a written acceptance of what the Chief Minister has said, rightly, on behalf of the Government and on behalf of the A.L.O.s (arm's length organisation), on this occasion, due to the severity of the issues, the personality issues, to draw a line in the sand as he wants to do, and all Members should do, that needs to be put in writing on Ports of Jersey headed paper and it is possible to do so. That will draw a line in the sand. I hope the Chief Minister is in agreement and I know he can do it.

The Bailiff:

Was there a question?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Does the Chief Minister agree to get something in writing?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I will discuss it with the shareholder representative, the Minister for Treasury and Resources, and refer the Deputy to my previous answer.

8.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I welcomed the announcement too, but I do ask the Chief Minister if he thinks that episodes like this, which have been protracted, also bearing in mind the wider context and experiences of other front line services in Jersey - I think of the 2 representatives from the ambulance service - whether these kinds of incidents both might put off people from fulfilling these front line service roles, if Government cannot guarantee their interest when fulfilling these very valuable roles?

[14:30]

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

At the time, it was a great disincentive, because of the turmoil that had been caused and the uncertainty and the accusations. I am encouraged by the progress that has been made since then, everybody seems to have learned. I hope, coming out of that, we will find ourselves in a better position. I have had a very positive and productive visit with the organisation. They are positive about the future.

8.1.10 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Chief Minister take this opportunity to emphasise to all of those front line services, whether they are volunteers, voluntary organisations or paid ones, that when they act in good faith and do their jobs to keep Islanders safe that Government and its institutions will have their back?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I hope I made that clear in my statement. I wanted to make it clear that this Island, this Assembly, the Government hold all those who volunteer in such a selfless way in high esteem and will be supported. Running alongside that though is an important duty of care and responsibility between the Minister and the Harbour Authority. I hope lessons have been learned from what has happened. Along those grounds, I do agree with the Deputy and I would urge that all bodies involved continue to build the relationship in the interest of safety at sea. Thank you.

8.1.11 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Will the Chief Minister accept a plaudit from me? Too often in the past Ministers have responded to critical comments from panels under the administrative review law with disagreement or even hostility. My question for the Chief Minister is whether he will encourage Ministers in his Council of Ministers to adopt the same attitude as him in relation to this inquiry and to accept the criticisms and the comments of the panel and to do something about them?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Thank you, that is very kind of Deputy Bailhache to pay a compliment. I am not used to them, but I will take it all the same. I thank him for that. I am very pleased that the Council of Ministers, Ministers and Assistant Ministers have a very good working relationship and an understanding and have received support and guidance when having to make these sort of decisions from fellow Ministers. I would like to think that the actions, as outlined in the statement today, are not a reflection of me, it is a reflection of the Council of Ministers. I feel confident that we will collectively continue to work in this vein and accept responsibility when we have got things wrong in the past, not just the Government, but the Assembly as well.

8.1.12 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the Chief Minister agree with me that the States' decision, building on what Deputy Bailhache has said, that in the event, while the review panel is rightly treated with disdain sometimes, that would be a word that has been said, would he agree that in the event that there would have been an ombudsman that would be professionally capable of moving forward with these matters - he was the Minister for Economic Development over this long period and this has continued and continued - does he see the merit in professionalising, improving, the voluntary work of the Complaints Board?

If there would have been an ombudsman, this matter might not have taken this length of time to resolve; does he agree with that? That factors into future planning and lessons learned in a positive way, I hope.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I do not necessarily agree with that. We are doing some work now on the ombudsman. It is a piece of work being led by Deputy Scott on how we develop the complaints procedure. The statement today and the report related to a complaint that was made earlier this year and dealt with relatively quickly by the Complaints Panel. They have done well to produce the report that they did.

The Bailiff:

No other Member has questions for the Chief Minister? Then I close this period of questions. We now come on to Public Business.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

9. Nationality Acts: Extension to Jersey (P.55/2024)

The Bailiff:

The first item is the Nationality Acts: Extension to Jersey, P.55, lodged by the Chief Minister. The main respondent will be the chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion - to consent to the extension of various provisions concerning British citizenship, which are contained in the Acts and Subordinate Legislation of the Parliament of the United Kingdom as set out in the appendices to this proposition and their subsequent registration in the Royal Court.

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

Sir, Deputy Le Hegarat will act as rapporteur for this item.

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

This proposition seeks the approval of the States Assembly for the extension to Jersey of U.K. Acts that deal with matters of British nationality and citizenship. The relevant Acts are outlined in the appendices to the proposition. In developing this proposition, feedback has been obtained from the relevant stakeholders, including the Legal Advisory Panel and the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Members will have noted that the Scrutiny Panel have issued its comments on the proposition. I am grateful to the panel for their considered review. Further to this process, a decision was taken to remove the Illegal Migration Act nationality provisions, which were included in earlier drafts. Members may be aware that this piece of legislation had been considered controversial. I can confirm that what we are left with in the remainder of the nationality provisions in the proposition of the remaining nationality provisions is to address historical anomalies or gaps that had been identified and needed to be fixed. Members will note that this proposition is brought by the Chief Minister in accordance with Article 31 of the States of Jersey Law 2005. The key purpose of an Article 31 proposition is to ensure the U.K. legislation, such as the nationality provisions set out in the proposition, can apply in Jersey only after this Assembly has given its approval to such extension. Article 31 of the States of Jersey Law 2005 acts as a safeguard by ensuring that the Assembly's consent is obtained before any provisions of a U.K. Act can be registered with the Royal Court. In general, the provisions outlined in the appendices to the

proposition are positive, benign or historic. The real intent of the proposition is to update our body of nationality legislation so that it is fit for purpose through being aligned with the position in the U.K. The various U.K. Acts and subordinate legislation dealing with British nationality can be broken down into 2 basic groups: Nationality and Border Act 2022, British Nationality (Regularisation of Past Practice) Act 2023 and British Nationality (Irish Citizens) Act 2024. The provisions of these recent Acts redress historical anomalies and gaps or preserved rights of people already considered to be British citizens. The second group includes the remainder of the U.K. nationality legislation as is included, as explained in the accompanying report and Scrutiny Panel comments, as part of a housekeeping exercise with aims to align Jersey legislation with the U.K. as far as nationality is concerned. Some of the historic provisions deal with changes that took effect in the U.K. over the past 22 years. The everyday practical consequences of the alignment that this proposition seeks to achieve is that applications made in Jersey relating to British citizenship and nationality matters will continue to be dealt with in the same way as if they had been made in the U.K. This ensures that in Jersey we operate on a level playing field with the U.K. as far as British citizenship and nationality applications are concerned. This is a matter of good administration, but can also be considered important to ensuring that Jersey remains an attractive destination for foreign national workers who have skills the Island needs and for whom the ability to acquire British citizenship on the same terms as the U.K. may be important. I make the proposition.

The Bailiff:

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

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

The panel is grateful for the in-depth briefings it received on this matter. As the Minister has already stated, all references to the Illegal Migration Act 2023 have been removed from the lodged version of the proposition following a change of Government in the U.K. The panel is assured that the changes proposed by this proposition and the extension of nationality provisions to Jersey are administrative in nature and do not involve any contentious immigration issues and is supportive of the draft proposition.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? If no other Member wishes to speak, I close the debate and call upon Deputy Le Hegarat to respond.

9.1.2 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I thank the Chair of the panel for her comments, as it is very helpful. Yes, the briefings were useful and made it quite explicit as to what this requirement was, so I am grateful to her. Can I call for the *appel*, please?

The Bailiff:

The *appel* is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on P.55, the Nationality Acts: Extension to Jersey. I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote.

POUR: 41		CONTRE: 0		ABSTAIN: 0
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. 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 I.J. Gorst				
Deputy L.J. Farnham				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

10. Social Security Medical Appeal Tribunal: Appointment of Members (P.57/2024) - as amended (P.57/2024 Amd.)

The Bailiff:

The next item of Public Business is the Social Security Medical Appeal Tribunal: Appointment of Members lodged by the Minister for Social Security, P.57. The main respondent will be the chair of the Health and Social Security Panel. There is an amendment lodged by the Minister. Do you wish for the matter to be taken as amended, Minister?

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

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Do Members agree to take the matter as amended? Very well, I ask the Greffier to read the proposition as amended.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion - to appoint, in accordance with Article 34 of the Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974, and further to a process overseen by the Jersey

Appointments Commission, Jersey Appointments Commission, Dr. Omer Zubair, Dr. Lucy Fleur Baudains and Dr. Nauman Jadoon, medical practitioners, as members of the Social Security Medical Appeal Tribunal, for a term of 5 years.

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

I am pleased to propose the appointment of Dr. Omer Zubair, Dr. Lucy Fleur Baudains and Dr. Nauman Jadoon as 3 new medical practitioners to the Social Security Medical Appeal Tribunal, subject, of course, to the approval of the States Assembly. Members will find summaries of the appointees' backgrounds in the written report, as well as more details about the function of the tribunal itself. The positions were advertised locally, in Guernsey and in the U.K., through the British Medical Journal. I am satisfied that the recruitment process was carried out in a fair and transparent way and can confirm the Jersey Appointments Commission were involved in the interview process. I am pleased to make the appointments to the Assembly and make the proposition. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

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

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

First of all, can I say I do support the proposition and I thank the candidates concerned for allowing their names to go forward. The reason I stand is simply to remind Members that back in October 2017 the Jersey Law Commission published its report, *Improving Administrative Redress in Jersey*. Its main recommendation was to recommend the establishment of the J.A.A.T. (Jersey Administrative Appeals Tribunal).

[14:45]

One of the main purposes was to transfer to that the ability to hear appeals which currently go to Ministers when considering appeals against decisions in their own departments, which cannot be right. Among the other functions was that a number of smaller tribunals be extinguished and absorbed by this new J.A.A.T. I simply bring that matter to the attention of Members so they are aware that it is an outstanding recommendation of the Commission. While I appreciate the expertise offered by these people, I would hope that on any transfer that is being capable of being transferred. That is the purpose of my standing, Sir.

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

I fully support the process and the observations of the previous speaker. I wonder whether the Minister in summing up could give Members an indication of what we are approving these people ... properly people; that is excellent. What is not contained within the report is any idea of the scale of work that we are appointing these people for. Does she have any information that could be of assistance by approving these members to give Members an indication of how many people they are basically making decisions over whose lives are going to be affected by their decisions?

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak? No other Member wishes to speak. I close the debate and call upon the Minister to respond.

10.1.3 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank the Constable for his comments. I am always in favour of undertaking the most efficient processes as possible so of course, where possible, if we could amalgamate such tribunals, I would look at that. I agree with the Constable this particular one has quite a lot of specialist expertise that we need to ensure is in place. With reference to Deputy Ozouf's question, I do not have the number of cases that the tribunal looks at on a regular basis in front of me. I will endeavour to get that

information to you and ensure that in future in similar propositions we include that information. I call for the vote.

The Bailiff:

Call for the *appel* or a standing vote?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am happy for a standing vote.

The Bailiff:

Those in favour of adopting, kindly show. Those against? The proposition is adopted.

11. Income Support Medical Appeal Tribunal: Appointment of Members (P.58/2024) - as amended (P.58/2024 Amd.)

The Bailiff:

The next item is the Income Support Medical Appeal Tribunal: Appointment of Members, P.58, lodged by the same Minister with the same responder. There is an amendment. Do you wish to take it as amended, Minister?

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

Yes, I do, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Do Members agree we can take it as amended? I ask the Greffier to read the proposition as amended.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion - to appoint, in accordance with Article 9 of the Income Security (Jersey) Law 2007, and further to a process overseen by the Jersey Appointments Commission, Dr. Omer Zubair, Dr. Lucy Fleur Baudains and Dr. Nauman Jadoon, medical practitioners, as members of the Income Support Medical Appeal Tribunal, for a term of 5 years.

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

I am pleased to propose the appointment of Dr. Omer Zubair, Dr. Lucy Fleur Baudains and Dr. Nauman Jadoon as 3 new medical practitioners to the Income Support Medical Appeal Tribunal, subject, of course, to the approval of the States Assembly. As with the previous appointments, Members will find the summaries of the appointees' backgrounds in the written report as well as more details about the functions of the tribunal itself. As outlined in the written report, where appropriate, panel members are appointed to other tribunals ensuring a strong pool available for each tribunal. The recruitment process was the same as the process for the Social Security Medical Appeal Tribunal. I am pleased to make the appointments to the Assembly and I make the proposition. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

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

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

Simply to say that my comments regarding the previous proposition apply equally here. I am sure States Members do not wish me to repeat them.

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

My comments are the same really. We are basically being asked to approve individuals for a scale of work which is not clear. I have absolutely no wish to cast any doubt, but one of the applicants is a doctor of 2 years standing and the other one is a much longer one. I would like, for transparency and openness, to know what we are doing. These are big decisions over lives and I raise an eyebrow that there is a doctor of 2 years standing that is making judgment over these seemingly important issues, but we do not know the scale of them. I hope that I have made my point.

The Bailiff:

Thank you. Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call upon the Minister to respond.

11.1.3 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

In the intervening time the previous Minister for Social Security has given me information that during her 2 years in office in the role ... I will endeavour to get the correct information. I misheard the previous Minister for Social Security. Back to Deputy Ozouf's point, I have been assured that the appointment process was fair and transparent and followed all of the Jersey Appointments Commission's rules. I will again undertake to provide further information in future propositions where we are appointing members. I am assured that the fair, right and proper appointments process was put in place to ensure that we have adequate appointees.

The Bailiff:

Do you call for a vote?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I do, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Those in favour of adopting, kindly show. Those against? This proposition is adopted. That concludes Public Business.

ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Bailiff:

I call upon the Chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) to propose the arrangements for Public Business for future meetings.

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

There are presently 9 items for the next sitting, scheduled for 22nd October 2024. Delivery of the 3 Bilingual Primary Schools, P.45/2024; Draft Multinational Taxation (Global Anti-Base Erosion - IIR Tax) Jersey Law 202-, P.53/2024; Draft Multinational Corporate Income Tax (Jersey) Law 202-, P.54/2024; Marine Spatial Plan; Draft Shipping (Registration) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202-, P.46/2024; Draft Family Division Registrar (Change of Status and Title) (Jersey) Law 202-; Draft Income Support (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202-; Gender Pay and Income Ratio Consultation, P.64/2024; and Public Elections: Extension of Eligibility Criteria. Given that there are 9 items and one of them is the Marine Spatial Plan, I assume that we will be sitting for at least the Tuesday and the Wednesday and may be going into Thursday. I propose the arrangement for future business.

The Bailiff:

Do Members agree with the proposal for future business? Very well, future business is accepted. Connétable.

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

Can I notify yourself and Members that I will be out of the Island for the next sitting, the Tuesday and Wednesday, attending a close family member's funeral in Wales.

The Bailiff:

Thank you for notifying us of that, Connétable. Very well, the Assembly stands adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on 22nd October.

ADJOURNMENT

[14:54]