

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

MONDAY, 11th JULY 2022

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[9:30]

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

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

May I ask a point of order? I think it is a point of order before we begin. I have noted, and I think you will also have noted, that there is an inequality in the Standing Orders whereby the male Members in the Assembly are not permitted to remove their jackets and I also note that the temperatures today are expected to reach the high 20s. I wondered whether you would consider raising that particular Standing Order to temporarily address that inequality given the heat today, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that proposition seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on that proposition?

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

Only, perhaps the air-conditioning could be turned on.

The Deputy Bailiff:

It has been turned on. This is the best it gets, I am afraid to say. The building's air-conditioning is poor. I am told there is a part on its way from somewhere but I am not quite sure where that is and when it is due to arrive. But, yes, thank you, Deputy. Male Members may remove their jackets if they wish during the course of this meeting of the Assembly.

Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

I wonder if this matter will be opened for debate.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You want a debate?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, I have decided to express my opposition to the move. If the Chair can suffer the heavy robes that go with your office, I do not see why we should not suffer our jackets.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak?

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

Only to say I understand the temperature that we may be experiencing later in the day. It is still, as far as I can sense, relatively mild and pleasant in this place, though having this conversation at lunchtime would not go amiss. But I do think that when we are speaking it would be appropriate to wear our jackets and perhaps you might make a nuanced decision.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that an amendment to the proposal?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

No, Sir, this is obviously a decision for you that when not speaking gentlemen could remove their jackets.

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

The only reason I am speaking is because one of the issues we have in this Assembly is trying to attract new people into a modern forward-thinking, forward-working constructive Assembly, regardless of differences in political opinion and some of the discussions and debates and, let us be

quite frank, arguments that will happen in here. I think talking about jackets is something from the past and we need to look to the future. There is no reason you should not be comfortable in your workplace. I certainly would have said that when I was a teacher to my students that: “It is too hot, do not wear your ties, it is absolutely fine.” I would rather you be focusing on what we are doing, the content of what you are doing, the content of your work, the content of your speeches and the overall thought that you put into the job that you do. If taking your jacket off helps you to do that then I would urge that that is what we do.

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

I raise the issue that my Constable raised, equality of suffering is I think something we should go for.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this proposition? If no Member wishes to speak I call upon Deputy Doublet to reply.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I think common sense should prevail, and I do not know if it is in Standing Orders about your attire but I think again common sense should prevail in terms of comfort and the heat.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I do not have the relevant Standing Order in front of me but as a matter of good practice the Chair should not simply raise Standing Orders, so it is a matter for the Assembly to vote on in the usual way. Those who wish to support the proposition will vote pour, those who are against it will vote contre, and I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The proposition is that male Members be permitted to remove their jackets owing to the temperature today.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Can I raise the défaut on Deputy Carolyn Labey before the vote please?

The Deputy Bailiff:

The vote has begun so sorry, it is too late.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I do it immediately after?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you can. All Members have cast their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting and I can announce that the **[Interruption]** ... Members please be of good order while I announce the result. The proposition has been adopted.

POUR: 38		CONTRE: 7		ABSTAIN: 2
Connétable of St. Peter		Connétable of St. Helier		Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf
Connétable of St. Martin		Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy K.M. Wilson
Connétable of St. John		Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of St. Saviour		
Connétable of Grouville		Deputy S.G. Luce		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Deputy I.J. Gorst		
Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy G.P. Southern				
Deputy C.F. Labey				

Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy L.F. Farnham				
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B.de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				

Deputy M. Tadier:

Now we have got to grips with the burning issues of the day, I am glad this was our first vote in the new Assembly, can I raise the défaut on Deputy Carolyn Labey please?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do Members agree the défaut should be raised? The défaut is raised.

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

The Deputy Bailiff:

There are several items under F, Appointment of Ministers, Committees and Panels, on the Order Paper, and the process is set out and described in the Order Paper. The first item is the selection of Ministers, and in accordance with Standing Order 117(2)(e) I invite the Chief Minister designate to read out her declaration.

1. Selection of Ministers

1.1 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister designate):

My chosen Ministers for the Assembly to decide upon today will be firstly the Minister for Treasury and Resources, my nomination will be for Deputy Gorst. Then Children and Education, the nomination will be Deputy Gardiner. Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture is Deputy Morel. Environment is Deputy Renouf. Then External Relations and Financial Services is Deputy Ozouf. Health and Social Services is Deputy Wilson. Home Affairs is Deputy Miles. Housing and Communities is Deputy Warr. Infrastructure is Deputy Tom Binet. International Development is Deputy Labey. Finally, for Social Security is Deputy Millar. I hope you will find, and the Assembly will agree, this a balanced and very capable slate of Ministerial appointments.

2. The Minister for Treasury and Resources

The Deputy Bailiff:

The first matter is the selection of the Minister for Treasury and Resources. Members have received notice of the designation. Deputy Moore, would you wish to make the nomination?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Yes, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? [**Seconded**] Are there any other nominations for Minister for Treasury and Resources? Accordingly, I invite Deputy Gorst to speak for up to 10 minutes, after which there will be a question period of up to 20 minutes.

2.1 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I am grateful to the electorate in St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter for the support they gave me on 22nd June and for returning me to this Assembly. In that election Deputy Moore was clear that if successful she wished to serve as Chief Minister and she topped the poll in my district, securing more votes than anyone in this Assembly.

[9:45]

As Chief Minister designate, Deputy Moore has the clear support of the public and the States Assembly, and has set out her vision for the next 4 years; one that I wholeheartedly support and would be committed to deliver if the Assembly were to appoint me as Minister for Treasury and Resources. I particularly relish the call to action that the vision represents, underlined by 18 commitments for the first 100 days. I am honoured to have been nominated for the role as Minister for Treasury and Resources where I will retain political responsibility for financial services. Today, I set out my vision for how I will seek to undertake this most important role. I am aware of the responsibility that is inherent in the role of the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the opportunity it provides to improve the lives of people across our community. I have twice served as an Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources, most recently during the last Government to assist with COVID support packages and to take forward our work on international tax, but also when Senator Le Sueur was the Minister for Treasury and Resources. It is a role and portfolio with which I am familiar and for which I hope to now take on full responsibility, hitting the ground running. Over the next 4 years, the Treasury and wider Ministerial team will need to focus on the many challenges facing our community and concentrate on the issues that matter to Islanders. These were made clear to us by the public during the election campaign. Government must shape its policies to support a strong economy, ease the pressure on family budgets in these exceptional times, and ensure our success can be shared across the community. If I am elected, one of my first actions will be to prepare and deliver an early mini-Budget so that we can immediately take some measures to help

Islanders with the cost of living and act before the winter months arrive. This mini-Budget will be lodged in the next few weeks to help Islanders as quickly as possible. We will take action through the tax system to reduce the burden on Islanders, especially to ensure taxpayers keep more of their own money in their own pockets. We will support an increase to the minimum wage, above £10 an hour, moving to the living wage by the time we end this term of office. Our mini-Budget will include measures agreed by the Council of Ministers giving support for all Islanders while prioritising support for the most vulnerable and those on fixed incomes. The election campaign also highlighted, if we needed reminding, the need to deal with the housing crisis and to give Islanders hope of a secure future in Jersey. As the Minister for Treasury and Resources I will play my part in delivering for local families. As shareholder representative representing the public, I would ensure that current and future Jersey Development Company schemes deliver more than the planned 15 per cent of affordable homes. This may of course impact on current projects and might make less money available in the short term for improving other parts of our public realm but, we must be clear, it is a crisis and needs to be dealt with as a crisis. The message needs to go out clearly from this Assembly, as it came through clearly to us during the election campaign, our priority is affordable purchases for first-time buyers. We will maximise first-time buyer properties on publicly-owned land to restore hope, retain the talents and skills of young Islanders and keep our community diverse and vibrant. In addition, as I have set out in my manifesto, I will do what I can as the Minister for Treasury and Resources to support affordable purchases, be those through deposit schemes, shared equity or deferred payment options. In all of these areas, building homes and helping first-time buyers, I will continue to stand firmly in support of Andium Homes. The cost of living and the housing crisis will be Treasury's number one priority, closely followed by getting a grip on the Government and States finances. During the election campaign the voters who I spoke to were clear in their view that States spending had increased to an unsustainable rate, driving borrowing up too high. If elected, I will work with my colleagues to address these concerns. As Minister, and as a Government, value for money must be our watch words and spending, particularly on consultants, must be restrained. States spending will be brought back under control and focused on the priorities of Islanders. We will need, of course, to invest in key areas: the health service, mental health, children's services, education and skills training. We will support our public infrastructure and modernise the public estate, keeping and improving the buildings that we need and selling those that we do not so that proper use can be made of redundant sites, in particular for housing. As the Minister for Treasury and Resources, I will focus on ensuring that not only is spending directed to where it is needed most but also in ensuring that projects which spending is allocated for are delivered on time and not allowed to drift. Construction projects which are funded by the taxpayer need to be delivered when they are promised. We will ensure that we have a modern Government which is responsive to taxpayers and delivers value and efficiency for the public. Islanders are rightly concerned at the increase in borrowing that occurred under the last Government. My position on that has been clear and is evidenced through amendments I brought to the last 2 Government Plans. We have committed, I believe, too much public debt, as Islanders told me regularly on the doorstep, and we need to return to prudence and live within our means. As the Minister for Treasury and Resources I do not propose to permit further borrowing beyond any that might be required for the new hospital. We will start to pay down our debts beginning with those accrued during COVID, which can be fully repaid by 2026. On tax, I remain consistent in supporting low, simple and competitive taxes. I want to see the marginal rate reduced by at least 1 per cent for all Islanders as a permanent measure, putting money back in the hands of taxpayers. Treasury will of course need to play its role in designing schemes to fund the climate emergency response and also to help change behaviour, but I remain clear that our work in this respect must be proportional and based on public consensus. My position on G.S.T. (goods and services tax) is also clear. It should be broad, simple and low with any necessary mitigating support for low-income households being provided through the income support system. As Minister for Financial Services, a role I will be pleased to retain, I will continue to promote the industry across our key markets, ensuring we remain competitive and open to new opportunities, working hand in hand with

those that this Assembly will elect today or tomorrow. We will implement our new financial services strategy, working with industry and the regulator. We will continue to modernise our statute book. We will conclude Jersey's participation in the new global tax rules, ensuring they are fair and in our long-term interest. Importantly, I hope to steer us through the MONEYVAL assessment in 2023, which is crucial for the well-being of our economy and to protecting jobs in the Island. I will work to continue to ensure Jersey is a green, digitally-enabled and entrepreneurial finance centre, which can be confident of its future providing jobs and prosperity for Islanders for years to come. I have probably outlined enough challenges and priorities to help 4 years pass very quickly. Within the Treasury Department itself of course we have challenges to meet in improving our service to Islanders and businesses. I will do what I can to tackle these head on and improve our level of service. I have been in the States since 2005, I know to expect the unexpected and that Government will need to be nimble and flexible in responding to the challenges of the future.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to a period of 20 minutes of questions. I remind Members that any supplementaries must be connected to the original question, and the first question is from Deputy Southern.

2.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I rise to my feet to praise the Minister for at least being honest about what he intends. In paragraph 4 of his comments, he says: "I will seek to ensure we prioritise our investment in the key public services, including our health services, especially mental health, children's service and education." So far so good. This is a generous Minister for Treasury and Resources. But he then goes on: "The rate at which overall States spending increased over the past 4 years is not sustainable and must be brought under control. We must focus and target our spending." What does this mean? The Minister for Treasury and Resources, I am sure, will quibble with my words. It means cuts, cuts and more cuts to public services. We have seen this leopard before. In 2014 to 2018 he made those very cuts and he intends to do the same again. Is that not the case, Minister?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

No.

2.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

He obviously has access to the magic money tree and will not say where he is going to make some cuts. If he is going to reduce spending he must admit that this comes with cuts in public services. There is no 2 ways about it. Will he say which cuts he shall make to which services? Will it mean extra waiting times for the hospital? Will it mean larger class sizes? What will it mean?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Perhaps I could also answer his earlier question. He is incorrect. I know it is good politics to suggest that previous Governments were austerity Governments and made cuts right, left and centre. But the Deputy knows that during the 2014 to 2018 Government expenditure was controlled and it grew only slightly. During the 2018 to 2022 Government expenditure has increased quite magnificently. Islanders were clear to me on the doorstep that they do wish to see a Government that takes back control of spending. My opening position would be that we must look at that increased expenditure that was approved by this Assembly and make sure that for every penny and pound that we are spending that we get value for money from it. We now have over £200 million extra spend that Government is spending from 2018. Surely, when we put all that together, £1 billion of revenue expenditure, we can allocate it to those areas that need appropriate funding; as the Deputy and I agree on health, getting down the waiting lists, on education and skills. There is a programme in both of those departments which need to be properly funded but we should not assume that every pound we spend is spent well and is achieving value for money. In fact, his own leader has said that they, in

Reform, are against wasteful spending. Perhaps we can be aligned across this Assembly and being against wasteful spending and allocating the spending where the public want to see it.

2.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am glad that the Minister for Treasury and Resources is proposing Reform Jersey's policy on reducing marginal rate income tax, even if he has not costed it, but the question really relates to getting Jersey back on track. I know this was a slogan for the Better Way candidates, official and unofficial, in the election and it remains one of the key pledges: get Jersey back on track. Does the Minister for Treasury and Resources believe that when it comes to the new hospital project we need to keep the new hospital project on track or is it his intention to try and derail it?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Let us not argue about whose policy it is to reduce the marginal rate. He knows that previous Governments I have been in have had the policy intention to reduce marginal rates. We reduced it from 27 to 26 and we said at that time that we would support reducing it further. So perhaps it was Reform Jersey that have picked up a jolly good policy and we support it together. My intention is this: Islanders need and deserve a new hospital but I was very clear during the election that there should be a short period so that we can, once and for all, put into the public domain the expected costs of a hospital at Overdale, the costs that have been spent or the monies that have been spent to date.

[10:00]

If we are to look at other options then we must be open and transparent about what they cost as well. Because we are looking at a cost that is now 3 years old. We know what has happened in the market with regard to inflation. If we go back to previous iterations we are looking at costs which were 6 years old. We need to look at those costs and then find a way forward because I think most people in the community believe that £800 million is too much to spend on a hospital but we are where we are. We do need to keep in focus that we need a new hospital. The Deputy of course knows it is not the Minister for Treasury and Resources' job to decide on the hospital. It is the Minister for Infrastructure's job to deliver a hospital. and the Chief Minister designate has been quite clear that she will appoint an individual to do that very review.

2.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

While it is not the Minister for Treasury and Resources' job, the Minister for Treasury and Resources is in a very strong position to either help or hinder that project in coalition with his Better Way Government. The question I would ask the Minister, if he is talking about messages on the doorstep, is that the message to me was very clear. They said: "We do not like particularly where the hospital is. We think it should have gone on the waterfront, and this is a mess that was made by the Gorst/Ozouf-led Government of 2014." But the hospital should go there now, we should stop wasting any more time and money, and it is much more important about what services go in the hospital rather than pursuing personal vendettas from the previous Government about site selection. Does the Minister not agree that that is also a message he heard in his big district of St. Ouen, St. Mary and St. Peter?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

It will not surprise the Deputy to hear that the electors of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter were not quite so critical, as he might like to have been, of the past. But putting that to one side, the electors that I spoke to were very much split. They really do want a new hospital and they had story after story of the difficulties that they were encountering across the health service and they want that to be addressed probably as more of a priority than the new hospital. But we know that to retain and get new staff we do need a new hospital. I do not want to hinder the delivery of a hospital and if it does, when we have done all of that publication of the details and the costs, if that does show that we must

keep going at Overdale I believe there are still some other things that we can do to reduce the cost of what is currently proposed. There is some redesigning, I am not sure that you really need all of that upper floor, and I still remain unconvinced that you cannot have a more practical Jersey solution to the road issue. It is not black and white, it is not straightforward, as the Deputy wants Islanders to believe. We are going to, in this Assembly, have to make those difficult, finally-balanced decisions. But we must keep focused on delivering a new hospital.

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

When this candidate was Chief Minister in the 2014 to 2018 Government I spent more hours than I care to recall sat in Philip Le Feuvre House with constituents as they cried their eyes out realising the reality that was about to hit them of Deputy Gorst's £10 million austerity package, which cruelly targeted the most vulnerable in our society. My question to this candidate is: does he now accept that the policies he implemented in that term were wrong and will he assure this Assembly that as the Minister for Treasury and Resources he will not propose any Budget that targets the poor in the way he did when he was Chief Minister.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

As the Deputy knows, the overall spending on income support during that period increased. The overall government expenditure remained flat or increased slightly just under the level of inflation. It was that prudence during - and Reform Jersey might smile - but it was that prudence during that period of Government that meant that the incoming Government was able to support Islanders and support businesses through all of the difficulties of the pandemic and COVID. We need to get back to prudence so that when we face challenges in the future, as we know we will, that we have in place reserves and sufficient funding to meet those challenges. As the Deputy also knows, in my opening statement I made a commitment that in the short term the priority of the Government has to be supporting the most vulnerable as we face the cost-of-living difficulties and the extreme squeeze on household budgets.

2.1.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

A very nice answer. The fact remains that his Government pursued policies which for some of the most vulnerable in our community their lives were made worse off. I sat in a room as people with disabilities were told they would be up to £600 a year worse off. I sat in a room with single parents to be told that they would be £2,000 a year worse off; so his words do not cut it. The question therefore is: if this candidate will not show any contrition for his past actions how can he expect Members of this Assembly and the wider public to expect that he will govern any differently now that he is likely to be the Minister for Treasury and Resources, and is this not a case of a leopard that has not changed its spots?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I am not quite sure how to answer that last question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Perhaps maybe a short answer because we are more than halfway through the time, and we have 10 Members who would like to ask questions. Perhaps Members could keep their questions reasonably short, and again if you could keep your answers short.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I will endeavour to answer questions quickly. This is a new Government, the Chief Minister designate has set out her vision and I clearly wanted to and do fully support that vision. I will use the office of the Minister for Treasury and Resources to work for the priorities of the Government, not simply what my own view on any given issue might be.

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

With the move to independent taxation drawing near, will the Minister designate commit to a compensatory allowance for married couples and, if that is the case, how long does he intend it to last?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I have always been in favour of that. I do not have all the details in front of me so it is something that I would wish to review and get other Ministers' views on an appropriate way forward.

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

I thank the Deputy for his speech. It is absolutely right that we move ahead quickly with the minimum wage to the living wage and further, if necessary. But the Deputy will know that there is one particular industry in Jersey which really struggles with this, can he give the Assembly some assurance that he will find a way of supporting farmers, and particularly vegetable producers, so that their businesses can continue to be viable into the future when we get to the living wage?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The short answer is yes but the reality of the situation facing our agricultural industry - and no doubt Deputy Morel will talk about this more fully - is not straightforward. In previous crises we might simply have thought of a short-term support to deal with the cost of fertiliser but, as the Deputy himself knows, there are many interlinked and difficult supply chain issues and changes for the agricultural economy, not just here in Jersey but right across Europe, some of that arising out of the war in Ukraine. I, together with Deputy Morel, stand ready to support farmers in what is going to be a very difficult and challenging period for them.

2.1.9 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Would the Minister designate rule out an increase in G.S.T. during his tenure?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I listened carefully to what the Chief Minister designate said when she answered this question. I will work collectively and collegiately with the Ministers that this Assembly elects today, but I was clear in my opening statement that I will give a jolly good fight to ensure that it does not, and that is my personal position.

2.1.10 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that a no?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

One is elected by this Assembly into a Council of Ministers. One may have one's own political philosophy which is, to answer the Deputy, a no. But it may be that other Ministers feel that that is the only option to them in the future. I am quite clear, my philosophy is no, and I will fight and fight to ensure that G.S.T. does not raise.

2.1.11 Deputy L. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

In his statement, the Deputy proposes to increase the tax thresholds and work towards reducing the marginal rate of tax by 1 per cent. Has the candidate costed this and how does the candidate intend to balance any budget deficit created by the decreases he is proposing?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I have to be careful what I say here because, of course, all potential candidates for any Ministerial role can go into the department and speak with officials and seek to understand what the implications are. The Deputy will not be surprised, it is rather counterintuitive however, that during a time of

inflation the revenues that the Tax Department are receiving into their coffers increase and there is something that is unintended there. So you see an increase in revenue and tax take because of rising inflation at the very time when Islanders themselves are suffering in their own pockets. I believe that if not all then certainly the majority of measures that Ministers may want to see in a mini-Budget would be covered by that increase in tax take that the Revenue Department is already experiencing.

2.1.12 Deputy L. Feltham:

If there was to be a deficit in tax take, what would you do in order to balance the books and would that include departmental budget cuts?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

As the Deputy knows, if one is facing a deficit one has to look to the economics and not just the calculator and the economics always tell us that if we are facing a deficit then we should seek to address it over the medium-term period, anywhere between 3 to 5 years. Members will be having a briefing by the independent Fiscal Policy Panel I think later this week. They will be advising Members what their view is of the latest economic outlook for the medium but I would seek to deal with any proposed deficit, if that is indeed the case, I do not see why it should be; in fact I think it will be the reverse, along the lines of the advice from those independent economic advisers.

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

My question to the Deputy is in relation to personal income tax and the transition from previous year basis to current year basis. Will the Deputy, as Minister for Treasury and Resources, commit to providing clear communications in relation to repayment options for individuals' 2019 tax liability?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I will, and I understand the difficulty that some Islanders have had in receiving the communications that they have from the Revenue Department. Some individuals very close to me have been confused when they themselves have read that communication. I, being tight, always take what I think is the in my best interest payment option, and there are some really good payment options for Islanders. They really do not need to be concerned and if they are concerned there are 2 things that I hope will happen. One is the communication that the Deputy has just outlined, but I am absolutely committed to getting individuals sitting at tables in Philip Le Feuvre House in person to address Islanders' concerns. There are quite a lot of concerns that need to be addressed when it comes to communicating tax changes.

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

The Public Finances (Jersey) Law of 2019 requires the Council of Ministers to take into account the sustainable well-being of current and future generations when developing the Government Plan, but Jersey dropped 5 places in the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Better Life Index in 2021, reflecting maybe a lack of correlation between words and strong action. How will the Deputy embed the sustainable well-being principles into decision-making when deciding how to spend Jersey's finances and how will the Deputy monitor the impact of these decisions?

[10:15]

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

As the Deputy knows, it was incorporated into the Public Finances (Jersey) Law and that was the first step to thinking about well-being. I think she is also right to indicate that while it is in the law, there is not good practice yet across departments thinking about it. That will be a job not exactly for the Minister for Treasury and Resources but for the Chief Minister and for the Council of Ministers. Perhaps I was trying to allude to it when I used the term "value for money", because value for money

is not just about the finances, it is about the deliverables of how we are spending the money. I am absolutely committed to making sure that we are delivering value for money and that includes Islanders' well-being. It cannot not.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The period for taking questions has completed and as there were no other nominations, I can confirm Deputy Gorst has been selected for appointment as Minister for Treasury and Resources. [Approbation]

3. The Minister for Children and Education

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move on to the Minister for Children and Education. I invite Deputy Moore to make her nomination.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I am delighted to propose Deputy Gardiner for this position.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? [Seconded] Are there any other nominations? Thank you.

3.1 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Today I stand before the Assembly and ask for Members' faith and trust in me to carry out the role of the Minister for Children and Education - I am really emotional - for the next 4 years. I would like to thank the Chief Minister designate for nominating me as she knows that I will be a very strong voice for children, teaching professionals, carers and families. I will not let it go and we will have an education and children's service that promotes educational excellence, economic growth and individual well-being. It is vital that all children have a fair opportunity to obtain the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare them for the uncertain future. None of us really knows the trends in globalisation and artificial intelligence and the world economy that will affect our future working lives. It is extremely important that we maintain and enhance a good standard of learning and education to secure our future. A well-rounded education makes a positive difference to the lives of children, young people, their families, carers and our community as a whole. Their future is our collective future. Our community is stronger when educated and mobile. Children and young people experienced major challenges, as did all our community, during the pandemic. The impacts that the pandemic had on children and young people's education, social and emotional well-being, physical and mental health and economic securities are recognised and we must provide support to ensure educational recovery and well-being recovery for all children after the pandemic. When I look into the whole portfolio of children and education and I think what are the major issues to address during this term, I realise there are many. I will raise some but probably there are more. We have on our hands, first, education reform that must progress, early years, and ensuring that the recommendations of the Care Inquiry are not forgotten; implementation of the inclusion review recommendations recently published; school funding and school infrastructure - we have lots of communication about it and it needs to be dealt with - social care reform; higher education funding; provision for children with special needs; vocational provision; skills agenda; mental health and well-being; safety online, at school and on the way to school; support for our teaching professionals and youth services; developing a digital educational strategy. There are all these to consider how we join them together. The most important secret is really to join them together and provide a well-balanced and holistic approach to the needs of our community. I have had meetings with Senator Vallois and with Deputy Wickenden, and I am grateful for their time in sharing with me their knowledge and their experience. I have learned from both of them. I am also grateful to the director general of the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department for a very constructive meeting and answering my questions

about the challenges we all are facing. It is a big job and, as with any big job, we must prioritise. I have tried to put together what will be my first 100 days plan following the 100 days plan from the Chief Minister designate. Members know that I like structure, so I divided it into the 5 main priorities at strategic level and 5 operational things for the first 100 days. Obviously other things will come to my attention and I will need to adjust because it is always dynamic, as we know. In no specific order but for me recruitment is one of the top priorities within the Children and Education Department. I would like to develop a holistic workforce strategy and action plan for the department that will provide us with a workforce analysis and projection of the future needs based on the workforce demographic, turnover and recruitment plans. Plans are very important for me. My first meetings will be with head teachers, the Children's Commissioner, unions, the early age progress report, Parent Carer Forum and other partners. I recognise this is a challenge across government departments and businesses. We must have a stable and high moral workforce to deliver the best for our children. This leads me to the next strategic priority, which is skills. I am grateful that the Minister for Treasury and Resources in his speech elaborated that we would need to invest into skills. In the first 100 days I aim to complete plans and establish delivery timelines for the reorganisation of Skills Jersey functions across C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) and the length of Jersey, because skillsets come under my portfolio. This will support the Chief Minister designate's commitment to create a people and skills commission that will monitor the population, availability of accommodation, skills gaps and employment opportunities. These plans will introduce a barometer for how we will work. As somebody who has been present at the Assembly, we know that we are coming towards the Government Plan, which is the Budget, and very swiftly I need to understand and to put forward business plans with the Minister for Treasury and Resources. Again, I am grateful that it was indicated there will be support for education but we need the funding for early years care sufficiency, the outcomes of the education reform programme and inclusion review. There are big pieces of investment in education coming and I will fight for them. Another strategic priority is to develop and start implementation of a participation and engagement plan for children and young people. This will ensure that the voice of our service users is heard and will be at the heart of developing the policies. On the strategic level, develop a community partnership group involving C.Y.P.E.S., Health and Community Services, Housing, States of Jersey Police, the Youth Service, Customer and Local Services, Parishes and Honorary Police. It will be a focused approach with partners to address some of the antisocial behaviour issues we are facing and missing children activity. Now, if I go into the operational matters, we must act on previous States Assembly decisions. We have some decisions that were not acted on. Also recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee, the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Scrutiny Panels. One is maintenance of the estate. We now have summer holidays and this is the best time to fix and prepare schools for the next year. As a matter of urgency, we must address all fire and safety risks within the schools. Also we need to sort out the building heating issues and the Greenfields improvement plan and others. I know that it is not all the same but we are talking about the urgent matters for the first days. Finalise the implementation plan for C.A.M.H.S. (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) mental health and well-being - I would like to also see how it is set going forward - finalise the St. Helier Primary School estate report to be presented to the Assembly; finalise the higher education review report to be presented to the Assembly; ensure the funding formula, whatever it is now, is presented and I assume that I would need to work on it a bit more but at least whatever has been done will be shared in the Assembly in the future. So what is really important, we are all connected to education, we all have personal views and I ask Members to connect, to contribute, to express, to develop the dialogue. This is important. I have already sought interviews with an executive team and if elected I would like to work together with Deputy Doublet and the Constable of St. Peter and embrace other skills that other junior Ministers might be willing to contribute. We must work together to make our Island the best possible place for our children and young people to study, play, grow and create their future. I want to bring a renewed passion and leadership to our

current Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills. I will seek help to meet all the challenges and current needs of our community. Thank you for your questions.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to a period of 20 minutes of questions and the first question is from Deputy Southern.

3.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The potential Minister says that she is passionate about education, which is nothing more than a cliché. She then goes on to say that good standards of education make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and their families. What single action will she take to ensure that good standards are maintained and introduced in our schools as a priority?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank Deputy Southern for his question because I am passionate and I worked in the previous term with schools in my district and I made improvements. I think about the actions and there are several things that we must address. The first thing is to ensure that we have sufficient funding for education that will allow head teachers in the schools to make the difference and to lead the school in the way they think is right, obviously with oversight from the department.

3.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

But the question was about actions and does not, if you do not mind me saying so, answer what actions will she take to ensure that these good standards are maintained and promoted in her service.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I refer the Deputy to my action plan that I have just outlined in my speech. I have 5 strategic and 5 operational priorities for the first 100 days and I welcome the Deputy to hold me to account at the 100 days if I manage to deliver what I promised in my speech.

3.1.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Following on from that speech, the candidate for Minister has referred to funding for the schools. Can we take it, therefore, as a given that she has a categorical assurance from the Minister for Treasury and Resources designate that she will be getting that funding?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for the question and I think it is a really important question. The moment that I decided to stand for this position and asked for this position we did have a discussion with the Chief Minister designate. As the Minister for Treasury and Resources indicated, he also aligned with the vision of the Chief Minister designate. My hope and my trust at this point is that I will get the funding that I need. It is important really to indicate that I was not party to the current funding formula. I need to see what the current funding formula is. I would suggest that for the Government Plan of 2023, the Government Plan that we will debate, we follow the funding formula that was specified but I personally would look to see if all special needs are met and we might have different updated funding from about September 2023.

[10:30]

3.1.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

There was quite a lot of equivocating in that answer. It is a very clear question that could be answered yes or no and without a yes we can only assume it is a no. So I guess I have to reiterate the question, which is: has she had that very clear, categorical assurance from the Minister for Treasury and Resources designate that she will receive every penny of the funding that she needs to implement the admirable vision for education that she has outlined in her speech, which I am sure every Member of this Assembly would want to get behind but will want to know that it has got funding? So, yes or

no, has the Minister for Treasury and Resources designate given her the categorical assurance that he will be signing the money over to her to make it happen?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I have an assurance that there will be investment in education. We never spoke about the sums.

3.1.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I congratulate the Minister designate and may I ask the question: what is her opinion on the 14-plus transfer system?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for his question. It is something that was brought to attention in the funding review and we must open the consultation. I think it is something that I would need to address during my term. I would like to have meetings with the head teachers, I would like to have an understanding from the parents and I probably would be likely to go to wider consultation, because 14-plus was here for 60 years, I would say, or 40 years or maybe more. I was not on the Island when it was introduced. I realise this is part of Jersey culture that I respect. At the same time, I know the difficulties that it brings and I can reassure the Assembly I will work on it, I will do the research and I will bring to the Council of Ministers and to the Assembly options around 14-plus education.

3.1.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given that the cost from the independent funding review of the 14-plus transfer system is £781,000 per year, does the Minister designate not believe that this is money better spent elsewhere in funding education in other state schools?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I think it is a really good point and that this is a reason that it will be part of the review. We need to see the provision between Highlands and Hautlieu, because we are talking about Hautlieu, and how it can be spread around the whole Island to all other secondary schools. So a big piece of work needs to be done and it is connecting research, it is connecting funding, and it is connecting people and their feelings around 14-plus education. I cannot commit what I am going to do with 14-plus education without making clear research and learning around it.

3.1.7 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:

What is the Deputy's preferred site for a new school for St. Helier?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank Deputy Le Hegarat for her question. I think that as Members know I was the person who voted for the position because I thought that the site needs to be redeveloped for a school. For the people who were in the Assembly in the bridging Island Plan, it was the States' decision about developing the Gas site as another primary school. I think we still will be missing another primary school in St. Helier. Basically what I am going to do ... the review I need to see because none of us have seen the review, none of us have seen the report. I requested this report several times in this Assembly. The moment that I am presented with the report and I look through the report, I reassure the Assembly that I am presenting this ... I would say give me time until September to look at it. It will be an open debate and we, as the Assembly, can decide the way forward, based on the evidence that will be presented.

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

Deputy Southern is quite right, we hear many clichés in this Assembly. However, I really feel that the Deputy has spoken with enthusiasm and passion this morning and she has done that every time she has spoken about education and young people, to be honest. But she has given us a very long list

of jobs that she has got to deal with; a very, very long list. Whether they are all achievable or not, we can only hope that they are. She has also given us a commitment to meeting with third parties to enable them to work with her to deliver on fulfilling those jobs that she has identified. I believe her passion and commitment is far more than we have had from previous Ministers for Education and regrettably the former Minister chose to not to respond to my 4 or 5 emails requesting a meeting with him to discuss a very concerning matter about the withdrawal of funding.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are you going to come to the question, Connétable?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am going to come to my question, Sir. In fact, I am there now. My question to the Deputy is: what commitment will she give to Members of this Assembly that she will make time to meet with them and address their concerns when she has such a long list of jobs to do and she has already committed to meeting third parties? Will she answer emails and arrange meetings?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Constable of St. Lawrence for her kind words and the question. I commit to responding to emails, maybe not within 24 hours, maybe it will take me 48 hours. My previous record of 3 years in the Assembly shows that I do find time for people and for stakeholders and I will definitely find time for Members and other parties, because what I believe in ... I do not have all the knowledge. I do not know what is happening on the ground. I am physically not able to know what is happening on the ground and the only way to find a better way ... it will never be perfect, nobody can make perfect decisions, but at least I can reassure the Constable and the Assembly that I will do my best to listen to all parties and to find a compromise way forward, because that is what I am here for, to listen, to understand and to make a decision.

3.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier:

Following on about the selective education system we have in Jersey, could the candidate remind us of how Jersey fares in terms of its fee-paying versus non-fee-paying split? More generally, can she state whether she thinks the balance is right in Jersey about that split between fee-paying schools and non-fee-paying schools?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for the question. First of all, I need to declare that my daughter is in a fee-paying school and she was in this school before I was first elected as a Deputy. In terms of the current arrangements for the fee-paying schools, I recognise this is an extremely sensitive area and this is why we need to have a discussion with all stakeholders about the education law. At the end of the day, our education law is 20-plus years old and I want to have a proper conversation, a proper dialogue about how education will play over for the next 20 years going into the future. I know also that the funding review raised an option about a means-tested base, and again it is something that needs to be discussed with a much wider public engagement.

3.1.10 Deputy M. Tadier:

I was hoping the candidate might provide a bit more detail. As I understand, having previously served on the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, the split in Jersey, obviously depending ... it varies from primary to secondary but there is about 42 per cent of students in fee-paying schools versus perhaps the U.K. (United Kingdom), France, Europe, which is less than 10 per cent. Given that is quite a basic and I would have thought fundamental philosophy that any candidate for Minister for Education would have thought about, can she tell us what her feelings are about the Jersey split? Should we have more fee-paying; should we have less fee-paying; is it divisive; is it okay as it is; is

it something we need to tweak? What is her vision regarding fee-paying versus non-fee-paying and the effect it has on the overall education system?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I was not on the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel but I think that memorising all the statistics ... it is important that I have statistics but as a Minister I will need to have a team who will help me with the statistics. I am not sure about the statistics, they might be right, they might be wrong. I do not know about the numbers. What is really important for me to tell the Assembly is the discussion needs to be held with the wider public. Saying this, it will take more time to rearrange fee-paying schools. For me, my priority is we have these discussions to ensure that non-fee-paying schools receive funding, receive resources and teachers receive a curriculum that will be made even better because it feels like the non-fee-paying schools are not that good and this is the reason for people going to the fee-paying schools, but I can reassure if you look at Les Quennevais, which is a non-fee-paying school, and the curriculum there from what I know is outstanding and the children are pretty happy to stay there through all their education. So we must really concentrate on how we are bringing investment in the non-fee-paying schools to support them and to allow the same level of education as in the fee-paying schools so it will be completely identical.

3.1.11 Deputy H. Jeune:

The inclusive education review recommends the Government to define inclusive education. How would the Deputy define inclusive education?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for the question, because it is not really defining education. It is saying that inclusive education needs to be defined and it is my task and the task of this Assembly to finalise this definition.

3.1.12 Deputy H. Jeune:

A supplementary is if the Deputy could maybe set out a few pointers to say where she thinks inclusive education would be; her priorities?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

For me, it is very simple: every child gets whatever the child needs. There are so many needs and there are so many children and we need to look individually and to create services, support, tools to support the individual child so that the child will have an opportunity to get to the best of his or her ability.

3.1.13 Deputy M. Andrews of St. Helier North:

Would the candidate be able to articulate in terms of the low level of education expenditure as it currently stands and how during this term education expenditure can be increased?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for his question and he is completely right, funding for non-fee-paying schools in Jersey is much lower than high performance jurisdictions. The achievements of children in Jersey, even with lower funding, are better than children in, for example, the U.K. It is a significant gap and, as I mentioned previously when I was answering previous questions, we will work to increase the funding and bring funding to the necessary level.

3.1.14 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:

If I can congratulate the Deputy and my question is: does she believe that education should be a statutory consultee to the planning process? We are all expecting a lot of new accommodation to be coming down the track very soon and we need to ensure the Government's aim of making safer walking and cycling routes to school important so that parents are not travelling around the Island

delivering their children to school for their education. Would she agree with me that that is something important that needs to be addressed?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Connétable and I completely agree. If Members remember, I brought the amendments to the bridging Island Plan to ensure that infrastructure planning applications will ensure that the educational needs of the areas will be met. It is absolutely necessary.

[10:45]

3.1.15 Deputy L. Feltham:

A couple of years ago I had to sit in a room with teaching unions and civil service unions and in order to fund decent pay increases for our school staff we were made to look for budget cuts in schools and reduce the school budgets. I believe that the process was called gain sharing. Can I get the assurance from the Deputy that she will not use gain sharing or cut school budgets in order to provide cost of living and decent pay increases for the staff in her department?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for her questions. I think that as a Minister for Education it is important for me to ensure that education is sufficiently funded. Personally, I think that we must work together and I will put extra pressure on the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Chief Minister and the States Employment Board to recognise the hard work of education. I will meet with unions and work with them collaboratively if they approach me. I responded to unions; we have a memo exchange because I cannot see that we can progress without proper funding. The cost of living, as the Deputy will understand, goes across the whole Council of Ministers and we need to address housing and other issues for the teachers.

3.1.16 Deputy L. Feltham:

Can I get the Deputy's assurance that she will not support cuts to schools' budgets and that also she will implement the findings of the school funding review?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes, I can assure that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Mézec, you might get one question in.

3.1.17 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, I will try to be very quick then. The question is: what tangible action will she take to address any of the outstanding recommendations from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Very quickly, I think the Chief Minister designate indicated about a public ombudsman and this is one of the first things that needs to be introduced.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That brings the time for questions to an end and I can confirm Deputy Gardiner has been selected for appointment as Minister for Children and Education. **[Approbation]**

4. The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture

The Deputy Bailiff:

We will now move on to the Assembly appointing a Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture. Deputy Moore, would you like to make your nomination?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Deputy Morel is my nominee for the candidate for this role.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? [**Seconded**] Are there any other nominations?

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

It is an incredible honour and privilege to stand in this Assembly to put forward my case for being elected Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture. I am humbled by the faith shown in me by the Chief Minister designate. I can assure every Member of this Assembly that I will be tireless in finding the optimal conditions that will enable Jersey's vibrant economy to soar, reaching new heights that in turn will enable us all to prosper and thrive. If appointed, I will be in the fortunate position to have been handed over a strong department in good order, thanks to the efforts of Deputy Farnham. From the team in the Ministerial Support Unit to the officers in the department itself, the Department for the Economy is staffed by talented people who want Jersey to succeed economically. They understand that it is through the hard work of Islanders in our economy that we are able to provide the public services from which all of us benefit. For those of us born since the first seeds of Jersey's world-leading financial services sector were sown, it is perhaps too easy for us to take for granted the overall level of wealth that has been created in Jersey and the incredibly high standard of living that this has generated, both of which are far higher than one could ordinarily expect for a tiny Island on the edge of Europe. I used the word "overall" to describe the high level of wealth and quality of life in Jersey purposely. While these are true descriptions of the results of our economic performance over the decades, there is no doubt in my mind, or I believe in the minds of my fellow States Members, that these measures of economic performance hide a reality, which is that increasing numbers of hard-working Islanders are struggling to make ends meet and as a result are questioning whether Jersey is the best place for them to live and work. The reasons for this situation are many and varied but there is one baseline cause that can be summed up quite simply, Jersey is pricing itself out of the market. The cost of living is rising so steeply, driven initially by the home-grown problem of the lack of accommodation and now added to by massive global geopolitical events, that some Islanders sadly now see their futures elsewhere. Stopping this unwanted trend will be the overarching priority for me should I gain this role. As Minister for Economic Development, I will strive to create a sustainable economic environment that enables all Islanders to see their futures in Jersey and I will do so by helping them unleash the formidable power of Jersey's entrepreneurial spirit. Children and young people must be able to see their futures here. Not only do they need to believe that they will be able to afford to live in their own comfortable homes in adulthood but they also need outlets for their diverse skills, abilities and interests. They rightly want and need an Island in which they can realise their incredible potential, and so I will continue the work that I have begun with the delivery of the heritage strategy, the culture and arts strategy, the marine and rural economy strategy and I will finish the work that has already started on a tourism strategy, all aimed at supporting, growing and diversifying our economy and in so doing creating a wide range of exciting careers that will help young Islanders believe that Jersey is the place in which they can live fulfilling and prosperous lives. Jersey's economic success has always been founded upon our entrepreneurial spirit. We are enterprising because a small Island community must constantly innovate to succeed. Our financial services industry is an incredible example of just how effective we can be when we keep our minds open to new possibilities. As Minister for Economic Development, I will work with the Chief Minister and my fellow Ministers to ensure we create the social, environmental and economic conditions needed to enable Islanders to have the means, skills, confidence and resilience that will allow them to identify opportunities and innovate solutions that not only meet the needs of

our own community but which can also be exported, selling to clients and customers around the world. It is hard to express the immense pride that I feel when I think about our Island's businesses and social enterprises. From world-leading financial services to a tourism destination that cannot fail to impress, from innovative co-operatives that encourage the growth of a sustainable circular economy to digital tools that transform the world of recruitment or challenge the culture of private car ownership, from artisan glassblowers, wood and iron workers to premium quality dairy, potato and shellfish exporters, from actors, musicians, singers and artists to lawyers, accountants and fund administrators, there are so many examples of incredible individuals and organisations in Jersey that have transformed ideas into reality and through hard work have grown them into successful enterprises. I want to support and build upon the outstanding level of enterprise that we have here and in so doing help us address the enormous challenges of carbon neutrality and a growing and ageing population. As Minister for Economic Development, I will work to ensure that our economic environment encourages sustainable enterprise. I will do so in the collaborative way that I have demonstrated as an Assistant Minister, listening to and working with stakeholder organisations, including arm's-length organisations and the private sector, to make sure the Government is investing in the right areas and doing all they can to make it easy to work and do business in Jersey while providing the necessary safeguards that we all need to help our economy thrive. I have spoken of my desire to work in pursuit of a truly sustainable economy and it is important that I explain my understanding of that term. A sustainable economy is one that balances our economic needs with our social needs and environmental resources. It is an economy that is long-lasting, precisely because it grows in step with the ability of the Island to maintain it without plundering our social and environmental capital. Unfortunately, today our economy is not on a sustainable path. Weakening productivity means that we are having to grow the population in order to maintain our economic performance. That, of course, pushes up the price of accommodation for both people and organisations. High commercial rents are a strong inhibitor of enterprise and so I will work with the Ministers for Planning and Infrastructure to make more economic land available, particularly around La Collette but also on a smaller scale in States-owned properties like the markets or Fort Regent, creating incubator work spaces that give entrepreneurs the opportunity to start businesses without the fear of creating large debts should their ideas fail. In the rural economy where land availability is decreasing, I will explore the possibility of a sustainable land trust that can help the farmers and smallholders that I am committed to supporting work the land they need to improve our food security while constantly improving their environmental performance. To address the cost of living, I will encourage the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority) to ensure markets are operating efficiently and will work with the Minister for External Relations to improve resilience, drive down costs and find new markets by opening up trade with France and Europe. The need to decouple population growth from economic growth means that as Minister for Economic Development I will need a laser sharp focus on increasing productivity. We will need to build on the productivity support scheme, working with Jersey Business, Digital Jersey and the technology accelerator fund to encourage organisations to invest in or innovate technologies that create growth without the need for more people. Across all sectors, Jersey's enterprises need to be fully technologically enabled because this is the only way we will be able to achieve an economy less reliant on population growth. Productivity improvements will also require a commitment to reviewing the impact of regulation and bureaucracy. When interacting with Government, the experience should be speedy and easy. This includes providing tenders for the supply of goods to Government. Too often, government processes are a burden on organisations and I will work with the Chief Minister and other Ministers to rectify this. I also believe Government can play a leading role in encouraging local businesses by procuring as many goods and services as possible through the Island's economy while, of course, ensuring that good value is received. The fruits of this work to boost productivity will be seen in the medium term. In the short term, however, we will need to help organisations find the people they need today. This will mean working with the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister for External Relations and H.A.W.A.G. (Housing and Work Advisory Group) or its successor to modify the work permit system

so we can more easily attract the people we need. With an eye on the longer term, we have to develop a system that funds lifelong learning so that Islanders are able to gain the skills they require to remain economically active throughout the different stages of their lives. As Minister for Economic Development, I will work with the Minister for Education and organisations such as Skills Jersey and Highlands to develop a lifelong learning system that enables Islanders to reach their full potential. In summary, Jersey is an enterprising Island community and if we are to remain prosperous then it will be because of the strength of our community combined with our entrepreneurial spirit. Jersey's Government will only be able to meet the challenges of carbon neutrality, achieving a stable population and supporting the healthcare needs of an ageing population with a diverse, innovative, skilled, technologically advanced, sustainable and enterprising private sector. In my view, it is the job of Government to provide the right conditions to enable Jersey's companies and social enterprises to thrive. By doing so, I firmly believe that we can develop a socially and environmentally sustainable economy that is able to support all Islanders throughout our lives and so enable us to pass Jersey on to future generations who will be able to build upon our success. This vision is dependent upon us dealing with today's economic challenges, most notably staff and skill shortages, decreasing productivity, a lack of suitable employment land and the rising cost of living. Dealing with these challenges, while at the same time building the foundations of a truly sustainable, long-term economic future, will be the dual focus of my work should the Assembly appoint me to serve as the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to questions for up to 20 minutes.

4.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The potential Minister has described his medium and long-term vision as dependent upon dealing with today's economic challenges, most notably staff and skill shortages and decreasing productivity. What new actions will this Minister take to deal with staff and skill shortages and to arrest the 20-year decline in productivity figures?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

One of the first things we need to do is to look at the work permit system. I am committed to working with the Minister for Home Affairs and with H.A.W.A.G. to make sure that we have permits that are attractive for people to come here. It is generally accepted that 9 months is not working. We need to look at that and that is something that I will do immediately.

4.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will that not immediately contradict his aim of dealing with the influx of workers to our economy, reducing economic growth by increasing numbers, which he said he was against?

[11:00]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If the Deputy had actually listened to the speech I just made, he will have heard me say that there are short-term pressing issues and there are medium and long-term more visionary issues, which we want to achieve. We want to get to a point where Jersey's economy is not dependent on constant population growth. That is the medium to long-term vision that I want to try to achieve but this is not simple. Let nobody be under any illusion, decoupling economic growth from population growth is going to be an incredibly hard task but it is a challenge that I am willing to rise to. In the short term, however, if the Deputy had been listening he will have heard that we today, as we stand today, have an issue with staff shortages. We know this and we need to deal with that straightaway. There is no point cutting off our nose to spite our face. We want to decouple economic growth and population growth and we need an economy that survives to that point. So today I will be dealing

with staff shortages but in the long term I will be seeking to take away that need for population growth on our economic growth.

4.1.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Given the contribution made by private jets to carbon emissions, does the candidate agree that there is no place in Jersey for an aircraft registry?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The question of the aircraft registry is one that I was addressing before the election and it is one that I have committed to resolving by March 2023. It is interesting and quite understandable that the Deputy has linked the harm caused by aviation in terms of environmental harm caused by aviation to Jersey's economy. I am very interested in the possibility of us having a sustainable aviation industry. Can Jersey lead the way? Can Jersey attract businesses here that are focused on developing aircraft that do not pollute in the way that they currently do? That is a question that I am asking the department to resolve by the beginning of next year, by March next year. If the Deputy then asked me again come April, I should be able to give him a more definite answer as to what we are doing with the aircraft registry.

4.1.4 The Connétable of Trinity:

I am really encouraged to hear the candidate's support for the agricultural industry and ensuring that we do everything we can to maintain our own food security. But with that in mind, would he see that there is any opportunity to break what I see as the harmful link between the major U.K. supermarkets who are so dictatorial to our local agricultural industry by saying that: "We will not pay you more than 9p a kilo for the carrots, otherwise we are going to bring them in from the U.K." and the damage that that is doing to our industry? Does he feel that there is any scope to address those issues?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is an incredibly pertinent question. The power of supermarkets to dictate the price paid to farmers is something that I find incredible. I had a discussion about this recently when somebody quite rightly said supermarkets are amazing in the way that they centralise. If you want a central place to get your food, that in itself is incredible, but the flipside is that they dictate prices that sometimes can be not just low but below the cost of production, which is outrageous. I will do everything I can and that includes supporting farmers financially to ensure that they get the returns they need. How can I break the supermarkets' grip on the market? I am not sure that is something I can do personally but one of the things I also mentioned there was opening up trade links with France and Europe. This will provide greater competition and will enable us to access goods, and sell goods as well, which do not depend on just the supermarkets in the U.K. By widening our market, we can reduce the impact of supermarkets when they price everything at this level.

4.1.5 The Connétable of Trinity:

Obviously we do have some protection for our dairy industry by not allowing the importing of raw milk, so perhaps there is some scope to investigate that a bit further?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am always willing to investigate many areas but, of course, in this case the issue might be the cost of living, which is the other downside to protection. We do have law that enables us to address particularly the potato export market and we have already been looking at that and talking with the exporters as to how they can use the existing law to increase the price of the potatoes selling to the U.K. and we will continue to do that.

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

Our fishing industry faces unprecedented competition from our French neighbours, not only who are fishing in our waters but are receiving subsidies from their Government. How would the Minister elect propose to deal with that?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am pleased to say to the Connétable that the marine economy framework launched just before the election creates different areas for support for the marine economy. We are going to be looking to create a marine economy development fund, a marine economy sustainability initiative scheme, as well as increasing the fishing vessel safety scheme that provides support to enable fishing vessels to meet safety requirements. We are already looking at how we can support our marine economy, which is something we have not been doing financially for years and that is something I am committed to continuing.

4.1.7 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does the Minister propose to explore the export market in different ways, given that we are controlled at present by France?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely. One of the really important pieces of work for the marine economy framework is developing new markets. It is absolutely an export industry. We saw during COVID how the Island tried to help and protect fishermen by buying as much fish as they could locate, but we also need to sell to a wider market. We do sell to France but also to Spain and Italy. Southern Europe is a great market for our shellfish and we need to develop that, so that is something that I am really keen to do.

4.1.8 Deputy M. Tadier:

Si on me permettra de poser la question en Français, dans la langue de Molière, parce que je sais que le Député est également francophone. Est-ce que le Député est de l'opinion qu'on devrait faire plus d'efforts et plus de liens économiques avec la France – la Normandie et la Bretagne, par exemple – et qu'est-ce qu'il fera lui-même pour soutenir ces liens et pour les augmenter ?¹

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Merci pour la question. Oui, c'est vrai, je voudrais bien ouvrir les liens avec la France, la Normandie et la Bretagne. Je vais travailler avec le Ministre des relations extérieures pour faire les choses comme ça. Même maintenant je parle avec le comité de jumelage de St. Laurent pour ouvrir les liens économiques avec Barneville-Carteret. Donc à chaque étage de nos relations actuellement, nous pouvons rouvrir ces liens comme ça.²

The Deputy Bailiff:

Could you give a summary of your response in English? It is appropriate for Members who are not familiar ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

¹ If I'm able to speak in French, the language of Molière, because I know the Deputy is also a French-speaker. Is it the Deputy's opinion that more should be done and more economic links should be made with France – and Normandy and Brittany, for example – and what will he himself do to support those links and increase them?

² Thank you for the question. Yes, it is true, I would like to open up links with France, Normandy and Brittany. I am going to work with the Minister for External Relations on things such as that. Even currently, I am talking with the Twinning Committee for St. Lawrence in order to open up economic links with Barneville-Carteret. At each level, therefore, of our current relations, we are able to re-open links like that.

Of course, Sir, absolutely. I said that I have committed to working with the Minister for External Relations to open up links with France, particularly Brittany and Normandy, and that I am already working even at levels like with our twinning committee in St. Lawrence to open up links with Barneville-Carteret, with which St. Lawrence is twinned. So it is at all these levels, all the way from twinning at the Parish level all the way through to the Government level, that we can open up these links with France.

4.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I thank the future Minister for his response? Does he agree that it is important that we in this Assembly remember we are a French-speaking Assembly and also that Government remember that we are not just a north-facing Island but that we have a continent and a country to the south and to the east ... just make sure we get the directions correct ... and that there is a whole wealth of opportunity, not just economically but culturally, and that we need to build on that for future generations?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, I will stamp my feet to that. I know it was a question but it is one that I wholeheartedly agree with the Deputy and I am really pleased he also mentioned culture and arts. It is absolutely right, economically as well as culturally there are so many opportunities between Jersey, St. Malo, Rennes. There are festivals that are on in Brittany and in Normandy. We should be part of these festivals. I really want to work on these areas because it is the way that culture helps us make friends. It is very simple.

4.1.10 Deputy R. Kovacs of St. Saviour:

Is the Deputy concerned about the reduction of visitor accommodation through the multiple closure of hotels over recent years and how can it be addressed?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Market forces have meant that various hotels have closed and it is a concern, but I also agree that it is not just a question of visitor numbers. It is also a question of visitor spend, the value of each visitor to our economy. If we can increase the amount that is being spent by visitors when they come here, that in itself will help us deal with the reduction in bed numbers that we have seen. However, I will go back to my twinning mentioned earlier. One of the discussions I have been having with people in Normandy already is about hotels that might be interested in investing in Jersey, hotels that come from France. Those are conversations that I want to continue because there are so many hotels, hotel chains, et cetera, that would suit us here in Jersey. We need to look as many places as we can and invite people to see whether they want to invest in the Island in that way.

4.1.11 Deputy R. Kovacs:

Thank you for the response. Given the reduction of visitor accommodation, should the Government investment in Visit Jersey be reviewed to ensure adequate return on investment?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Visit Jersey has done an amazing job, particularly through COVID and out of COVID, in marketing the Island, but the Deputy touches on a really important point. When it comes to arm's length organisations, we need to constantly review their effectiveness and their value for money, so that is something I will certainly be doing. I could not tell you at this moment whether it would be keeping funding the same, reducing or increasing. It depends on reviewing that value and seeing what that value delivers.

4.1.12 Deputy H. Jeune:

During the election campaign, the Deputy was talking about cutting red tape as part of invigorating and supporting business. Cutting red tape has been used in some instances by Governments around the world to roll back environmental and sustainable standards, health and safety standards and employees' rights. How will the Deputy ensure that the streamlining of bureaucracy to support small businesses will not weaken standards and, in fact, enhance them?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Deputy asks a really important question because, too often, the threat of cutting red tape is used by some to say: "Oh, you are just trying to remove protections." Absolutely not. We have really important protections in all areas of our economy, whether it is from employment to health and safety to product standards. They need to be maintained, but what needs to change is the way Government interacts with these businesses. I have seen first-hand how difficult it can be just to get the most simple things done when you are trying to do business in Jersey, not because the regulation is wrong but the way we are implementing the bureaucracy around that regulation. Those are the things which are wrong and those are the particular areas I would like to concentrate on.

4.1.13 Deputy L. Feltham:

The Deputy made reference to arm's length organisations that are in receipt of funding from the Government. How will the Deputy ensure that those organisations are well governed?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Another really important question. Arm's length organisations are entrusted by Government to carry out certain tasks. They are entrusted in that way, and obviously it was a trend that occurred over the last 15 years or so, because they have an independence which enables them to be nimbler and move more quickly than Government, and that is the right thing. The Government's role, then, is twofold: one, it is to ensure governance, and that means constantly speaking to the boards of these arm's length organisations, which is something I was doing as Assistant Minister where I had delegated responsibility. But it is also to ensure they are strategically aligned with the overall strategy or policy of Government, and so that means working with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, it means working with other Ministers and the A.L.O.s (arm's length organisations) themselves to ensure that there is strategic alignment to the work they do. So, those 2 things: governance ... for me, that is incredibly important and it includes things like making sure that board members do not serve 12 or 15 years on the same board. You need to refresh boards. You need to have diversity within boards as well, and those are things that I have championed in this Assembly and I will continue to do so as Minister.

4.1.14 Deputy L. Feltham:

Thank you for your answer. Some of those organisations deliver grants programmes on behalf of Government. How does the Deputy intend to ensure that those grants programmes are well-managed and that grants get given to the right people and that there is an assurance that there is a process around how those grants are given and that Government K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) are met?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Deputy is right, there are a number of grants programmes. ArtHouse Jersey is one where they give grants to organisations to deliver cultural offerings in Jersey. Another one, very obviously, is the technology accelerator fund, which has just been passed by this Assembly. It is about understanding how they are doing this, seeing where the money goes and the returns on that money. It will not be possible in the first instance to see whether grants given by any one A.L.O. to any one organisation is right on the surface. What you need to do is to see the delivery of the promises that

were made to the A.L.O. Did that cultural offering take place? Did the company that was funded by the technology accelerator fund deliver what it was meant to deliver? So, time tells, but the important thing from a Minister's perspective is to keep reviewing and to keep asking the questions.

[11:15]

4.1.15 Deputy C. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

A big problem for business is staff recruitment and retention. Businesses cannot get staff because people cannot afford housing, specifically private rentals. So does the Deputy support controls like banning above-inflation rent increases?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not have any one particular medicine to give to the issue of high rents, but I am committed to working with all fellow Ministers to ensure that we intervene in the market in the best way possible to make sure that rents in Jersey are affordable.

4.1.16 Deputy M. Andrews:

In relation, say, to supply side economics, so the level of low taxation, and also capital investment incentives in the economy to try and procure greater levels of economic growth, do you think supply side economics can actually generate sufficient levels of growth in the medium term?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Growth is generated by activity, growth is generated by hard work and growth is generated by innovation. Those are the ways that Jersey will ensure that we continue to maintain growth in our economy. As far as supply, Jersey's supply side economics has relied principally on the supply of people because we are a knowledge sector and principally service industry. That is the area that I believe, as I have talked about, we need to decouple this idea of economic growth and population growth. So, in that sense, the supply side economics work, but when your supply is constantly people and that is how you are growing, we need to change that. So, is it working at the moment? It is causing us problems, that is for sure.

4.1.17 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I was going to ask this question of the Minister for Treasury and Resources, but we ran out of time. The co-funded payroll support scheme and other business measures introduced during the pandemic provided a lifeline to businesses. Will the Minister agree to work to persuade the Minister for Treasury and Resources and others on the Council of Ministers to introduce an appeals scheme for those businesses that might have fallen foul, shall we say, of the technical issues related to the auditing of the scheme? The Minister for Treasury and Resources can just simply nod if he agrees with that as well.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was just going to say I could not see whether the Minister for Treasury and Resources was nodding or not from my position. Absolutely, there is no question, the co-funded payroll scheme was superb. On behalf of the whole Assembly and Jersey's economy and the Island I would like to thank Senator Farnham and all those ... or Deputy Farnham now, and all those who came up with the idea of the co-funded payroll scheme. It kept Jersey's businesses in operation and it kept people paid throughout a period when it was not possible to work. But, unfortunately, the legacy of the scheme has been sullied by, in my view, the inappropriate overzealousness of Government in its bureaucratic aims, effectively, and so there is no question in my mind we do need an appeal system. Personally - and I speak personally, not as a member of the Council of Ministers - I just think we should stop asking people for the money back. It is that simple.

4.1.18 Deputy M. Scott of St. Brelade:

Will the Deputy be taking forward the Economic Council's *New Perspectives* report and, if so, how?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am grateful and I know Deputy Farnham as the previous Minister for Economic Development was also grateful for the work of the Economic Council and their *New Perspectives* report. The report covers 5 principal areas and everything it says makes sense in that. I believe that I have already talked about the ways in which we will develop a more sustainable technologically-enabled economy and there is no question in my mind I am committed to doing so.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. That completes the period of questions for Deputy Morel and accordingly he has been selected for appointment as Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture.

[Approbation]

5. The Minister for the Environment

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move on to the selection of the Minister for the Environment. Deputy Moore, can we have your nomination?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

My nomination is for Deputy Renouf.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations?

5.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I want to start by saying that I am deeply honoured to be nominated for the role of Minister for the Environment. As anyone who knows me will tell you, the environment is a passion of mine. It has been for decades, so no Ministerial brief could be closer to my heart. I want to talk first about why I believe I am qualified for the role of Minister for the Environment, then about my vision for the role, and finally a few words about a couple of specific areas of policy. First, in terms of expertise, I have a degree and PhD in geography, which bears witness to the depth and longevity of my interest in environmental matters. This passion carried through into my career and, in particular, when I started making science documentaries at the BBC. For example, I was involved in almost all of BBC Television's programmes about climate change over a 20-year period, up to and including David Attenborough's recent "Climate Change - The Facts". Since coming back to Jersey, I have given public talks on climate change. I have spoken in primary schools about the environment and I have been a member of the council of the National Trust. I love this Island's natural beauty. I am who I am because of the time I spent exploring the Island's coastline and countryside when I was growing up. Those experiences have helped shaped my vision for an environmental agenda in Jersey. So, what is my vision? I believe we should aim high. Jersey should be a beacon of how to make environmental protection work with a thriving economy, how to reduce carbon emissions in a socially just way, and how to make the environment a central part of a better lives agenda. As one voter said to me, if we cannot do green in Jersey, then where can we? I believe that protecting the environment is as close to an uncontroversial ambition as you can get in Jersey politics, but what does it mean in practice? I believe that the environmental agenda gives us a huge opportunity to transform Jersey for the better. In fact, I see our environmental ambitions as like a green wave that can sweep through and invigorate every aspect of the Island's economy, from tourism to farming to finance. Let us briefly consider the context. There are massive shifts under way in the global economy. For example, decarbonisation is going to be one of the great defining projects of the next 30 years. All around the

world business has bought into the net zero ambition. It is going to happen; frankly, it is just a question of whether it is going to happen in time. But it is not just decarbonisation. We have to face the related issues of habitat loss, mass extinction and overexploitation of the natural world. All of these issues are global in nature but they also find their own particular expression here in Jersey, so we must play our part in pursuing an environmental agenda not just because it is morally the right thing to do, although it is, but also because it is the right thing for our economy, our society, our people, the right thing for our Island. So, that green wave I mentioned just now? I think we should surf that wave and use its energy to drive improvements in every aspect of Island life. Of course, part of the environmental agenda is about the simple things: protecting rare species and vulnerable habitats, improving access to the countryside, providing parks and green spaces in St. Helier, and preventing ugliness in planning developments, as a recent U.K. Government declaration put it. But it goes much deeper than that. Supporting the environment is also part of broader moves towards increased sustainability and resilience. The world is changing fast. This is an era of much greater insecurity. We need an Island economy that is more resilient to outside shocks and agile enough to seize the eco-moment. That means a reinvigorated farming sector that thrives but does so with a significantly reduced need for chemical inputs. It means a hospitality industry that takes advantage of the massively growing market for ecotourism and it means a finance industry that takes a lead, a global lead, in financing the energy transition, habitat restoration and rewilding. There are, however, 2 dangers with surfing this green wave. We do not want to move so fast that we are out on a limb, ahead of mainstream technology or sacrificing living standards, but neither do we want to fall behind and miss the green wave. If we do, we will lose the incredible economic opportunities that lie in front of us and we will fail in our mission to improve people's lives. Summing all of this up without resort to a somewhat tortuous surfing metaphor, let me put it like this. In my election campaign I talked about being a sensible environmentalist. I stand by that. We need to be ambitious but not recklessly ambitious. Let me talk specifically about climate change and our drive to carbon neutrality. For me, nothing exemplifies the opportunity of going green more than our carbon neutral ambitions because almost everything we do to reduce our carbon emissions is also good for us. Take transport, for example, the single biggest contributor to our emissions. Encouraging active travel - walking and cycling - improves health outcomes, including mental health, which improves quality of life, reducing long-term health expenditure. Supporting public transport and multi-vehicle occupancy reduces congestion, which is a significant business cost, and also reduces pollution, further improving health outcomes. Shifting to electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles also means less pollution and healthier outcomes. I am concentrating on these points because if there is one thing I have missed over the last few years it is a sense of excitement about the opportunities in front of us. I want to reignite that sense of hope and possibility around our carbon neutral strategy so that people feel proud of our drive to carbon neutrality. Let me make one more brief point about the journey to carbon neutral. It is going to cost money. Now, at this stage, I remain agnostic on how we fund the transition, and maybe we can talk about some of those things in questions. But let us put this in context. The total cost is estimated at about £300 million. Spread that over 10 years and it is around £30 million a year or 3 per cent of Government expenditure. It is a lot of money but I believe it is doable, especially when you consider the long-term economic benefits. Let me turn to planning issues. Members will be aware that we have a bridging Island Plan in place that lasts for 3 years with a new Island Plan due by 2025. In my view, the bridging Island Plan was a far more substantial piece of work than the title "bridging" would suggest. It is also the case that the bridging Island Plan requires the development of further detailed policy work in areas such as the future of the reclamation site, a water strategy, coastal defences and a marine spatial plan, to name but a few. One major reason to bring forward a new Island Plan would be to release new sites for development. That may still be necessary. However, anecdotally it seems we have lost people over the last couple of years. Therefore, before we rezone more fields I believe we need a new assessment of housing need, taking account of measures that could reduce the demand for new sites, such as bringing more empty homes on to the market, the potential for office conversions and brownfield development. Taking

all of this into account, my inclination at this stage would be to suggest extending the bridging Island Plan by another couple of years. I question whether there is much value in or appetite for the development of another full Island Plan in this Assembly's term of office, given that it would need to kick off right away in order to meet a 2025 delivery date. In conclusion, I would point out what must be obvious from what I have said so far. Delivering a planning and environmental programme depends on teamwork. Therefore, I aim to work closely with Ministers in Economic Development, Infrastructure, Housing and elsewhere in Government to balance the competing demands on our environment and deliver our objectives. This must be a shared project. We are a small, crowded Island. It is not surprising to me that almost every square metre is contested. We cannot satisfy everyone. What we can do is be open in consultation, transparent about the decision-making process and honest about why certain choices are being made. These are responsibilities I embrace with conviction. Working together and in tune with nature, we will get Jersey back on track. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to questions for 20 minutes, and the first question is from Deputy Southern.

5.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Once again, I am hearing from Ministers about intentions but not about actions. He says in the fifth paragraph here: "During my campaign", the potential Minister says: "I made it clear that I was standing on a platform of what I called sensible environmentalism."

[11:30]

So the first question is: what might be seen as sensible to some may seem as madness to others. Where is his definition? He then goes on to say: "There is overwhelming support in Jersey for a strong environmental agenda, including on climate change." There is a strong environmental agenda versus a sensible agenda. Then he finally finishes up, and this is the *pièce de résistance*: "In other words, we need to be ambitious and to talk with conviction about the environment." So the end result is we will talk tough about the environment. That is what it says. That is what the entire paragraph says, effectively. When the potential Minister talks about being strong and talking tough, what does he actually mean, is the question.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I find it not that hard to consider the possibility of being both strong and sensible in the same paragraph. I think in terms of what it means in practice and how to pursue an environmental agenda in practice, I would say this. We have not yet had briefing papers from the civil service. We do not yet know the full issues that will face us. The very definition of sensible is that I will approach issues as they come before me, but I will do so in the sure knowledge and the conviction that I hope I have expressed here today that I support strong environmental measures and I will fight for the environment, but I will do so in a way that has respect for all sides of our community so that we try and bring everyone with us. I cannot be more specific than that.

5.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In short, I am waiting to be told by my civil servants as to what I should do on any particular matter. Is that not the case?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I find that slightly offensive. Never in my career have I been seen as somebody who has been pushed around. I have led strong teams. I have been a strong individual in whatever roles I have done. The Deputy might even remember me as a strong individual at school in his classrooms, but I will be strong and I will stand up for what I believe in. It is what I have done throughout my life.

5.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I do not know if the surfing analogy is the right one but I do wish the Minister good luck. I think that maybe a driving analogy is best because I know when you go to a different country it can sometimes take a while before you get used to driving on the other side of the road. The worst thing, of course, you can do is to drive in the middle of the road and then you are definitely going to get hit and there will be some kind of accident. With that in mind, he talked about the desire to build on brownfield sites. He has also talked about a socially just way forward. Does he accept the current Island Plan, and it has been a longstanding policy, that glasshouse sites should not be developed for rich people to have a windfall, which certainly would not be socially just, and that we must find another way, if only for food security, to try and make sure that we protect glasshouse sites, put them back into production so that we can help with the cost of living and food security issues in Jersey?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am pleased to see that I am encouraging a development of metaphor as a method of communication in this Assembly. In terms of the specific question to do with glasshouse sites, the Deputy will have noted that in my speech I talked about the need for a new assessment of housing need. I think it is fundamentally important that before we take any more action to lose agricultural sites that we know how much demand we have for new houses. We are anecdotally told that we have lost population over the last few years. I do not know if that is the case. The previous Island Plan, the bridging Island Plan, was based on the planning assumption of a population growth of 800 per year. If that is not the case, then that means that there is less requirement for rezoning of new fields, including glasshouse sites. We simply need to know the facts before we take any further decisions.

5.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The reason I asked that question, and I think it is fundamental to the type of Minister for the Environment and Minister for Planning that he will be, is that his Chief Minister in the last Assembly, in the last few months, stood on a platform of build, build, build, let us build on as many greenfields as possible, let us build on as many brown sites as possible. She wants to build on glasshouse sites so that rich people or people who own derelict land who have let it fall fallow for years and years can get a large windfall, yet in his election campaign - but he is supporting this Chief Minister - he said that he did not want to build, build, build. Certainly, that is what he told the electorate in St. Brelade. Is there a cognitive dissonance in there? How will he resolve the tension at the very first moment between the Chief Minister's desire and his own words in the election campaign?

Deputy J. Renouf:

No, I do not think there is much of a cognitive dissonance. I have made clear that in my view before we take any further steps we should take a cool look at what the actual housing demand is. I think, with respect, that the Deputy may be importuning motives and views to the Chief Minister designate that may go beyond what she has actually said. I have made my position clear: we will need to look at what the actual demand is. There may be cases where glasshouse sites should be rezoned. There may be cases where glasshouse sites themselves can be restored where other less valuable agricultural land owned by the same landowner could be rezoned. There are multiple options available and I think we should look at all of them and consider very carefully the data before we make any further decisions.

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

While I appreciate the candidate's green credentials, from a factual point of view we all know that fuel is absolutely going through the roof. It goes without saying if road fuel goes up, food and all essentials will go up, too. Does the Minister support the lowering of road fuels by a reduction in tax or some other method?

Deputy J. Renouf:

It is a very good question. Let me say that I am reluctant to lower fuel tax for the following reason. Fuel is going up primarily because of the problems with supplying fossil fuels. That is feeding through into a price signal. If we remove the financial signal that tells us that relying on fossil fuels is not in our best long-term interest, if we always remove that signal, then we are reducing the signal we need to send to people to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Having said that, I do believe that in a situation of extreme stress, which we now find ourselves, it might be appropriate for a time-limited period to consider a reduction in fuel duty - time limited - so long as the funds that come from fuel duty to the carbon neutral fund are protected. In other words, that any reduction is taken by the general revenue rather than by the carbon neutral fund.

5.1.6 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I thank the Minister for that concise reply. Following on from that, and possibly a question from the previous Minister, much has been said about the cost of food, which again is quite high. If supported by ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does that relate to your first question?

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Sorry, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Your supplementary must relate to your first question.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Indeed, Sir. With the cost of fuels, et cetera, would the candidate support the local ... sorry, you threw me completely there. We do have lots of excellent companies providing local supermarkets, but would the candidate support the importation of companies such as Lidl or Aldi to keep the cost of food down?

The Deputy Bailiff:

It does not relate to the initial question so I do not allow it.

5.1.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The candidate spoke about being strong so let us put that to the test. Will this candidate as Minister be strong where previous Ministers were weak when it comes to the enforcement of minimum health and safety standards in private rental accommodation? As the Environmental Health Department will fall within his remit, will he as a matter of urgency bring back the regulations, which have already been written and are ready to go, to introduce a proper landlord licensing scheme?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I will want to consider this question in detail. My inclination at this stage is that I do support minimum standards in housing and I do support some form of registration scheme, but I will want to consider further before making a final commitment.

5.1.8 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Not a good start. Does the candidate accept that a registration scheme is nothing more than a measly compromise which leads to nothing more than data collection rather than the actual and real enforcement of those minimum health and safety standards which were shown in a recent ITV News report for the failure they are, for the fact that they do not provide security for tenants and people are living in squalid-quality accommodation? Will he do a little bit better than he has done in saying he

will think about it and instead take a strong approach now and commit to real action and not this measly compromise that has been suggested on registration, which is a pure distraction?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I will commit to making a very, very strong ... I will make a very strong commitment to ensuring that standards in housing are raised under this Minister. As I have said already, I will want to investigate what the best method of doing that is. However, I would like to say very clearly I share the Deputy's very strong disquiet at the appalling state of some housing in this Island and I do not think strong enough action has been taken up until now. I do think strong action needs to be taken, but with the greatest of respect I will want to get to know the brief properly before I make a final commitment. I am sorry if that feels inadequate. I will be led by data and I will be very happy also to meet with the Deputy to discuss the matter further.

5.1.9 Deputy R.J. Ward:

It feels very strange not having my jacket on, slightly naked. **[Laughter]** Anyway, may I ask the Minister, does he agree with the adoption of the Paris Agreement for Jersey with its 2050 target as the date for carbon neutrality?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, I do. I would also, though, before I sit down again, like to pay tribute to Deputy Ward for his work in pushing this agenda. When I returned to this Island, I was very proud to come back to an Island that had had a climate emergency adopted and was taking this forward. I would like to place on record my appreciation for the work that the Deputy has done in pushing that agenda.

5.1.10 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Does the Minister see any risks with the adoption of the agreement on carbon neutrality that may produce for us as a jurisdiction, namely being lost in larger targets which mean that our targets will really be almost, well, nothing?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am not sure I understand the question. I am happy to take a clarification.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The Paris Agreement we have signed up to is a Paris Agreement for the U.K. and we, therefore, become part of the U.K. for that agreement for 2050. That is a much larger jurisdiction. Is there not a risk that our leading of carbon neutrality can be lost in that larger jurisdiction?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Well, I had not thought of that possibility, to be perfectly honest, but I would certainly not support any watering down in terms of keeping ... Jersey should be a separate jurisdiction for the purposes of our carbon neutral ambitions.

5.1.11 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I warmly welcome the Deputy's comments, given his strong environmental credentials, that he is going to be a sensible environmentalist. I have been trying to be a sensible economist for the past 8 years, so I wish him all the very best. The question I have is given the Island's urgent need for new housing, how is he going to balance that need with his strong environmental credentials?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I think I have already made some allusions to this in that I think we have to work out exactly what our housing need is. Our bridging Island Plan is based on the assumption that we would have a net inward migration ... sorry, a net population gain of 800 per year. We are being told, anecdotally at

least, that, if anything, we are currently losing people rather than gaining people. That figure of 800 people per year in population growth was then translated into a need for 800 houses a year, and that is, in fact, what the bridging Island Plan aims to deliver.

[11:45]

It seems to me unlikely, given where we are, that we are currently needing more houses than was suggested in the bridging Island Plan. Therefore, let us find out exactly what the situation is in terms of housing need and then decide whether we need to come into conflict over the delivery of new sites for housing.

5.1.12 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

My question is fairly straightforward. Would the Deputy have voted to build in the countryside as a number of Members did so during the bridging Island Plan?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am on record as wanting to protect fields from development wherever possible. I think the last Assembly was faced with a very tricky balancing act between the need at that time - evidenced need - for new sites for housing and the desire to save greenfields. I think something had to give during that. I cannot say exactly which fields I would have voted for and which ones I would not have voted for, but I think something had to give in that Assembly.

5.1.13 The Connétable of Trinity:

Unfortunately, I do not have the physique to be a good surfer, but I do share the Minister's enthusiasm for this green wave and in planning terms his aim to get rid of ugliness. Being Parish centric, could I ask that there is an opportunity to remove an eyesore in one of my bays in my Parish, which is a redundant hotel reminiscent of something more like in Beirut? It will deliver only one dwelling but it will provide an enormous restoration of landscape character. Could he give me an indication of what his views are on that style of development?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am going to avoid commenting on that particular development, with the Connétable's permission, in that at some point I may be required to make some judgments in my role. In general, I am in favour of 2 things here. Sometimes they may come into conflict. I am in favour of developments on the coastline that preserve access to the countryside and I am alarmed at the trend for very large houses in general to take dominant positions in the coastal national park in particular. However, I do think that in all of these cases they have to be considered not just in terms of that overall principle but also in terms of what they are replacing and, therefore, require individual judgment. All I can do is give you my general sense of the principles which I follow and then the need to follow that through in individual circumstances.

5.1.14 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Can I start by congratulating the candidate for his election, his nomination and, indeed, his speech? I am pleased to endorse what he said about active travel and the need for homes to be built on brownfield sites. Does his sensible approach to the environment include making allowance for the fact that many people, particularly in urban areas, are going to need vehicles? They may be low or zero emission vehicles, but they are going to continue to need them and they are going to need somewhere to park them? Would he undertake to have a close look at the current parking standards, which seem to me to discriminate against residents and businesses in St. Helier and urban areas while making it really carte blanche for parking elsewhere in the Island?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I could just answer yes, but just to put a little bit more flesh on it, I do think that the current car parking guidelines for developments in town feel instinctively to me to be a little low. I will qualify that in the sense that we do know we need to drive towards using ... we need to drive? We need to make fewer car journeys, particularly ones driven by petrol and diesel, but I feel like there is an opportunity here to make the planning guidance more sensitive to the very particular type of developments under way. I am particularly talking about new developments here. Developments with larger units will need more parking, crudely. Developments with one and 2-bedroomed flats maybe need less. I think we should possibly be more sensitive in our judgments of these issues.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That concludes the period for asking questions. I should explain to those Members who indicated their wish to speak as soon as Deputy Renouf sat down, and are probably feeling frustrated because no new Members got a chance to put their questions, that the old timers, if I can use that expression in relation to Members who were here in the last Assembly, often indicate their wish to speak during the course of the speech. So that is why you were not reached, simply because other Members indicated their wish to ask questions during the speech.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

May I just respectfully note that the first 2 questions in the last session, as good as they were, took nearly 5 minutes to ask, so Members really do need to be brief so many other Members can have a chance.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, I endorse that observation. As there were no other nominations, Deputy Renouf has been selected for appointment as Minister for the Environment. **[Approbation]**

6. The Minister for External Relations and Financial Services

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move on to the Assembly appointing a new Minister for External Relations and Financial Services. Deputy Moore, would you like to make a nomination?

Deputy K.L Moore:

I nominate Deputy Ozouf.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations?

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

I want to start by thanking the voters of St. Saviour who placed their trust in me, which has led, following Deputy Moore's election as Chief Minister designate, to me now being nominated for the role of Minister for External Relations and, at least in the short term, Financial Services. Having been a Member of this Assembly from 1999 to 2018, Members will perhaps know that I have some experience which started over 23 years ago as a St. Helier Deputy. Within 18 months of that, I, however, accompanied the Home Affairs President to sign an agreement with the Republic of Poland, which saw in advance of the rest of the European community Polish workers coming to Jersey. This early experience perhaps identifies that I have some experience and an established reputation in dealing with external matters. As I look around at the diversity, quality and determination of what is a now newly-elected Assembly, I detect a determination to succeed with a welcome fresh approach, an approach in discharging the role as a Minister that will be one working in collaboration with both this Assembly and the Council of Ministers. I hope that we can together turn the tide of confidence

in our Island. I say “confidence” because it is inevitably the case that internal confidence which arises by the decisions of this Assembly and the Council of Ministers in tackling major issues and whether or not Jersey is fiscally prudent does have an impact on the external view of Jersey. The tone from our Chief Minister designate is one that these issues should be tackled in an open, accountable and collaborative approach, and I would be proud to be part of that team. Like many other Members, I was perhaps not alone in having some frustration with the activities of the last few years. Having said that, I must say that all was not wrong. It is difficult to discharge public office and one area that I feel was well handled was the work of the External Affairs Department and, in particular, the work of the now former Senator Gorst, Deputy Gorst, in his oversight of External Relations. I wish to publicly recognise him and thank him for laying strong foundations for Jersey in the area of external relations. In particular, the last 4 years have been a significant time of challenge, navigating Brexit, the global pandemic, challenging fisheries issues, C.O.P. (Conference of the Parties) 26, and, of course, in the last few months the invasion by the President of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. There has been a backdrop also of somewhat, as we have seen in the last few days, turmoil in the politics of the United Kingdom. Deputy Gorst and indeed Deputy Labey, with the support of the External Affairs team, have handled this period of turbulence with sound information, research, quiet diplomacy and good and determined time and effort that has been well spent. I would be honoured to have the opportunity of continuing the work of Deputy Gorst. In accepting the nomination of the Chief Minister designate, while nobody has any evidence of the future - there are, it is said, known knowns, unknown knowns and unknown unknowns - no Member that took their oath of office 2 weeks ago will be under any illusion that the next 4 years are likely to be a time of immense challenge and change, both domestically and internationally. Brexit and the issues facing us are not yet finished. The incoming new U.K. Prime Minister is going to face a significant and unresolved set of issues in relation to the Northern Ireland border issue and the Northern Irish Protocol. This is further challenged by significant political change within the Conservative Party in the U.K. and, of course, we have also seen changes in the Administration of our other nearest neighbour, France, in the last 2 months. The ongoing issues, as the now, or shortly I hope, Minister for the Environment has said, the issues of climate change, have had to be issues that have been needing to be dealt with. At the same time, the extraordinary and unprecedented increase in commodity prices, which have continued and are likely to continue as markets indicate as a result of the ongoing situation in Ukraine. This also is important to point out that such international events do sometimes shine a spotlight on Jersey in a disproportionate way, in particular in relation to the United Kingdom and international communities’ efforts in relation to sanctions in order to try and deal with what is a very difficult situation. This identification of issues does show that issues come that are unknowns to the External Relations Department. The Chief Minister designate has, however, made one thing clear, that she wishes to transfer financial services to the Treasury, so I am being nominated for one role but with a clear expectation that half of the role, if that is half of the role, will move. So I believe that it is a sensible move. I fully support it and I commit to working with both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Treasury and Resources to effect the changes necessary to transfer responsibility for financial services. The resultant External Relations Department will perhaps underline the important difference of the Minister for External Relations to perhaps other Ministerial portfolios, and that is that its work is very much a role of being a collaborative player on the Council of Ministers, working with Ministers as it relates to their non-domestic relationships. The Minister for External Relations has to, with the Chief Minister, publish a statement of common policy on external relations, and that policy has been published. I understand it has remained relatively unchanged since the policy that was written and led by former Senator Bailhache, now Deputy Bailhache, in his work with External Relations, which very much were at the cutting edge of creating an External Relations Department. The document that is set out sets out the broad principles of our international relations. It sets out the importance to protect our constitution, promoting Jersey’s international identity, and also having regard to the best economic interests of Jersey, something which my hopefully future colleague the Minister for External Relations ably dealt

with. There is also a need to promote Jersey's national and cultural identity abroad. The report lists how those objectives should be followed through, moreover, in a set of priorities. The new council will no doubt want to revisit these priorities and I look forward to working with the council on considering what those priorities should be. Of course, as the common policy is ultimately a matter for the States Assembly, it will be important to listen to the views of the as yet unelected and unselected Scrutiny Panel, but of course Members more widely. While I have outlined that there are challenges in international relations, I believe also firmly that there are huge opportunities, opportunities to strengthen our bond particularly with the Jersey community that lives outside of the Island. While I have been somewhat hesitant sometimes to use the words "world class" - we are not a country, we do not have the largesse of other countries with a foreign service - there are undoubted opportunities to lead by way of example by linking our diaspora together with the current issues that Jersey has. I want to make it a mission of External Relations to build and enhance our relationship with the literally thousands of members of the Jersey diaspora across the world.

[12:00]

This work was started in the London office a number of years ago and, if elected, I would wish to undertake a more detailed analysis of where this diaspora live, what their skills are and what we can do to enhance them. I also look forward to working with the Minister for Economic Development and Ministerial colleagues such as the Minister for Education in considering what we can do to advance cultural identity and cultural betterment for Jersey outside of the Assembly. I am very pleased that subject to this Assembly's support the role of Minister for International Development will be continued by Deputy Labey in her important role in international development work. This is an important area, a crucial area, and I commend to the Assembly and to her the excellent work of the Island Identity report, which has not yet, as I understand it, been formally adopted by the Council of Ministers. I look forward to working with Deputy Labey, if elected, on that joint endeavour. Clearly, working with Guernsey is important and, as always, we need to build strong relationships with the United Kingdom, which is our key partner. I was a Member of this Assembly who attended upon numerous party conferences in the U.K. and I think Deputy Mézec in his remarks in securing the position of Chief Minister was alluding to the work that we both did at the Labour Party conference. That highlights the importance of Jersey remaining politically neutral in terms of whatever Government the United Kingdom has. Having studied European business and economics in London, Frankfurt and Paris, I hope that I do have an understanding of international relations, moreover the importance of what Jersey has and Jersey being a collaborative jurisdiction, and I look forward to answering Members' questions. The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. We now begin up to 20 minutes of questions.

6.1.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Will the candidate pledge to break with the approach that was adopted by his predecessors and refrain from involving himself in actions which constitute positive P.R. (public relations) for the representatives of some of the worst dictatorships on the planet?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I recognise I have not been a Member of this Assembly for the last 4 years and so the Deputy will forgive me if I am not familiar with the particular issues that he deals with. I would say that it is important to recognise that Jersey is a Crown Dependency and, as such, the responsibilities for international affairs fall within the United Kingdom. That does not, however, mean that we do not make our voice heard but in the appropriate way in order to enhance that. Diplomacy is often talking about the people you do not agree with.

6.1.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Of course, I entirely agree with all of that. We cannot choose other countries' governance for them and you have to engage whether you like it or not, but to appear in photographs smiling and shaking hands, with hands that are, frankly, covered in blood, and to put out press releases extolling the virtues of some of these people is surely a step too far and we can engage in that diplomacy in ways that do not involve glorifying people who do not deserve to be glorified, they deserve to be demonised?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I recall that it was when I was a Backbencher in 2017 that I asked the then Minister for External Relations of his knowledge and the equippedness of Jersey to adopt the Magnitsky sanctions, which were a new form of sanctions brought forward in order to identify perpetrators of criminal and socially disruptive activity, to use a polite word. So I think the international community is well aware of the ways that you can sanction individuals and sanction different Governments, but that has to be done on evidence. Jersey simply, if I may politely say, does not have the resources to identify the extent to which some other people ... Jersey will respect international sanctions but we are not a foreign country in that sense and we need to be closely aligned with the United Kingdom's foreign policy, which we continue to do but that does not mean we do not talk.

6.1.3 Deputy H. Jeune:

Jersey has a significant impact beyond its borders, mainly through the finance industry. Global responsibilities must be taken seriously and as a whole Island strategy. What key multilateral processes will the Deputy prioritise to ensure Jersey develops into a true sustainable finance jurisdiction where there is zero tolerance for green washing?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

In my opening remarks I made it very clear that the Minister for External Relations is the colleague - I do not want to use the word "servant" - of other Ministers, but certainly that is the role which the Ministers for External Relations play. The Deputy raises an important issue about the Island's reputation in relation to financial services. I note the comments that she makes and I look forward to working with the Minister for Treasury and Resources with his work on financial services in order to ensure that the reputation of Jersey is enhanced, because there are many opportunities for our finance industry to do quite the opposite of greenwashing and to make advances in terms of innovative technology.

6.1.4 Deputy H. Jeune:

Just to confirm, you will be advised to go to the key multilateral processes, you will not have that decision-making process yourself?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Unless I have misunderstood the role, the Minister for External Relations is working against a criteria of common strategic policy for External Relations and simply does not just go off by themselves. In saying that, I do not in any way wish to set aside the issues that the Deputy raises. There are important issues about the way that Jersey projects itself, and indeed in the past there have been many positive contributions, namely with the work that has been done in relation to the positive economic contribution of Jersey to the United Kingdom and the European Union. But I take the point that the Deputy makes and will bear that in mind in discussions about the importance of international relations and what we do.

6.1.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

First of all, I congratulate the Minister on his return to Government and on his use of the word "diaspora". Thank you. Given the cross-range nature of his role, I ask this question as I would have

of others but I did not get the chance: what will the Minister do to end the bullying culture that has been identified in the States as an organisation and what personal qualities do you bring to this within your Ministry and in your multi-faceted role?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think that I would start by saying that the tone from the Chief Minister designate is going to be a very important one. That is a Chief Minister who is going to lead from the front and have absolutely zero tolerance to any form of inappropriate behaviour, which I say that I have experienced in ... perhaps in not identifying, Members will be aware of being somebody that is from a minority community or whatever it is one is subjected to all sorts of inappropriate activity and behaviour. Indeed, I lament some of the comments that I have seen online over the weekend. Deputy Ward is not in any way linking that. He is basically asking me about my own conduct and all I would say is that I was very proud for every department that I led throughout the nearly 20 years that I was in the Assembly of the support that I received from staff at the chief officer level and below. I was always encouraged by the farewell that I was given, which was a generous and warm one, and one in which a Minister conducted his affairs in a collaborative and joined-up way, recognising the important work of junior staff, which has sometimes not always happened.

6.1.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I ask the Minister what will he do distinctly to give members of the workforce a voice and a space to express their concerns and how will he address those very real concerns, particularly for those on the front row, if you like, of our services, who sometimes get the worst treatment from managers who are under stress?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

As important as that question undoubtedly is and I think wanting to be asked by many Members, the Minister for External Relations is not responsible. They are not the Chief Minister and that matter is perhaps best addressed by the Chief Minister, except to say that as a Minister working with departments you can only do so with the support and work of your invaluable staff and related agencies, and that I have always had a proud reputation for, I think, of working with colleagues and not having any truck with any sense of bullying with junior staff or, indeed, staff below the role of chief officer.

6.1.7 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Before Brexit, this Island enjoyed a close relationship with France. What steps is the Minister designate going to do to build bridges with our French neighbours? I do not mean, of course, the literal bridge that has been suggested but metaphorically to restore the happy interchange of tourists, of students and particularly for local people who have been accustomed in the past enjoy time in France and I find that circumscribed by Brexit.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

There is no doubt at all that Brexit, which of course our Island community had no say in, has caused all sorts of issues in relation to travelling with France and indeed French trade, in particular, in relation to fisheries. I cannot tell the Constable what the prescription is going to be for the problem. We first need to diagnose it. But it is, I would say, by dialogue, by going and speaking with representatives across the political spectrum of France, both at the regional level and at the national level and indeed with the ambassadorial service that there is in London. It is by understanding, by respect and by discussion that I hope that we can deal with some of the difficult issues. There will be some issues that we will need to talk to the U.K. about particularly, as I understand it, in relation to immigration and day-trippers from France. But I have not got solutions but I will find them.

6.1.8 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am sure the Minister designate's ability to speak French, which he does not need to show off in this Assembly, will be very useful. Would he also spare a thought for local boat owners who in the past had been able just to drop down to Chausey for lunch if their boats go fast enough? I have to declare mine would take 2 days to get down there. But will he do something for boat owners as well who have really lost that freedom to pop across to France whenever they chose?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I must admit I once entered the office of the former Greffier of the States and I saw a picture, a map of the kingdom of Rollo, which included the Crown Dependencies, as they now are, Jersey with ownership of Chausey. I am not suggesting at all that we attempt to revisit history, we cannot change the past but we can change the present. If it is the will of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, who has responsibility for these issues, if this is a prioritised issue that needs to be dealt with then he can rest assured that that will be dealt with by the External Relations Department appropriately and robustly. I thank the Constable for his comments about my French. I would remind him and the Assembly that we were successful in getting Jersey off the French blacklist in financial services, which would have lost in excess of around 2,000 jobs I think. Our ability for diplomacy is there.

6.1.9 Deputy L. Farnham:

In his opening speech, the Deputy spoke of the importance of rest of the world engagement that the Minister for External Relations has to lead. But closer to home, what does he see as the most important part of his role that will work to improve the lives of Islanders and protect our livelihood and the economy? I am asking not sort of on everything but can he identify anything that will specifically ensure that we can improve the lives of Islanders through his role?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Any Minister that stands, or potential Minister, in this Assembly and pretends that they have a magic wand or a silver bullet ... and I do not think the Deputy is asking me to do that. I would say that I think it is important for Jersey's international identity for, as I said in my remarks, confidence to be restored domestically. The fact that there has been some disquiet, which is normal and healthy in a democracy, in the last difficult 2 or 3 years I think does give the impression, particularly perhaps the fiscal position of Jersey, of some questions being raised in Jersey. I have been accustomed over many years to dealing with many outside commentators that said that the finance industry would end, we were going to be courting one or other international agreement. The experience that I have is that we can deal with the international pressures. I am not going to use the "word well-regulated" and all the rest of it but we can represent ourselves, whether it is fisheries or finance or digital. But it is really important for the outward impression to be given ... not impression, the reality of a confident Island at ease with itself and confident in the future and thinking the best days have yet to come and they are not relegated to the pages of *temps passé*.

6.1.10 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

External Relations is an important role, particularly at this time of global uncertainty. The Deputy in his opening remarks spoke about his first being elected in 1999 and serving until 2018.

[12:15]

I am sure he will agree with me that during his political career it could be described as having been colourful. My question to the Deputy is serious and it is this: during his various Ministerial roles what has he learned about what to not do as a Minister?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful for the Constable's thoughtful and incisive question. When one has discharged political responsibility at the highest level in turbulent times one may get a picture in people's minds of one's character and that is often identified in a caricature. The caricature of the then Senator Ozouf or Minister for Treasury and Resources or Minister for Economic Development dealing with low-value consignment relief was perhaps a difficult one and one which 4 years absence from the Assembly has caused me to reflect upon greatly. I return to this Assembly with undoubtedly not talcum powder but a few more grey hairs and, therefore, age moves on. The way that you conduct yourself changes in relation to the experience you have had. Looking outside from within I can see why some of that character might have been appropriated to me. However, at the same time, I would not undo some of the work that was necessary in difficult times but there is a way of doing it. The way that the Minister for External Relations has to conduct himself or herself is one of collaboration, of simply sticking to the brief and concentrating on the areas that other Ministers are asking you to do. That is a very different role than perhaps the roles that I have fulfilled and like many of the people that I met on the doorstep in St. Saviour, a number of them said: "Goodness me, you really are human, you are a real person" and the caricature was unrecognisable for the person they saw on the doorstep, and I am grateful for the support of the people of St. Saviour in making that positive choice. The caricature is not perhaps something I recognise but I take the point that the Constable makes.

6.1.11 Deputy L. Feltham:

I would like to ask the Deputy, given the size of our Island and the scope of our trading capacity, is there any value in pursuing our own trade agreements with other jurisdictions and, if so, which trade agreements will he be pursuing first?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It would be very easy after the last question to respond to the Deputy's excellent question, is that the fact that I know what the trade agreements are. The short answer is I am not entirely sure because my work previously in this Assembly has been very much directed towards financial services, to the extent that fisheries matter, that clearly matters in relation to bilateral relations with France. But it is certainly going to be, I suspect, in the area of digital and the furtherance of our financial services industry as we move towards a more digitally-enabled services sector, which is going to be punching above its weight; I do not like that word. But certainly we need to identify the barriers to entry for our digital and technology areas and certainly those would be the subject of discussion where we need trade agreements to do so. Our constitutional position is what it is. We are not members of the European Union but I do accept that there is an opportunity for bilateral trade treaties where our economic interests lie and that will of course be very much governed by the work of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture and the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

6.1.12 Deputy L. Feltham:

Obviously as a small jurisdiction the size of our team, as well as their experience, may well differ from larger jurisdictions. What measures would the Deputy take to ensure that our team is able to compete on an equal footing with those of other larger jurisdictions?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The "bettertogether" hashtag has been used in the context of this new Assembly's approach and I would say that the better together of working in partnership with the United Kingdom, being British Jersey, does have an enormous strength to it. It is the good relations that we have with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the network of embassies around the world that mean that Jersey, a jurisdiction which is micro compared to that of other nations, can be multiplied many times by the use of the huge network of high commissions and embassies around the world with the attendant other British opportunities. That is where I would say to the Deputy that we can have a multiplier

effect by reminding ourselves that we are British Jersey and that is an important brand, whether or not it is potatoes or whether it is financial services.

6.1.13 Deputy M. Andrews:

Also, I just wanted to ask the question in relation to trade agreements and also the importance in terms of recognising what the exchange rates are and also the volatility of exchange rates within the international system.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think the Deputy is rightly alluding to the challenges of doing a trade with a jurisdiction which does not have the same exchange rate as us. There is a lot of talk, of which I am an enthusiastic, longstanding bystander and supporter of bilateral links with France, but that of course does come with an exchange-rate risk, which was the thing I had to deal with on my first day as Minister for Treasury and Resources when I found out the incinerator had not been hitched.

6.1.14 Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

As former Chair of the Scrutiny Panel overseeing Economic and International Affairs in the last Government, I endorse the comments made by the candidate as to the good work carried out by the then Minister for External Relations and Financial Services, which included very regular briefings and briefings I suspect before it goes to the Council of Ministers on matters prevalent. Would the candidate please confirm that he will deal with the Scrutiny Panel with the same alacrity as his predecessor?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

That gives me the opportunity of also recognising the important work of Scrutiny, which I did not specifically commend the now Constable for his work, because I have read many of those interactions and they were positive, important. I hope to have the same relationship with Scrutiny going forward. It was an excellent piece of work and an excellent ongoing 4 years of work in very difficult times.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. The period for questions has come to an end and, accordingly, I can confirm that Deputy Ozouf has been selected for appointment as Minister for External Relations and Financial Services. [Approbation]

7. The Minister for Home Affairs

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to the next Minister appointment. Deputy Moore, do you wish to take something out of turn, is that right?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I would ask the Assembly now to consider the Minister for Home Affairs and I would like to nominate Deputy Miles, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that nomination seconded? [Seconded] Are there any other nominations for Minister for Home Affairs?

7.1 Deputy H. Miles of St. Brelade:

I would like to start by thanking the parishioners of St. Brelade for giving me the opportunity to be part of this Assembly. It will have not escaped Members' notice that I am new to this Assembly and can, therefore, be considered an inexperienced politician. I think I will enjoy that label and the benefits it brings while it lasts. That experience cannot, however, be said to include my background

in the Home Affairs services or working on justice in Home Affairs policy. I spent over 30 years working for Jersey's public service in those areas, including as a policy director for the Chief Minister designate. I have the practical experience, the strategic knowledge and the relevant training and qualifications. I am new to this Assembly but I am ready for the challenge to being Minister for Home Affairs. My career has included time working for what is now the integrated Customs and Immigration Service, for the Probation and After Care Service, the States of Jersey Police and the former Department for Community and Constitutional Affairs. I have worked in service delivery, service development, strategic leadership and planning roles. I have attended and passed the Senior Police National Assessment Centre Strategic Command course, which in a previous career would have enabled my appointment to a Chief Officer role. In my policy role, I led the development of the Criminal Procedure Law and the Sexual Offences Law, modernising the landscape of criminal justice in Jersey. I have a PhD in social sciences and a strong academic interest and appreciation of our criminal justice system, right through from the Parish Hall Inquiry system to the courts and particularly in promoting informal justice, rehabilitation and social work with offenders. Jersey is one of the safest places in the world but this is not a position that has been achieved through luck and not one that we should take for granted. If elected I will pursue community-based policies and those that are rooted in a comprehensive understanding of our Island and what works best for Jersey. I will provide political leadership to the department and maintain and enhance Jersey's reputation as a safe and fair community. As part of my preparations for today, I have met the director general for Justice and Home Affairs and many of the service heads. Together they run an excellent operation, they are good at what they do and they have my full support. It has been said many times in recent years, and I make no apology for saying it again, we owe so much to our police force, our customs and immigration officers, our fire and rescue teams, the ambulance service, the health and safety executive, the superintendent registrar and all of those who ably and conscientiously support their operations. **[Approbation]** I will always fight their corner and be their voice in Government and in this Assembly, on policy for legislation and for funding. I do have some immediate priorities for services if I am elected to the role. I will be seeking to ensure that as much resource as possible is aimed towards the front line across all services. At Customs, for example, I do not want highly-trained and effective customs officers sitting behind their desks dealing with G.S.T. queries, I want them at the ports and the post office working on front line operations. We need to secure more resource for the Fire and Rescue Service, they have been cut and cut and cut and this has reduced their capacity to improve and promote fire safety among businesses and within the community. As Minister, I will argue for increased funding so that we can properly resource our crews and maintain fire safety within the community. I consider this a risk to our Island, which needs addressing. The same applies to the ambulance service, I see no greater priority than the ability to be able to respond to front line emergency calls and I will work with my Ministerial colleagues to address the current funding shortfalls. While I will support collaboration and joint working across the services, there will be no mergers of services for any period that I serve as Minister. Police, customs, fire and ambulance have their distinct roles. They of course work together but I will not pursue pointless reorganisations aimed solely at cost-cutting, which do not improve service delivery and often seek to replicate failed U.K. models. This includes - and this may or may not be of interest - our relationship with the Jersey Probation and After Care Service. I want to work very closely with Probation. I want the prison to continue working closely with Probation to promote rehabilitation and reduce reoffending across our community. I will take my *ex officio* seat on the Probation board and I will actively engage and set out my policy agenda. But I will not seek to bring Probation into the Home Affairs Department. It works well as a department of the Royal Court and, again, I want that service to be able to get on and deliver for our community, as it has done year after year and not be worried about who wants to bring them into which Ministerial portfolio. I am also aware of some of the ongoing capital projects which we need to see through. The new police firearms range, which is long overdue, the army and sea cadets headquarters, which the previous Assembly committed to, and of course to the prison redevelopment. We also need to secure sites for the Sexual Assault Referral

Centre and the new fire and ambulance headquarters. Current accommodation for both of those are not fit for purpose. On policy my focus will be early intervention, working with partners and making sure we are rooted in the community.

[12:30]

We need to minimise the harm caused by crime, antisocial behaviour and substance misuse. As an immediate priority then that means reinstating community safety programmes, such as building a safer society and Prison Me No Way. In St. Brelade voters raised with me their concerns about increases in disturbances across the Parish and we are hearing that across the Island. I am very careful to not point fingers but it does not surprise me that a problem from years ago, which was being well managed, has now started to emerge again, following the removal of 2 key early intervention mechanisms. Our work with partners will necessarily include the Parishes, the Honorary Police and the Youth Service and we will commit to working with the third sector and private sector partners, indeed across the community to bring our relationships back to where they were a few years ago and to develop them further. I will continue the work of my predecessors to support victims, witnesses and those who are affected by domestic abuse. I am committed to ensuring that Jersey complies with the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and girls, known as the Istanbul Convention. We will work towards a society that respects everyone and where we all feel safe wherever we are and whenever that is. We are a small Island and I believe that this is a wholly achievable objective but we are not there yet. The Home Affairs portfolio is a broad and exciting one. In my remarks today I have not covered the importance of us revitalising our commitment to the armed forces covenant or the need to work with the Parishes on ensuring we might meet the highest standards of safety and modern best practice in our firearms licensing procedures. The Minister also has responsibility for the marriage and the divorce law, a rather neat equation. I understand that work has already started on legislative changes and I will continue that work, particularly ideas around the no-fault divorce. I look forward to working with Scrutiny and across the community to make our Island even safer and a better place for everyone. I hope this sets out my vision, my priorities and my focus. I ask for Members to support my nomination and I look forward to taking questions.

7.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Back on track, as they say. Does the Minister designate support the increased use of facial recognition software and the use of Tasers in Jersey, particularly with respect to human rights connotations?

Deputy H. Miles:

Thank you for the question. To answer first the second part of the question and that is the use of Tasers. The Assembly has already agreed that Tasers can be used in Jersey. My own opinion is that they are a less-lethal option and I think the safeguards that are in place are sufficient for their use. The second area around facial recognition software is really interesting. We have a regime of C.C.T.V. (closed-circuit television), which is aimed at protecting the public in Jersey. Again, there must be legislation underpinning the use and strict procedures and guidelines around that use. It is not for me so much about the use of facial recognition software as the storage and dissemination of the product of that facial recognition.

7.1.2 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I congratulate the Deputy on her nomination. I say that one of the biggest issues we are facing over here in relation to the economy is the availability of staff, especially seasonal staff. We have adopted the 9-month work permit policy in line, I believe, with the U.K. in relation to Brexit and the fallout from that and the fact that we are part of the C.T.A. (Common Travel Area); so we are following those guidelines but they do not work, they do not work for our businesses. Will the Deputy undertake to review that as a matter of urgency? The previous Minister provided extended contracts

for construction workers. Will she undertake to take a close look at how we might adapt the work permit scheme to allow more time for seasonal workers to remain in Jersey, without of course impacting on our long-term population goals? Also, the sub-question to that: will she also explore the possibility - and this might be more difficult - of allowing French visitors to come to the Island on their I.D. (identification) cards, as opposed to having a passport?

Deputy H. Miles:

I thank the Deputy for his question and both of those are really important areas. I think, firstly, we must stress that the issue over the work permits is for foreign nationals. Since Brexit that really means anybody who is not British or Irish coming to Jersey requires a work permit. There are 2 elements to this, the element of domestic agreement is how long we might from a population perspective allow people to work in the Island. Historically, we have always issued the 9-month permit with a 3-month gap in order that people do not build up their residential qualification. The second element to it is evidently the immigration and the nationality side of things. If you are a foreign national you are required to apply for a visa. In order to be issued with a visa you have to have a work permit. Because of our links with the U.K. and our links with the Nationality Act we are bound by the rules that exist in the United Kingdom. The process is out of Jersey's control. We will issue work permits but people who are applying for a visa need to turn up themselves at the Visa Application Centre. That visa application is then put through to a department at the Home Office, who then pass that on to Jersey. It is my understanding from Scrutiny Panel work that there has been some negotiation about having Jersey consider the visa applications for the Island directly and that might speed them up. The other issue that is problematic is in the past we have been seen to need to align with the United Kingdom. When we have moved from the 9-month permit for foreign nationals to a 12-month permit that has raised eyebrows in the U.K. because it is not the way that they do it in the U.K. In fact in the U.K. I think their permits are for 6 months. There would need to be some sensitive negotiation with the Home Office in order to work out what we can do as a local solution, given the stress to our economy and given the necessity to remove any barriers to people coming to the Island to work for us. The subject of the second question regarding the identity cards, again, is an interesting one and quite a tricky one. It is just culturally the French have *carte d'identité*, they do not tend to have passports. Since Brexit we are now considered to be a third country and, therefore, any countries within the Common Travel Area require a passport to be stamped on entry and stamped on arrival. From my discussions with the head of service at Customs and Immigration, I know there has been some discussion about relaxing this rule for day-trippers. Indeed, I know that we have managed to get it for schoolchildren, so schoolchildren coming on a day trip can use their *carte d'identité*. At the moment everybody else has to have a passport and there have been some ideas about how we might ensure people on day-tripper tickets are stamped in and stamped out. But I think administratively that might be quite complex. We have to look at our obligations under the Common Travel Area. From an economic perspective coming for day trips on an identity card, yes, would be the ideal solution but what we do not want to do is find out that the United Kingdom put in a customs or a passport control because we have been seen to be the weak link, if you like, in the boundary of the Common Travel Area.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I thank the Deputy for those answers, I think the Deputy might need to sit down and ...

Deputy H. Miles:

Sorry.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. Do you want to ask a question?

7.1.3 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, Sir, I do. I think some deft diplomacy will be required by the Minister for External Relations and the Minister for Home Affairs here. I would urge the Deputy to look at breaking the mould. I know we have always done things in a certain way but there is an urgent need here to put Jersey first and make some changes. I hope that the Minister for External Relations and the Minister for Home Affairs can work towards that with their counterparts from the U.K. to undertake to pursue that, it is a matter of importance.

Deputy H. Miles:

Yes. Can I reassure the Deputy that we do take this very seriously and there will be serious discussions about enabling people to visit Jersey, not only for tourism purposes but also that they may become economically active in our community in a way that happens quickly and effectively?

7.1.4 Deputy H. Jeune:

What concrete initiatives will you support and prioritise to reduce gender-based violence?

Deputy H. Miles:

Jersey has signed up to the Istanbul Convention, which is the convention that is focused on violence against women and girls. Part of that work not only concerns gender-based violence but also other sorts of violence, such as honour-based violence. In the last Assembly Connétable Shenton-Stone successfully lodged a proposition to gain funding to set up a taskforce around women's safety and I am pleased to say that I will be supporting that work, that there are already measures in place to take that work forward.

7.1.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

My question on *carte d'identité* has been asked. First of all, can I congratulate the impending Minister on her appointment but also on a very good result in the St. Brelade campaign? I think she connected very well with the electorate very clearly. The question, therefore, relates to the constituency and it relates to surveillance and video cameras. It seems to me that the general policy up until now is that St. Helier is covered by a network of C.C.T.V. but apart from perhaps schools and other areas it is not generally the policy that outlying areas, conurbations, are covered by C.C.T.V. Does she think this is something which could be looked into and how would she do that?

Deputy H. Miles:

I am reluctant to turn the Island into an island that is permanently surveilled by C.C.T.V. cameras. Where we have C.C.T.V. cameras I feel that they need to be put there for a specific purpose and usually that purpose is about safety. We are a very safe Island and at the same time saying that there is no doubt from a police perspective that the availability of C.C.T.V. evidence is a very useful tool in tackling crime and disorder. What I would say is that there would have to be a very careful balance of how we implemented C.C.T.V., how we use it, based on issues around privacy and human rights.

7.1.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

More specifically, would she look to have a consultation at the earliest possible opportunity about one getting possibly C.C.T.V. around Don Farm, at the new skate park in particular, which I believe the police would like and also to talk to other outlying communities who are represented by Deputies and Constables in this Assembly about how proportionate C.C.T.V. usage might be used in those areas?

Deputy H. Miles:

Yes, most certainly I would undertake to have a consultation but I refer to my previous answer, just because we have a facility that is going to be significantly used by young people does not mean to

say that we constantly need to surveil those young people. Young people have an entitlement to privacy in the same way as any other citizen. I am also concerned that by having C.C.T.V. springing up left, right and centre it is another way of demonising young people who are exercising their freedom of choice to take part in what is a very constructive activity.

7.1.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does the candidate agree that when it comes to the decriminalisation of cannabis the writing is on the wall and it is inevitable? If she does agree with that would she further agree that, therefore, every prosecution for possession of small amounts for personal use that happens in the meantime is a miscarriage of justice?

Deputy H. Miles:

Thank you for that question. As a former customs officer, a former senior leader in the police and as a criminologist, I have a bit of a cognitive dissidence around the decriminalisation of cannabis. As part of the preparation for my role as Deputy, I spent a very interesting couple of hours with End Cannabis Prohibition Jersey and I am very interested in what they have to say.

[12:45]

There is no doubt that there is a groundswell of opinion towards ... let us not say decriminalisation or legalisation but perhaps a more tolerant approach to that. What I would say is that over the last 4 years since we saw the demise of the building a safer society strategy we also saw the demise of our substance misuse strategy. What I would say is that I would like any issues around cannabis to be taken in the context of other substances. There are other substances that some people might consider more harmful than cannabis, for example, alcohol, over-the-counter medication. I would not be looking at this as a single issue, I would be looking to roll it into the work that we need to do moving forward, as I mentioned in my speech around early intervention, around a substance misuse or a substance use strategy.

7.1.8 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

She spoke about cognitive dissidence and also spoke not overtly in favour of decriminalisation of cannabis but a more tolerant approach. But surely if something is criminalised you are legally intolerant of it. Would she not agree that it is inevitable that the direction of travel is towards the decriminalisation of cannabis and, given the growing body of evidence that its criminalisation is harmful and leads to worse outcomes for those who involve themselves with that sort of thing, that this could be something that could be pursued early on in the context of that wider substance use strategy? That this should be contained in that so that we stop prosecuting what is overwhelmingly young people and overwhelmingly working-class people for something that really most people do not regard as something that should be a crime.

Deputy H. Miles:

I do not agree that it is inevitable that we would be decriminalising cannabis, and I refer to my previous answer, that this is something that has to be carefully considered within the bounds of the appropriate strategy. That appropriate strategy would be a substance abuse or a substance use strategy.

7.1.9 Deputy L. Feltham:

The last Government made some quite considerable changes to the departmental structure under the Minister designate's remit, I would like to ask her if she thinks that departmental structure is the best one which is suited to her Ministerial portfolio.

Deputy H. Miles:

Thank you for the question. Yes, there is absolutely no doubt that the target operating model, if we can still call it that, that was in place in 2018 is not in place now. What I think I need to say is that we need to be very careful before we reorganise what has been put in place. While things might look good on paper and may look like they are fit for purpose on paper, what has been seen over the last 4 years is that is not the case. I am aware that there is a uniform services review in train. I am not sure what the driver for that uniform services review was but there seems to have been a desire to genericise all the services under the portfolio of Home Affairs. I am certainly not convinced that that is the best way forward.

7.1.10 Deputy L. Feltham:

Part of that organisational restructure was the development of a combined control room to take emergency services calls, does the Minister designate believe that a combined control room is the most appropriate way of taking those calls?

Deputy H. Miles:

Once again the combined control room came out of the review of blue light services and there seems to have been an assumption that because a vehicle has a blue light on it, it has to be administered by a single control room. I am aware that there have been some difficulties establishing the combined control room. We need to take into account that every profession within Home Affairs has a unique culture, has a unique set of guidelines, has a unique set of operating procedures. We are a very small Island and, therefore, we have very small numbers of professionals working in each of those departments. What might look sensible on paper clearly has not translated into delivering the best service to the public. I would be prepared to look again at the combined control room, particularly before funding is allocated to it to commit to a final combined model.

7.1.11 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I was very heartened by the Deputy's words when she spoke earlier and really look forward to her delivering as Minister for Home Affairs. My first question went out the window because she advised us that she is not going to amalgamate the services. My next question was the former Minister for Home Affairs committed to a review of the Firearms Law; that was not undertaken. I would like to ask the Minister designate what her view is on the current Firearms Law, which is of course now 20 years old.

Deputy H. Miles:

Thank you for the question. As I said in my opening remarks, I was policy director to the Chief Minister designate and I worked closely with the Connétable of St. Lawrence who at that time had responsibility for firearms within her portfolio. The Firearms (Jersey) Law is old and there are elements of it that are not fit for purpose, particularly in current times. My focus would be on the safety of firearms, carefully controlling who has access to them, how they are stored, how they are used. I think although it is not an immediate priority, yes, within the 4 years I would want to have a review of the Firearms (Jersey) Law.

7.1.12 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

The Deputy spoke earlier, she referred to procedures regarding firearms licensing, will she elaborate on that for us, please?

Deputy H. Miles:

At the moment Members will know that it is the Connétable of each Parish that is responsible for the issue of firearms licences, although the States of Jersey Police are the department that administer the register of firearms. Currently that means that there are 12 different methods of ... I do not know if

“methods” is the right word but there are 12 different people who are involved in the licensing of firearms. If that works from a safety perspective and the Island can be assured that every person who is applying for firearms and who holds a firearm is treated in a similar way, then I would not be looking at any change to those processes and procedures.

7.1.13 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I will be quick, will the Deputy commit to the retention and replacement of the 2 integral rescue craft operated by Jersey Fire and Rescue Service that form a vital part of our keeping the population safe on our beaches?

Deputy H. Miles:

It is going to be a very quick answer because I have only got 8 seconds but, yes, certainly, as I alluded to in my speech, the fire service have suffered a number of cuts and I think it is important that we consider that area.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. I can confirm Deputy Miles has been selected for appointment as Minister for Home Affairs. [Approbation]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that seconded? [Seconded] Does any Member wish to speak on the adjournment? The States stands adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:54]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:15]

8. The Minister for Housing and Communities

The Deputy Bailiff:

I now move to the selection of the Minister for Housing and Communities. Deputy Moore, do you wish to make your nomination?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Thank you, Sir, yes. I nominate Deputy Warr.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you. Is the nomination seconded? [Seconded] Thank you. Are there any other nominations?

8.1 Deputy D. Warr of St. Helier South:

I apologise for my lack of awareness of the policies in this House. It is a great honour to be put forward as a candidate for the position of Minister for Housing. I would though first like to thank the previous Minister for Housing and Communities, ex-Deputy Labey, for his work over the last challenging couple of years, in particular his development of the Jersey Homes Promise. It is an excellent piece of work and I would commend his efforts to the House. One of the reasons I stood in the recent election was because I see on a daily basis the challenges faced by the employees of businesses across the Island, how tough it is to make ends meet. Housing, health and childcare costs cause an immense strain on their health and well-being. I felt they needed someone to fight their corner. I am very grateful that the electorate has given me this opportunity. Housing is an existential problem for this Island. If we get the policies wrong we directly affect people’s health, our economy, our quality of life and our children’s future. Something has gone terribly wrong. My job is to find

out what it is and with the help of this House to fix it. This Government is going to be single-minded in delivering solutions for the people of Jersey. Like all of those who were successful in the last election I am very much in listening mode. My ideas around this subject are not fully formed and I realise that I also have a lot to learn. The Better Way movement held a series of listening events in the run-up to these elections, which proved invaluable, as they informed so many of the ideas in our manifestos. One of these events was around the subject of housing and I am grateful to Michael Van Neste, the previous chair of the Jersey Homes Trust, for his insights. I recognise that there are no easy solutions. If there were I am sure my predecessors would have found them already. Despite the current frenetic pace of building currently undertaken, we are still in catch-up mode because of the many years of underinvestment by previous Governments. The problem is a big one. It is estimated that we will need just over 4,000 homes over the coming 5 years; that is 800 homes per annum. Right now we are building at a rate of 400 per annum, so we are well short of what the market requires, which in turn means that the cost of housing is unlikely to come down any time soon. But is this the right approach? We simply do not know. The lack of up-to-date data currently available is, frankly, embarrassing. The housing need I quoted here is based on 10 year-old figures. Back then the projected population of this Island was circa 108,000. The last census told us the actual population is 103,000. We can only put in the correct policies if we have up-to-date data. This is something very high on my to-do list should I be appointed. One of the challenges we now face is how can we make more productive use of the land that is available for building? How do we speed things up without lowering standards? There are a number of sites within St. Helier that are earmarked for development, such as South Hill, the waterfront and the Le Bas Centre, however, it is not quite that simple. There is also a demand for a new primary school, which sites might be needed for medical facilities. What about sufficient green spaces for our mental well-being and our children? One of the jobs of the Minister for Housing and Communities is to work with the various Ministries to come up with a plan of action. It touches so many departments; Planning, Education, Environment, I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) and Treasury. Only by working collaboratively will we achieve the best outcomes for Islanders. From the St. Clement hustings there was a clear message from the electorate: no more building here. On top of this the bridging Island Plan identified a number of sites across the Island but a significant number were turned down. Thus it appears St. Helier is expected to bear the brunt of a significant chunk of our new housing stock. I was in a Havre des Pas residents' meeting last week and one comment was: "We have had our fair share of building, so I hope further development is shared out evenly around St. Helier." They are absolutely right and we need to listen to these very genuine concerns. We also need some creative thinking; one of the strengths, I believe, that I bring from the commercial world. The Island-wide census identified 4,000 empty properties, something Deputy Mézec referred to in his speech 4 years ago. We knew it then, so why are we no further forward in our research? We need to understand what is happening here. It has been suggested to me that 75 per cent of those properties were legitimately empty, people moving homes, et cetera. But what of the final 1,000? Before we go down the road of taxing empty properties, as some have suggested, we need better information. We need each Parish to carry out an audit and report their findings before any draconian decisions are made. Then there is the idea of right-sizing houses. The census identified 10,500 homes with 2 or more spare bedrooms. Even if just 10 per cent of those fell into the right-sizing bracket there is still another potential 1,000. From emails sent to me there are a number of people who simply need to be found a solution that enables them to move. Their problem is that they are asset rich and cash poor. We also need to consider the change in demographics of our population. I stood on a platform of One St. Helier, Many Communities. There are, however, many communities around our Island. I would urge each and every Parish to consider how they will keep their ageing communities together. What type of housing might they provide? It is still possible to look the other way but in 10 or 20 years' time this will be a major issue, so best to start planning now. I think we should also consider challenging the non-qualified rental sector and asking ourselves, is this still appropriate? I note 4 years ago Deputy Morel asked this very question but I am not clear as to whether any meaningful progress was made. Again,

it is another policy we should consider. It will no doubt have its pros and cons but with the right checks and balances it could bring down rental costs in this part of the market. I also want to review the criteria behind the Housing Gateway. I received an email the other day about an individual who is currently sofa-surfing. They are single, of an age that meets the Gateway criteria but have an income just above that set by the Gateway for help, yet they cannot afford to rent on the open market. Surely we, as an Island, want to do better. It highlights to me that we must never forget that behind every statistic there is a real person. Because the market is clearly not functioning as it should be we do need to consider legislation that protects both tenant and landlord. The current law dates back to the 1940s and needs updating. I am aware that work is currently underway to develop a tribunal. We must, however, remember this is a sticking plaster and not a long-term solution in this dysfunctional market. I am pleased to see that there is a suite of schemes to help individuals get on the housing ladder. Rent-to-buy, shared equity and no deposit schemes all help to make that first step on the ladder affordable. This leads me on to our delivery partners. Another area I would want to look at are the M.O.U.s (Memorandums of Understanding) of our housing delivery partners. Are they still fit for purpose? Will they still be relevant in light of revised policies? Once again, I emphasise the need for all parties to be focused on delivering the needs of our community. Another email sent to me was around a disabled individual stuck in their fifth-floor flat because the lifts were not working. This had been going on for weeks and had simply become a prisoner in their own home. In a humane society this is completely unacceptable. Finally, it is great to hear that the one front door scheme has been reopened in La Motte Street. I want to be part of a doing Government, one that provides solutions for the people of Jersey. I hope this House will allow me to play my part.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. Before we move to questions, I think that was a phone. Was it you, Deputy Curtis? That is a £10 contribution in the usual terms. Thank you. The first question is from Deputy Mézec.

8.1.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

One of the final acts of his predecessor as Minister for Housing and Communities was to begin the recruitment process for a re-established rent control tribunal. In the candidate's election manifesto he said: "I am, however, fundamentally against any form of rent control on the private sector." Can we, therefore, assume that his first act as Minister for Housing and Communities will be to cancel the final act of his predecessor?

Deputy D. Warr:

That is a very valid point, Deputy Mézec, and I have to say that in light of my subsequent approach to this I think that was probably a little over the top as far as that extreme level. My concern, I think I would say, with the rental tribunal is we have to be very careful how we phrase the law. In the U.K. there has been an absolute disaster. What I have been advised is that we are able to write our own laws, we are able to learn the lessons of the U.K. Government and, therefore, if we phrase it correctly I am absolutely in support of a rent tribunal and the work being done there.

8.1.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am grateful to the candidate for confirming that before he has taken office he has already abandoned one part of his manifesto. Could I ask if there are any other parts he will be abandoning?

Deputy D. Warr:

None.

8.1.3 Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement:

I would like to ask if the candidate is going to be looking at visiting a range of housing stock from bedsits to staff accommodation to what Andium provides, all the way to the open market, to inform his understanding of the housing market.

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank you for that question, Deputy Curtis. There is a huge amount of research required by myself and my team that I need to learn and get to grips with very, very rapidly, given that 4 weeks ago I was a humble citizen of St. Helier, Jersey. Interestingly, the number of emails that I have had, particularly from places like the homeless trust areas, I have been amazed and staggered at the variety and the amount of work and effort that has gone in before me that I now need to pick up and run with, so in answer to your question, yes, I will be, and I will be taking my team out with me as well because it is really important that we all gain some insights.

8.1.4 Deputy A. Curtis:

Given that it will be the case, hopefully, if the candidate finds that the conditions of housing and the deal that many people in non-qualified housing are currently accessing is not appropriate, would he consider further regulation around the pricing on particularly bedsit lodging houses and non-qualified accommodation?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for that further question. I think this is my point about the legal side of things. We have got a landlords' register and licensing project, which was a new Residential Tenancy Law, which is currently in the process of being written up and which I intend to lodge in September, which is the work of Deputy Labey. I would hope that we will work towards ways to help both landlords and tenants to improve conditions for both parties and so it is my intention to lodge that proposition, obviously with consultation with the House ... of the Chamber, sorry, I apologise.

[14:30]

8.1.5 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

My question relates to homelessness. The Homelessness Forum recently produced a report containing 8 recommendations. The single most important one was to define homelessness in legislation. Would the Deputy, as Minister for Housing and Communities, commit to bringing in such legislation within the life of this Assembly?

Deputy D. Warr:

Again, I have had an email sent to me today from Patrick Lynch, Caritas Jersey's chief executive officer, highlighting this point to me and that we do not have a statutory definition for homelessness in Jersey. Clearly that is not acceptable and we need to do something about that.

8.1.6 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Another point of one of those recommendations was to have a housing advice hub for emergency issues for homelessness. Does the Deputy equally commit to having such an advice hub?

Deputy D. Warr:

Just on a commonsense basis, I would suggest that our one front door policy should maybe include that.

8.1.7 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I have got the Order Paper in front of me here and I definitely heard the Deputy being proposed as Minister for Housing and Communities, yet he stood up to say he was pleased to be proposed as the

Minister for Housing. Communities was not mentioned at that time, so will he tell the Assembly what the communities remit means to him?

Deputy D. Warr:

Apparently - and I have just had a whisper in my ear here - that element of the Ministry will be moved elsewhere. However, I think you make a really valid point about communities because Jersey is all about communities and it is very important that we have this connectivity. The Havre des Pas forum, which I attend once a month, is an extraordinary example where the community has come together and are developing their own rules and requests and are working with Government to develop this sort of integrated approach. I would like to see that approach not only across St. Helier, but also across the whole of the Island.

8.1.8 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

The Deputy then did go on to mention communities, albeit not in the title of the Ministry, when he said that Parishes should be looking at looking after communities. Will he tell the Assembly what he meant by that? Will he expand on that and whether, as Minister for Housing and not Minister for Housing and Communities, he would be engaging with Parishes?

Deputy D. Warr:

I will for sure be engaging with the various Connétables of the various Parishes around the Island. My concern - and this is again from experience of parishioners - is that there is a real danger that people who are right-sizing houses may be moved out of their community where they are comfortable. I have got an example in Trinity, where we have an over-55s community, and a gentleman said to me he really appreciated the fact that there was a community into which he could move rather than being extricated from his house and sent somewhere else. I think it is really important that we consider those thoughts as we have this changing demographic, this older generation coming together, who have maybe lived side by side all the time. I think it is really important that we should be thinking about how we develop our communities going forward.

8.1.9 Deputy H. Jeune:

Jersey is facing an acute failure around homelessness and though we have a homeless strategy that was agreed in 2019, the work of implementation has been very slow. We have already heard a question about we are still working on the definition of homelessness, but all homeless providers since 2019 have had to expand their provision. What concrete steps will the Deputy take to support these providers and their residents to eradicate homelessness?

Deputy D. Warr:

That is a very valuable and important question. The first thing I can do is engage with those providers of the facilities. This is me, a new guy on the block, as it were, trying to find out and gather information as much as I can. It is a massively important issue because it causes all sorts of wider issues in terms of people's health, their mental well-being and so on. My first port of call will be to take my team and myself out to meet those people who run these places, such as the shelter, and understand exactly who is going in there, why they are going in there and what can we do to help as a Government.

8.1.10 Deputy L. Feltham:

I would like to ask the Deputy what, in his view, does he think has caused the housing affordability crisis that we now see.

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you, Deputy Feltham, for that question. Would we not love to know? It has been suggested: "Oh, it is about supplying more houses, we do not have enough houses, it is about investors", it is

about this. There are a myriad of reasons and I am sure every Member in the House here would have a view as to why there is a housing crisis at the moment. The problem is we do not have the data. I keep on saying that and I feel like I am going blue in the face saying it. We need facts, we need evidence, proper evidence, which is factually-based. We cannot make decisions on 10 year-old historical data.

8.1.11 Deputy L. Feltham:

Given the Deputy's answer to my initial question, I would like to ask how long it is going to take him to get the right level of data that he requires in order to take some action that we so sorely need in this Island.

Deputy D. Warr:

I would like to think ... I do not say "I would like to think", but I feel this should be part of the Chief Minister's 100-day plan.

8.1.12 Deputy T. Coles of St. Helier South:

I would like to ask the Deputy, he has mentioned the census regarding the empty properties. To him, what can be viewed as a legitimate reason for a property to be left empty?

Deputy D. Warr:

I have no idea. That is the harsh reality; I do not know. I think we all surmise, as I said to you from my speech, 75 per cent of the reasons properties are empty is ... well, I say 75 per cent. Again, that is not statistically verifiable, but people are moving house and so on. We need to find out more information. I do not know. I am very surprised, because I am very disappointed that this very question was raised 4 years ago and we do not seem to have made any progress further forward. I intend to change that. I am going to make sure that we do not have to wait another 4 years before we find out that information, that we find out that information hopefully within the next couple of months.

8.1.13 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I do believe that the putative Minister has said that he wants to be known as being a "doing department" and yet in his speech he referred to not one single actual concrete act. He said: "I am going to do some research." I will tell this Assembly what that means: doing some research means doing nothing for quite a long time. Does the potential Minister accept that doing research is not enough in itself and will he commit himself to any one of the 10 points made by Reform Jersey about how to deal with the crisis, and in particular will he commit himself to moving to a means-tested system of setting social housing rents?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for that question. Doing: I am just thinking about a business scenario. In my business, I do not do stuff until I have the right facts to hand. If I do not have the right facts to hand, how can I make a sustainable decision for my business? I know I have been criticised, saying: "Oh, housing is not a business" and I appreciate it is not a business, but I am trying to talk about the methodology of how you approach making decisions. You make decisions by having the correct facts to hand and then going out and doing stuff after that. Unfortunately, there are ... I have to congratulate Reform on one thing, and that is your 10-point plan was very easily read and succinct and had great brevity to it. That is not a criticism of content, it is just that I am sick of reading 140-page reports on all sorts of stuff telling us what all the problems are and not what they are going to do. I have read a load of these reports and I am sick of them, so well done, Reform, on doing that. In terms of what would I carry out from Reform, that is a really good question. I shall do my research, I shall have a look down here. There are a lot of very seemingly sensible suggestions, and I would like to think that we may be able to work together and to use some of their ideas.

8.1.14 Deputy G.P. Southern:

May I suggest that I will not be holding my breath because this putative Minister has not noted that there were 9 points on our action plan? There were 10 points on our housing action plan dealing with the crisis, so he cannot even count to 10, apparently.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are you coming to a question, Deputy?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The question is does the Minister accept that he can count to 10?

Deputy D. Warr:

I can count to 10, thank you.

8.1.15 Deputy M. Scott:

Many leases provide for an increase equal to R.P.I. (retail price index), which was 8 per cent in the last 12 months, while many tenants' salaries will not be increased by that percentage, including some employees in the public sector. Will the Deputy introduce some form of rent control to address this disparity to avoid an increased exodus of skilled labour out of this Island?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for that question. Rent controls is always a very controversial area. I am going to go back and repeat myself and say I want to find out the information: what are the implications of that? Let us find the facts and then go forward from there. I am afraid I cannot be any more sophisticated in my answer than that.

8.1.16 Deputy M. Scott:

Will the Deputy accept that this is a crisis, so fast action is needed?

Deputy D. Warr:

I think I described it in my speech as being an existential crisis, so I am fully aware that it is a crisis.

8.1.17 Deputy M. Andrews:

In relation to Andium Homes' market equivalent rental policy, is the candidate of the opinion that Andium Homes rental policy is in need of reform?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for that question. I think this would form part of our memorandums of understanding with Andium Homes, which need to be reviewed. I have suggested that we should be unhooking the connection between private and public sector rents. This idea of this 80 per cent always tracking private sector rents I think should be reviewed. It obviously has to be on the basis of a sustainable differential, but I would like to think that we could use the public sector to push rents down. That is my take on the situation at the moment, but again that is what I read here now. I do not have the facts to hand.

8.1.18 Deputy M. Andrews:

In relation to Andium Homes rental policy, obviously at the moment it is, as you say, pegged to the private market and of course there is demand from inflation. Is this something that could be potentially reviewed and also implemented in terms of social policy reform within this term?

Deputy D. Warr:

Yes.

8.1.19 The Connétable of Trinity:

I welcome the candidate's comments about keeping communities together, and as a fellow Trinitarian, I would welcome a side conversation with him about developing that. However, my question is expanding upon the questioning of Deputy Curtis. We all too often hear about the housing crisis and that any number of thousand homes are required, but do we know what the mix of those homes are? Are they 3-bedroomed houses with a garage and a garden, one-bedroom flats, 2-bedroom flats, 3-bedroom flats? We keep just talking about a global number without any understanding. I appreciate he needs to get some data. My second point would be while help-to-buy schemes are laudable, my concern with those is that we keep a careful view on the other end of the telescope, that they do not allow commercial or private sector developers just to see that there is easy money available and their property prices continue to go up, so you are chasing your tail all the time. I would just be pleased to hear what he has got to say about that.

Deputy D. Warr:

Yes, absolutely right, and that is a danger. I have to say, these are conversations that I need to have with people like the Jersey Development Company and Andium Homes to see what the take-up is on these areas of the market. I just want to go back. Sorry, could I ask you just to repeat the first part of the question, which was quite different to the second part?

The Connétable of Trinity:

It was just a comment on keeping the communities together.

Deputy D. Warr:

Sorry, keeping the communities together.

The Connétable of Trinity:

Then the second part was about keeping a ceiling on the property prices, which are supported by help to buy schemes.

Deputy D. Warr:

Sorry, I now recall what you were saying. It was: was the mix of properties correct, that was one of your questions, and that is a really good question.

[14:45]

If you look at the rental housing market and the Gateway market, it would appear that one-bedroom flats seems to be the largest-growing market, and obviously there are a lot of those being built, but interestingly, Andium Homes, again who were at the conversation which took place in Havre des Pas last week, made the observation that when they started that development, that development started 8 years ago on data based around that time. Obviously the demographics have changed, but they are still having to fulfil 8 year-old requirements. This is one of our big problems right now, we do not have the data. It should be much more proactively produced. One of my very, very big jobs and first jobs to do is to collect that data and make sure we have accurate information.

8.1.20 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Sorry, I am just adjusting my air-conditioning which I have installed. I was going to ask the Deputy - and congratulations on his nomination - what are his ideas for creating some affordable homes to give Islanders hope? I am not talking about supply and demand matches, but any quick announcement he can make on ideas for getting Islanders into their own homes at an affordable cost.

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for that question, Deputy. I am going to be working closely - and hopefully Deputy Binet will be involved - with I.H.E. and obviously Property Holdings. Property Holdings clearly hold a significant amount of property which we have to look at and we have to kind of divvy up, dare I say it, but if there are any sites there which are immediately available, which we think can do a job or help to do the job, I think we should be progressing those very rapidly.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That concludes the 20 minutes. Deputy Ward, I apologise I missed your light. With the rush of lights, I seem to have missed yours, for which I apologise. Accordingly, I can confirm Deputy Warr has been selected for appointment as Minister for Housing and Communities. **[Approval]**

9. The Minister for Infrastructure

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to the selection of the Minister for Infrastructure. Deputy Moore, would you like to make a nomination?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I would like to nominate Deputy Tom Binet.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? You are standing up already.

9.1 Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour:

I should like to start by thanking our new Chief Minister designate for nominating me for the post of Minister for Infrastructure. It really is a privilege. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Deputy Kevin Lewis, for his work over the past 4 years. Unlike some of the other nominees, I do not possess a range of formal qualifications. However, I have spent a lifetime in the commercial sector and as a result have a reasonable amount of practical experience in various areas and these basic qualities will, I hope, serve me well if my nomination is confirmed. In the short time available it has proved a little challenging to familiarise myself with every detail of the broad range of functions that reside within this Ministerial portfolio. That said, I have met as many relevant people as possible, including the Constable of St. Helier, a man who I suspect will have to become a very close ally if many of the current issues are to be progressed. I also managed to spend a couple of hours with the Director General of I.H.E. before he departed on annual leave. My take from these and other discussions leads me to a number of initial conclusions. With regard to transport, there appears to remain a considerable amount of work to be done to provide the Island with a truly sustainable transport solution, and at this early stage my instinct tells me that we may have to be significantly more radical than is currently proposed. It is a sad fact that a lot of people are still waiting for others to get on a bus or use a bicycle in order to clear the roads for them to continue to use their comfortable 4x4s. Being mindful of the requirement to be totally honest in this Assembly, I must confess to having been in this bracket for perhaps a little too long, therefore if successful this afternoon I shall be charged with delivering something that must be sufficiently robust to change even my own hitherto unco-operative habits. I also foresee a requirement for a great deal of co-operation with the Parishes via the Comité des Connétables to ensure the scheme is easily understandable and completely consistent throughout the Island. Staying with transport, I am aware that discussions have been commenced with LibertyBus in relation to its contract and that prior to conclusion there will be a requirement to assess the impact of the under-19 bus pass scheme, along with other matters of detail. With regard to solid waste, it will come as no surprise to those in the know that La Collette is nearly full. However, I am reliably assured that there are significant opportunities to recycle more net waste to reduce the

volume currently filling the reclamation area. There are also problems to be resolved with the disposal of hazardous waste and apparently a requirement to start considering longer-term issues, such as the disposal of household waste post the useful life of the existing energy recovery facility. Coupled with this is a requirement for an extension of Jersey's drainage network and especially in relation to accommodating further housing construction and decisions to be made about the enhancement of sea defences. All of the above will require long-term funding proposals with difficult decisions to be made about applying or increasing various commercial charges. An area of particular interest for me would be Jersey Property Holdings. Without the benefit of inside knowledge, I have been bemused over the course of time by some of the things that I have witnessed: decisions about Cyril Le Marquand House, for example, and the move to Broad Street, and the vacation of La Folie Inn some 20 years ago and its subsequent abandonment is another small but interesting observation. While I am aware of its existence, I have yet to obtain and study the existing estate strategy, but please rest assured that should I be successful in today's process, I would certainly commit to developing a comprehensive and coherent plan for all government property, ensuring that every effort had been made to liaise with every other relevant department in relation to their future needs. With 800 properties to contend with, the prospect of 20 minutes of questions is quite daunting, so I would request that particularly in this area they remain of a general nature, sorry. In terms of current projects, decisions will be required relating to the future use of Fort Regent and the commercial and financial implications will need to be properly assessed. A casino and hotel currently feature on the list of possibilities and I certainly hope the implications of these would be fully considered by this Assembly. I am not certain of the extent to which it is appropriate to reveal my own position on this, but if I might take the liberty to do so, I must confess to being decidedly unkeen. We already struggle to deal with the many and varied mental health problems that currently exist and adding to this the problems that come with additional gambling just seem inappropriate, at best. With the limited time available, it is difficult to cover all of the other live issues in this portfolio, but I would just acknowledge the fact that more work needs to be done on the active places strategy, with the possibility of developing new sports facilities in the east of the Island, and further investment required to improve some of the existing facilities. I am also informed that the skate park at Les Quennevais is due to be completed by the end of the summer and the question of whether we should build another one at St. Helier is shortly to come on to the agenda. To a large extent, many of the issues mentioned so far are ongoing business, albeit that a different approach or slight change of emphasis might be required. However, there is one so far unmentioned issue that stands out by some way and that is the new hospital. As explained in the new Chief Minister's introductory statement, an evidence-based review is to be conducted with the requirement to respond within 100 days and advise the Assembly whether changes can be made to the hospital project to deliver a more affordable, more appropriate alternative. The target date to report back to the States is 20th October this year. The precise brief for that review is yet to be concluded, but it would be my intention to work closely with the Chief Minister to ensure that it is well-targeted so the end product provides a clear indication of how best to proceed. Lest this be viewed by some as yet another piece of governmental prevarication, it is worth pondering for a moment on the merits of embarking on an £804 million commitment in the teeth of an unfolding economic crisis, the likes of which many will not have witnessed in their lifetime. Furthermore, the current scheme will undoubtedly superheat the local building trade and produce a requirement to import and house a very large temporary workforce. Given the economic circumstances, the war in Ukraine, 10 per cent inflation and global supply difficulties, it may well prove pragmatic - indeed, completely necessary - to greatly reduce this vast expenditure in order to help sustain the less well-off through a cost of living crisis that is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future and, as far as our health services are concerned, to make sure we have sufficient funds available to attract key staff we need to provide the sort of health service we had in Jersey before its recent deterioration. In addition, if a plan can be devised that allows us to renew our hospital facilities over a longer period of time, we could ensure that the majority of the construction work could be undertaken by local contractors, providing consistency of work supply until well after

the current housebuilding boom comes to an end. The resultant benefit to the economy could be extremely significant. There is no doubt that this Assembly has to be mindful of public opinion, and having spoken to many voters in recent weeks, I have yet to find anyone who is particularly enthused by the prospect of bulldozing a dozen perfectly good houses - many of them new - in the middle of a housing crisis, flattening a perfectly serviceable rehabilitation unit and a number of other decent facilities, including the bowling club, and constructing a £30 million super-highway. To most people, it does not accord with the way in which this Island has conducted itself successfully for centuries. It just does not have a particularly Jersey feel to it. Whatever the outcome of the review, it would be my intention to work extremely closely with the new Minister for Health and Social Services to ensure, first, that all existing health facilities are maintained to the required standard for the foreseeable future, and secondly, to develop new facilities that fit comfortably with the future health service that must now be devised in the wake of this most recent election. The previous approach, which sought on the one hand to have a £1 billion hospital, and on the other to invest tens of millions in a care model but ensured patients made little use of it, was always something of a contradiction to me. Another area of close co-operation will undoubtedly be the requirement to provide suitable accommodation for front line staff. It does not take a genius to work out that we will all get better healthcare from a complete, happy and well cared-for workforce working in older facilities than we will from a miserable, demoralised and depleted team working in a fine new building, which was precisely the direction of travel prior to this election. In conclusion, the Minister for Infrastructure's portfolio has a very broad remit, especially as it includes the all-important new hospital project. Clearly there is still much for me to take on board, but please rest assured that this would be undertaken with much enthusiasm and there would be no reluctance to take whatever decisions are required, however controversial, in a constructive and timely manner. If accepted, the proposed new Council of Ministers appears to have all of the ingredients necessary to reset politics in Jersey. I would very much like to be a part of it.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. We now move on to questions for up to 20 minutes and the first question is from Deputy Rob Ward.

9.1.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

This Assembly agreed £2 million to fund a youth facility in the centre of St. Helier, unfortunately Property Holdings who were essential to enabling this are not. Can I ask the Minister to commit Property Holdings to pushing this project through? There is a site recognised in the Government Plan of Nelson Street. Can I ask him for all of his support in order that this happens as quickly as possible?

Deputy T. Binet:

I have to confess to not knowing a great deal about it, but if it has been passed by this Assembly then it strikes me that it should be carried out, unless there are good reasons for it not to be, but otherwise the answer would be yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to say to the Minister when he can find time, I am more than happy to sit down and take him to Nelson Street myself.

Deputy T. Binet:

Thank you.

9.1.2 Deputy L. Feltham:

Give the impact of population on the Island's infrastructure requirements, I would like to ask the Deputy what he considers to be a sustainable population level for the Island.

Deputy T. Binet:

I am not sure whether the Deputy was expecting a number. That is a rather difficult question and certainly not a question I am in a position to answer at this time at all, I am afraid.

9.1.3 Deputy L. Feltham:

If the Deputy is not in a position to give an answer to my initial question, could he tell me what methodology he would use to identify what level of population we can sustain, given the levels of infrastructure his department can provide?

Deputy T. Binet:

Once again, far too early to be making those sort of commitments or suggestions, I am afraid. That will come after a considerable amount of experience.

9.1.4 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I again congratulate the Deputy on his nomination, but start by saying I am hugely disappointed with the inaccuracies contained within his speech. I wondered if he might take a leaf out of the Minister for Housing designate's book and at least seek the facts out. There were figures stated on hospital road building that are completely wrong and I would ask him to undertake - before making any decisions on the hospital - to get the facts, get the figures and make sure they are accurate. Just for the record, he said that if it has been passed by this Assembly it should have been carried out, but obviously that does not apply to the hospital. My question is: will he undertake to get all the facts and figures and study them on the hospital project before coming to any predetermined decision?

Deputy T. Binet:

First, I think there is a subtle difference in the question that was asked by Deputy Ward and the one that is being asked by Deputy Farnham.

[15:00]

I did not have anybody, on numerous door-knockings, mention the £2 million that had been applied to Deputy Ward, but an awful lot of people did speak to me about the hospital. I apologise if I am not precisely correct on some of those facts and figures but perhaps the Deputy did not knock on as many doors as I did. I will certainly commit to looking at the facts, that will always be the case, and it is this Assembly that decides on any change of course, as the Deputy well knows.

9.1.5 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think I knocked on more doors than the Deputy. We had a conversation about this, but the question is simply: will the Deputy undertake to make sure he studies and understands the facts and the figures before making any firm decisions on the hospital? He mentioned £1 billion. He is close, certainly a couple of hundred million over the budget approved by this Assembly, so it is neither here nor there.

Deputy T. Binet:

Sorry, yes, I did commit to looking at the facts in my last answer.

9.1.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Again, following on the quote about methodology, I would be interested to know which economics textbooks the potential Minister has been studying when he says that he wishes to finance ongoing revenue expenditure, for example, given the need for Jersey to finance better terms and conditions for front line healthcare staff, why he chooses to fund that after following some caveat on a capital scheme. Surely, he has been taught, as I have, that you do not spend capital on revenue or revenue on capital and yet he is proposing to do exactly that.

Deputy T. Binet:

That is an interesting question. All I would say is that I come from a very basic background. I have not been reading any books on finance and that where I come from 2 and 2 makes 4. When you borrow money, you have to repay it and the money comes from somewhere.

9.1.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

That opens up the avenue to suggest that he does read some basic economics textbooks in order that he can get a grip on what he is proposing.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is there a question there?

Deputy T. Binet:

I would like to thank the Deputy for his kind advice. [Laughter]

9.1.8 The Connétable of St. Mary:

There are still a considerable number of domestic properties on the Island which do not have the benefit of mains drainage. Does the candidate agree that this is unacceptable in the present era and will he commit to obtaining the necessary funding to rectify it and, in that connection, liaise with the Constables concerned on the matter?

Deputy T. Binet:

I thank the Deputy for his question. That has been raised with me by a number of people already. I think the extent to which we can do that and the period of time over which it can be done depends on funding, but in essence, yes, that would be a very wise thing to be doing, but I would not be able to commit at this point in time as to a timescale for that.

9.1.9 Deputy L. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

The previous speaker may have partly asked my question, but I would like to ask the Deputy what he thinks about the extension of mains water. We still have many properties in the Island that are not on the mains network, despite well-documented problems with P.F.O.S. (perfluorooctane sulfonate) and nitrates in our groundwater. Will he commit to working with other relevant Ministers with the aim of having a plan and funding mechanism in place by the end of this political term for connecting these properties to the mains network in the future and combining the work with mains drains where possible?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am certainly committing to doing everything that I possibly can within the financial constraints that are available.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Senator Mézec. Sorry, I wrote it down, there it is. Old habits die hard. Deputy Mézec.

9.1.10 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No longer a Senator and hopefully never again. Could I ask the candidate if he could give some tangible plans he has to improve Jersey's bus service?

Deputy T. Binet:

I have a requirement to be honest and at this point in time the answer is no, but that does not mean that I will not in very short order. I am aware of the need for this and I shall be looking at that as soon as I possibly can.

9.1.11 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

At the very least then would he like to comment on the success or otherwise, as he sees it, of the student bus pass introduced as a result of the proposition from Deputy Ward in the last term, which I know will be up for review very shortly? Given how successful it has been, would he like to commit to seeing the maintenance and extension of that scheme?

Deputy T. Binet:

I did mention in my speech that it is something that is up for review and I shall be part of that. I do not have an intimate knowledge of it, but hopefully within a very short space of time I will.

9.1.12 Deputy H. Jeune:

It was very heartening to hear that the Deputy has had a change of heart regarding his own sustainable transport policy, but what specific initiatives would the Deputy prioritise in the Sustainable Transport Policy to encourage increased sustainable transport use in Jersey beyond the questions that have already been asked around bus service?

Deputy T. Binet:

Something that I am interested in is electrification, moving to electric cars. Our new Chief Minister kindly provided me with some information on what they do in Norway and I just wondered if we might, at some point in time, start putting higher taxes on the purchasing of petrol and diesel vehicles and using that money to subsidise the purchase of electric vehicles and possibly being quite radical about the extent to which we do that.

9.1.13 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that the façade of the former Newgate Street Prison is languishing in a field somewhere, would the Deputy commit to utilising it, either in a public building or just simply selling it off during his 4-year term of office?

Deputy T. Binet:

It would seem that I am being asked to make an awful lot of commitments on the back of a week's worth of homework. It is an interesting one and I commit to looking at that. I am happy to speak to the Connétable about that at his convenience.

9.1.14 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does the Deputy consider that the time this granite has been laying in a field is inappropriate and should not be repeated in building structures that the States get involved with? Will he commit that he will manage Property Holdings and the materials that the States or the Government holds in a better way than henceforth and hitherto?

Deputy T. Binet:

I will certainly commit to do my very best to do so.

9.1.15 Deputy A. Curtis:

The Deputy mentioned Cyril Le Marquand House in his opening. I wondered if he felt and agreed that at a principle level the States should not be looking at the sale and leaseback of that land and that we should retain significant amounts of our land without sale.

Deputy T. Binet:

A simple answer to that one: yes.

9.1.16 Deputy A. Curtis:

A supplementary on that would be a similar site to Cyril Le Marquand House would be Fort Regent. In the moving proposals, would the Deputy agree that the entirety of Fort Regent, at least at a freehold level, should be owned by the public?

Deputy T. Binet:

Once again, unless there are any complications of which I am not aware, then the answer to that would be yes too.

9.1.17 The Connétable of Trinity:

I make no apology for labouring this point, which has already been raised. As a Constable who has over 400 properties in his Parish which are connected to third world drainage systems, it flies against the stated aims of reducing our carbon footprint, surely, to run a fleet of tankers to haul the waste away on a regular basis. Would the Minister at least commit to doing as much as he can to put additional funding into extending the network?

Deputy T. Binet:

Clearly I was not clear enough in my last answer. I will be clearer now. The answer is yes, I shall do everything that I can.

9.1.18 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

An easier one this time, not the hospital. The Deputy will be inheriting Property Holdings and responsibility for looking after our rather large and underutilised property portfolio. Can I ask him if he can share briefly, if it is possible, his vision of how he might improve that to derive the maximum value and better usage for the taxpayer?

Deputy T. Binet:

Thank you for the question. Yes, I cannot stand here and say that I have got a master plan for anything. With 800 properties, I am sure that previous Ministers have come and gone from this position and not been aware of more than half of them. What I can commit, I have had some experience with property and with rationalising businesses in various properties, and whatever experience I have had throughout the course of my commercial life I am very happy to bring to bear here and apply that to Property Holdings.

9.1.19 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Will he undertake to liaise with the Minister for Housing to ensure any property that is suitable can be handed over for housing as soon as possible?

Deputy T. Binet:

Prior to the election I had a very interesting meeting with Andium and they did indicate to me that their progress has to some extent been impeded by a lack of action from the Assembly, which was something of a concern to me. It indicated that we may almost have a homemade housing crisis in that we have not moved quickly enough and, to the extent to which I can commit to doing that, then that would certainly be the case and I would commit to doing that.

9.1.20 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am afraid it is another commitment for the putative Minister. Will the Minister commit here and now to either maintaining or improving funding for what is known as the Hoppa bus, the town service which has just been started, and appears to have a healthy number of passengers?

Deputy T. Binet:

No intimate knowledge of the bus service, but if what I am being told is correct, then it seems to me that there would be no reason why one should not do what is being requested.

9.1.21 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I have got a quick win for the potential Minister. The sale of car registration plates: some time ago, JSY was introduced to the original J. number plates. Would the Minister designate consider introducing JE for Jersey electric car as a provision for raising income?

Deputy T. Binet:

That is an interesting suggestion and I am happy to talk to the Connétable about that at some point. It does seem to be quite reasonable on the face of it, so quite possibly.

9.1.22 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

As we are currently, I believe, up to about 98 per cent connected with mains drains on the Island, is the Minister looking forward to the opening of the new sewage treatment plant in 2023, which will enable him to connect the rest of the Island?

Deputy T. Binet:

After these questions, I am not sure if I am looking forward to anything to do with infrastructure [Laughter] but I will just say yes and pass that one off, if I may.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any more questions for Deputy Tom Binet? Any more questions? With these nice short answers, we got through a record number of questions. Any more questions? In that case I bring this question period to an end and can announce that Deputy Tom Binet has been selected for appointment as Minister for Infrastructure.

10. The Minister for Health and Social Services

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Moore, am I correct in understanding that you wish to take the Minister for Health and Social Services next?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

That is right. I would like to nominate Deputy Karen Wilson for Health and Social Services.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, is the nomination seconded? [Seconded] Are there any other nominations?

Female Speaker:

Yes, I would like to nominate Deputy Howell for Health and Social Services.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is that nomination seconded? [Seconded] Thank you. Are there any other nominations? There are 2 nominations, Deputy Wilson and Deputy Howell. In accordance with the Standing Order, questions will be asked and the candidates will speak in the order in which they were nominated, starting with Deputy Wilson who will receive the normal 10 minutes and then be asked questions for up to 20 minutes.

[15:15]

During that period, Deputy Howell, you are required to leave the Chamber. You will be escorted from the Chamber now and taken to what is described as a quiet room.

10.1 Deputy K. Wilson of St. Clement:

As a newly elected Member of the Assembly, it is without doubt the greatest privilege to stand here in this historic place and, if I may, I would like to extend my thanks to the people of St. Clement for electing me and to the Chief Minister for her nomination. If appointed I commit to continuing the work I started as an 18 year-old, which is dedicating myself to working for patients. One of the wonderful things about Jersey is that it extends a welcoming hand to people from all around the world and encourages them to participate in its ancient and venerable democracy. But it has not been all plain sailing. Before I was thinking of standing in this election I spoke to a number of Deputies who warned me that I could expect relentless abuse from the trolls on social media and, judging by events over the weekend, they have not disappointed. One of the first concerns, a concerted campaign no less, appears to be questions over my residency. Previous queries raised with the Greffe and the Jersey Electoral Commission have been answered and confirm I have been here for the requisite amount of time. Over the last few days I have also been accused of being a failed N.H.S. (National Health Service) clone, brought to Jersey by malevolent forces in order to mutilate our health service in Jersey on the pro-Christian bed of utterly unsuitable N.H.S. bureaucracy. Nothing can be further from the truth. What I have learned being here before, during and after the pandemic is that Jersey is different. We have a unique health service which has its own outstanding strengths and particular problems. My job, if appointed, will be to build on these strengths and find the very, very best solutions to problems wherever they may be. Over the last 2 years the health system has endured a gruelling period. The COVID-19 pandemic places enormous strain on staff and I am sure Assembly Members will join me in paying tribute to those who worked tirelessly to keep us safe and supported through the recent pandemic. As we emerge now from the pandemic, we have to move forward in the most difficult of times restoring staff morale and rebuilding our care system. The pandemic taught us the importance of team work and innovation, and this is the spirit in which I want to conduct my time if appointed as Minister for Health and Social Services. This is going to require new approaches and difficult choices. We learned that the care sector cannot singlehandedly tackle a crisis of that enormity but needed all parts of society to address the challenges presented. In a post-pandemic world we need to build on the value that came from that way of working. There is a need now for this new Assembly to think more critically about the way we consider health in Jersey and avoid the trap of returning to business as usual. A simple vision drives this approach. The healthier people are, the more likely they will be to make a positive and productive contribution to Jersey society and the Jersey economy. At the moment Jersey falls below the O.E.C.D. Better Life Index, which is a measure introduced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to measure well-being. It is for this Assembly to collectively improve that position. I want to set out a way to address the health challenges we face by placing a value on health and a greater emphasis on tackling inequality. Critical to this will be a new public health strategy and a need to create what the World Health Organization refers to as new social foundations which address the structural root causes of ill health and inequality in our economic, tax and political systems. This renewed emphasis on public health is timely and offers the possibility for some innovative developments. I look forward to making progress in these areas to deliver better health incomes for all. If we improve health we improve life chances and so it is important to make sure we focus on what matters most to people when planning healthcare. One way to achieve this is to include people in the decision-making processes with due regard to their own experience as a patient, a carer or a service user. It is a valuable contribution to improving the quality of healthcare and we must ensure that this approach becomes embedded within our culture and systems of delivery. It is my intention, if appointed, to set up a Ministerial board whose function will be to set the standards and frameworks for an improved patient experience. This will be developed by the people of Jersey for the people in Jersey and form an integral part of how we measure quality, safety and performance of the health and social care

system. In addition, there is a need to strengthen arrangements for routinely involving people in the delivery of care services across the Island. I will explore policy and/or legislation that will give legitimacy to the views and opinions of local people in the planning and delivery of healthcare. I would now like to turn attention to some of the challenges that remain and outline the tasks ahead in the next few months. There is important work to be done to improve outcomes for people with severe mental illness. I will ensure services for the severely mentally ill are prioritised within our programme for change. I will work with the Minister for Infrastructure to ensure Clinique Pinel is completed and bring forward a new strategy to address the wider determinants of poor mental health. The proposal for the new hospital is a great concern for many people who expect the new Assembly to bring this development to a conclusion. Post-pandemic we are faced with a completely different set of circumstances affecting its delivery. That is why the Chief Minister is right to commission a review of the outline business case and seek assurance on its affordability, design and location. I will work with the Minister for Infrastructure to undertake a timely review of the current proposals for the re-provision of our hospital and report to the Assembly and the Chief Minister within 100 days of entering office on a proposed way forward. But there is more to health than hospitals. Aligned to the new hospital is the development of the Jersey Care Model. While we need to redesign community services to address future challenges, there are just too many public concerns about its design, its funding and resourcing to allow it to continue in its current form. We have to consider if it is right for Jersey and we will ask officers to pause its implementation until we are in a better position to understand the cost and resourcing issues involved. Which brings me to one of the biggest challenges facing us today, solving our healthcare workforce issues. It is a global issue so we need to think creatively and use all the assets available to attract a more sustainable workforce. There are significant shortfalls in key areas of service delivery, particularly in the areas of community dentistry and ophthalmology. I want to work with the Ministers for Housing and the Environment to expedite arrangements to improve access to housing and issuing of licences. The cost involved in recruitment and the cost lost to recruitment are placing an enormous burden on the public purse. As I stand here today, it is unacceptable that 27 healthcare staff are without accommodation. I acknowledge the issues are multifaceted and recruitment process alone is not the answer but the workforce agenda needs a fundamental rethink and we must have the courage to make hard choices to create desirable conditions for people to live and work in Jersey. I am pleased the Chief Minister is setting up a workforce and skills commission to drive improvements in this area. Technology is one way we can reduce the demand for labour. Advances in artificial intelligence and assisted technology will change the way we experience healthcare. As our population ages we have to find solutions that are less people intensive but just as effective and build much needed capacity in our system. In a similar way, there will be a need to examine a number of systems affecting patients' experience of the care system overall. For example, waiting times, the way we procure services and also the various workstreams in progress. We need to clarify expectations around delivery and examine the cost and affordability to the Government in key delivery areas. With that in mind, I intend to establish a Ministerial panel with the specific purpose of advising Ministers and outlining future possibilities for a way forward. I hope that what I have provided is a glimpse into the future of what I offer if I am appointed as Minister for Health and Social Services. I admit to not covering work in progress and a range of legislative and policy development areas in the time available, nevertheless these commitments will be considered going forward, particularly in the areas of dementia care, legislation on assisted dying and our development of medicinal cannabis. In conclusion, my priorities will be to open Clinique Pinel, complete the hospital review, pause the Jersey Care Model, bring forward a new public health strategy, bring forward public involvement and secure a workforce fit for the future.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy Wilson. We now move on to questions for up to 20 minutes. The first question is from Deputy Barbara Ward.

10.1.1 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

Please would the nominee for Minister for Health and Social Services provide views on the plans for the new mental health facility at Overdale, its siting, its cost and size suitability?

Deputy K. Wilson:

The provision of services for the mentally ill is close to my heart and I thank the Deputy for raising this issue. For too long we have delayed progress with providing appropriate facilities for people with severe mental illness. As I have mentioned in my speech, one of the priorities will be to expedite the current plans for how we improve the estate in its current arrangement. Obviously the hospital review that will be undertaken includes the development of a new mental health service and it is in that regard that we will bring to the Assembly our proposals for the way in which mental health services and the estate will be provided for within that new envelope of estate design.

10.1.2 Deputy B. Ward:

Would the nominee for Minister for Health and Social Services state what would happen to the present, near to completion, mental health unit attached to Cedar Ward if a new mental health facility is constructed at Overdale? Are we paying twice for the same facility?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I understand that may cause some concern of double running costs. We are a long way off yet before we are in a position to understand what the final outcome of the new mental health inpatient unit would look like. We will continue to develop the existing provision.

10.1.3 Deputy H. Jeune:

There has been no increased financial support for patients to see G.P.s (general practitioners) in over 10 years and the W.H.O. (World Health Organization) considers out-of-pocket expenses, that is citizens paying upfront to see a doctor, a huge contribution to increasing inequalities in our society. What measures will the Deputy take to ensure just managing families and individuals have equitable access to their G.P.?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Thank you. Yes, there has already been some support for families in terms of this payment arrangement but this is a matter for the Minister for Social Security to address and I would be happy to talk more about that on that basis.

10.1.4 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Infertility is classed as a disease by the World Health Organization and affects around one in 6 couples, yet financial support for high level treatment such as I.V.F. (in vitro fertilisation) is severely limited in Jersey. Will the Deputy commit to implementing N.I.C.E. (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidelines for the provision and funding of I.V.F.?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, thank you. The pattern of service available currently has undergone a number of changes over the last couple of years. It has seen a turnaround in staff, it has seen a turnaround in its funding mechanisms, and what I will do is I will commit to review the current arrangements and ensure that we are in a position to at least be compliant with what N.I.C.E. guidance offers in that regard.

[15:30]

10.1.5 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Would the Deputy also agree to look into the possibility of providing formal access to free fertility preservation for cancer patients as soon as possible?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, the answer is yes, I will.

10.1.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In her priorities that would be included she said: “Addressing the workforce issues undermining the care system and ensure that the workforce is well supported and enjoys high morale.” Will she, in undertaking to do something about this area, push for the ethical care charter which has been resting on a shelf for the past 3 years since its acceptance by this body? Will she insist that is now enacted?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, I will certainly have a look at the charter again. I think raising the morale of healthcare staff includes a whole host of approaches and one of the things that is most important is to make sure that the culture at the top of the organisation sets the tone and the standards for how it treats its staff and its workforce. I would certainly want to see some improvements in that area based on the number of concerns people are raising about allegations of bullying and intimidation. If I could just caveat that by saying that there is also concern for the people at the top of the organisation to make sure they are supported as well. I think as part of our new approach to changing the culture, we will have responsibilities as a Council of Ministers, as an Assembly, to also model the appropriate behaviours that we expect of all of our public servants. In that regard, I believe that some of the standards that will be reflected in the ethical charter, but also elsewhere in terms of the code of conduct that professionals are expected to abide by, should be upheld. We should also adopt a zero tolerance to bullying and intimidation in the workplace and I would certainly want to work with the colleagues to be able to strengthen those arrangements so that people can speak out, feel supported and encouraged to do their best work.

10.1.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In the midst of all of those factors that were listed there I am not sure that I heard the Minister would push this particular piece of work because it concerns the terms and conditions under which people are visited in their homes.

Deputy K. Wilson:

I will certainly agree to take a look at it, yes.

10.1.8 Deputy L. Feltham:

I welcome the Deputy’s comments about taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. As a senior union representative, I have to say that some of the most difficult representations that I had to do revolved around bullying within the Health Department. It is certainly something that permeates around that department. I would like to ask the Deputy how confident she is that the current senior leadership team within the Health Department are capable of setting that tone from the top?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Confidence is a highly subjective issue, is it not? One of the things is I would like to understand more broadly about what is leading to staff expressing their concerns and their views and whether it is only as a consequence of the way in which senior leaders in that organisation are behaving. I also think we need to consider how stressful it is to work within a healthcare system and whether or not we have the appropriate measures of support or arrangements of support in place for all staff working in that organisation. It is very important, I think, that we do not get into polarised debates about one member of staff being bullied worse than another. The fact is bullying should not be tolerated - period - wherever. I would just repeat my comments to the Deputy that while we recognise there is an issue at the moment, I will do my utmost, if appointed, to drive a cultural change in the leadership, in the system, in the service so that we start to address the needs of patients, put them at the centre,

and reflect the behaviours and attitudes towards patients in the way that we expect to behave towards ourselves.

10.1.9 Deputy L. Feltham:

Given that zero-tolerance approach to bullying, can I ask the Deputy for her commitment to undertake a review of all of the bullying allegations that are currently live within the department and to reassure us that the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken where there has been found to be bullying within the department, even if that is at senior levels?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, upholding public service values requires me to address those very concerns that are there. I will commit to undertaking a review of that current position and reporting to the Assembly on the outcomes of that.

10.1.10 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

When the U.K. health service was founded by Nye Bevan he said: “Illness is neither an indulgence to which people should have to pay nor an offence for which they should be penalised, but a misfortune, the cost of which should be shared by the community.” Does she recognise those principles in Jersey’s health system?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I think those comments were made about a particular system elsewhere. I think Jersey has its own unique system that we have to frame our own approach to the way we deliver healthcare in the Island. So I think the principles of fairness and equity ring true, which is why I am proposing to bring forward the public health strategy, which will hopefully tackle some of those inequalities that the Deputy alludes to.

10.1.11 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does the candidate believe that healthcare ought to be free at the point of delivery as a basic human right?

Deputy K. Wilson:

In some regards I think that is quite a loaded question. I think that the circumstances of each country have to determine the affordability of healthcare within each of their jurisdictions.

10.1.12 Deputy R. Ward:

One of the U.K. successes is their national cancer strategy which gives specific requirements for outcomes. Can I ask the Minister, is it time that Jersey had a specific cancer strategy for Jersey residents?

Deputy K. Wilson:

What I am intending to do if appointed is review all our strategic frameworks to understand where the gaps are. Certainly what I would want to do is to make sure that the quality of provision is maintained in whatever framework or organisation of service that we deliver for residents in Jersey.

10.1.13 Deputy R. Ward:

May I suggest to the Minister that the first thing that could be done, perhaps tomorrow, is to look at the travel arrangements for those who are having to go off-Island for cancer treatment, in particular for their families? There is a very small group that are accommodated and those on lower incomes and poorer members of our society may well face travelling alone without emotional support because they simply cannot afford to pay for the flights that are booked so late in the day. I ask the Minister to review that tomorrow and change that situation.

Deputy K. Wilson:

I would certainly commit to commencing a review of that. What I can change within 24 hours clearly I think is a tad unrealistic but I would certainly commit to reviewing it.

Deputy R. Ward:

I can clarify there is a policy that has a phrase in it that could do that if it is interpreted differently.

10.1.14 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

My question is in relation to rehabilitation services. It is fair to say that our rehabilitation services in Jersey are not up to scratch, not in the commitment of its staff but in the provision of facilities. Would the candidate commit to having a proper reinstating of Samarès Ward, and where the hospital ends up being, that we have adequate facilities for the long-term rehabilitation of patients?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I do believe that the plans are already underway to return Samarès Ward. I think the Deputy raises a very important question about the concept of rehabilitation care in the Island. We do not see it for people who have profound physical ... or having to make life-changing adaptations as a result of illness. We also see it for people who have experienced mental illness as well. What I would like to do is propose within the new strategy for public health that we broaden the concept of rehabilitation and not just consider this in the context of physical rehabilitation but a much broader rehabilitation around recovery and wellness.

10.1.15 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank the Deputy for her answer. How does she see the provision of A.I. (artificial intelligence) in those rehabilitation services, which she mentioned in her opening speech?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I thank the Deputy for raising this. This is an amazing opportunity to raise the standard of rehabilitation care. Artificial intelligence and assisted technologies offer us a real opportunity to promote further independence for people in their own home and I think I would certainly want to work with the Minister for Economic Development, who has the brief for digital, to expand the provision of digital technology into the health arena.

10.1.16 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I was speaking to a former nurse recently about how we should reduce hospital waiting lists. Her view was that that was far less important than the recruitment of hospital staff. Does the Deputy agree and what is her view on this, please?

Deputy K. Wilson:

It is difficult to comment on one individual perspective but I think the broader question here is that there is an issue with productivity in our health system. There is an issue about the way in which our care staff are working and I do not think that we are in the place, at this moment in time, where we are able to optimise and maximise the full productivity that is possible within our current staffing arrangements. The reason I say that is because some of the working practices may need to be reviewed. We may need to review what people's workstreams are, what their work commitments and responsibilities are, and also make sure that we are targeting the reason why people deliver care and support. Other people have come to me and talked to me about the fact that there are a number of jobs in the healthcare sector that could be done by less qualified individuals but are currently occupied by relatively senior qualified individuals. We do need to take a root and branch review of the way in which work is organised, what kind of productivity we can drive forward and also have a particular emphasis on skilling up and redesigning the workforce so that we can offer a lot more

opportunity for developing new skills and embracing things like the development of technology in healthcare, which we need to prepare our workforce for in the future.

10.1.17 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you to the Deputy for that answer. We know that there are many people in this Island whose lives are being detrimentally impacted upon because they are in need of operations, and we know that there are a lot of people waiting for new joints. Notwithstanding the Deputy's response to my first question, how would she reduce waiting lists and ensure that we are delivering for the public who have paid towards the healthcare that the hospital provides?

Deputy K. Wilson:

One of my first tasks will be to set up a Ministerial review of all of the waiting lists within the hospital. Supplementary to that will be to consider what additional capacity we can organise within the system to reduce those waiting times for patients.

[15:45]

I understand the burden of disease that comes with prolonging the length of time that people access treatment. There are a couple of steps we can take. We can commit to reviewing the waiting list and the prioritisation of that, we can also start to look at what we call waiting list initiatives and combine some of the existing health resources into targeting the reduction in those waiting times. I would also like to examine the way in which we are commissioning our services to see whether or not there is any additional capacity that we can fund through arrangements with other alternative providers.

10.1.18 Deputy T. Coles:

Does the Deputy support protected titles and regulation for the allied care sector to ensure that patients receiving care in the community are receiving care from practitioners that are qualified, maintain continued professional development and with assurances that they are not being misled in the treatment they receive?

Deputy K. Wilson:

The answer to that is, yes, I do. We have a huge task to encourage interest in the work in healthcare and I think whatever it takes to recognise the value and the kudos of a caring facility and have the privilege to work for someone in this way, I would like to support.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy Wilson. I now invite you to leave the Chamber and for Deputy Howell to come back in. I call upon Deputy Howell to speak for up to 10 minutes.

10.2 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Good afternoon, everyone. Throughout my 40 years in Jersey I have been involved professionally with the health service, as a dentist, now retired, and the wife of a G.P. Additionally, I have been a carer for over 15 years and a volunteer for various charities. I am approachable, hardworking, determined, someone who wants to work collaboratively and to bring people together, not afraid to challenge and to make difficult decisions with common sense and a can-do attitude. Jersey is not the N.H.S. I feel strongly that our health service should be led by someone who is not N.H.S. centric. I think it should be led by someone who has been here for quite a while, with a good knowledge of Jersey, who understands our health service and what is going on both in the hospital and in the community. I am standing for Minister for Health and Social Services because I am passionate about wanting to make a positive change, improving patient care. Our wonderful front line staff need to be cherished and empowered to do their jobs. Excellent patient care coupled with kindness and compassion has to be our number one priority in all areas. I want to thank the deputy medical officer of health and all the doctors, nurses, support workers and management for all they have done to keep

us safe during the pandemic, and for the input of so many others. For the vaccination programme and for the front line staff who continue to work under challenging and difficult circumstances. But now it is time to look forward to making improvements within our health service. I will work with the senior management team to understand the current management structure within H.C.S. (Health and Community Services), try to reduce bureaucracy and streamline the organisation so it can be agile, with clinicians being aided rather than impeded in undertaking their roles. At present morale is low and I want this to change. There is evidence that many good staff have left, putting more strain on those remaining and causing stress within the workplace. There is also evidence of decisions which have been made without input from the clinicians involved. This cannot continue. Bullying of any description is totally unacceptable and I want to stamp this out, following procedures which have been laid down. I look forward to a change of culture, where any staff member can raise their concerns without fear of reprisals. To quote Richard Branson: "I have always believed that the way you treat your employees is the way they will look after your customers and people will flourish when they are praised." In our hospital and across our community staffing, levels are of extreme concern and I will do all in my power to make sure that there are proper levels of front line staff, ideally permanent ones. I am acutely aware that there are some essential areas where there are simply not enough staff to provide the services that Jersey folk need. It is imperative to address this. Not only do we need to attract staff, we need to be able to retain them. I will work with other Ministers and with the States Employment Board possibly to try to add a Jersey weighting to their salaries. I am acutely aware that housing for staff and carers is a challenge and would work with the future Minister for Housing and with Andium Homes to address this. Not only do we need to encourage Islanders to think about caring as a vocation, we also need to see if we can attract those from further afield to come to Jersey to help ameliorate the current situation. We need to make sure that the healthcare sector is a happy sector in which to work. Despite recent additional Government spending on mental health services, this investment would seem insufficient. It is now time to further increase funding in this area and it was very good that the future Minister for Treasury and Resources has agreed to this. We need to know when the refurbished Orchard House will be ready to increase mental health support to schools and in the community and make sure there is proper and timely provision for all Islanders who need help. I acknowledge and thank sincerely our Island charities for all the great work they do in regard to mental health and in so many other areas of life in Jersey. We would not manage without them. Primary care is a vital aspect of our care and we actively engage as practitioners and listen to how improvements can be made. One area that could make a huge difference is if there could be better communication between primary and secondary care and secondary and primary care, a joined up I.T. (information technology) system. I think in Estonia they have a digital record that belongs to the patient. Perhaps we could explore something like that here. I would work with the Minister for Social Security to make sure that G.P.s, pharmacists and others are remunerated sufficiently for their work. There is also a desperate requirement to review, with the Ministers of Social Security and Treasury and Resources and others, our long-term care provision. The Island needs clarity on this issue. Public health. I would work with Professor Peter Bradley and his team in public health to make sure that we are doing everything possible for Islanders in terms of public health and public health initiatives. While they are currently within the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department, it would be important to understand what they are doing and work together. The Jersey Care Model, this is an aspiration that is very difficult for many of us to understand. No one can quite fathom it out. I will need to find out the facts, i.e. what exactly has been spent and what have the outcomes been. It is questionable that we will ever have sufficient staff to deliver such a programme. It could be that money would be better spent on direct employment of front line staff to deliver actual patient care. So what would I do in my first 100 days? I would work collaboratively as part of a team which will be open, transparent and accountable, and be available to listen to all staff. COVID permitting, I would like to reopen the front door of the General Hospital and I would like to establish an office there on the ground floor. I would meet on a one-to-one basis with senior management to establish the facts and work to visit as many departments as

possible, with an Assistant Minister, to understand the issues and the needs of staff and implement these, to ensure that our front line staff are properly supported and empowered to do their jobs. Similarly, I would need to meet up with primary care providers and charities. I would work with the States Employment Board and the human resources team to try to ensure sufficient front line staff and carers. I would like to reopen Samarès Ward. I would like to establish when the refurbished Orchard House will be ready, increase mental health support within schools and community and make sure that there is proper timely provision for all Islanders who need help. I would work with the Minister for Infrastructure to revisit the plans. Our new hospital needs to be properly future-proofed and provide all the services and facilities that we need. Proposals must include a workforce plan and provide the best value for money so that we can have the very best overall health service we can afford.

[16:00]

In summary, I believe it is time for a new start, time to get health back on track, time to really look after our front line staff so that they are happy in their work and empowered to do their jobs providing excellent, safe patient care for Islanders, time for Jersey to have a health service we can all be proud of. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move on to questions and the first question is from Deputy Barbara Ward.

10.2.1 Deputy B. Ward:

Just from an equity point of view I wanted to ask both candidates the same question. Please would the nominee for Minister for Health and Social Services provide views on the plans for the new mental health facility at Overdale, its siting, cost, size, suitability?

Deputy A. Howell:

The new mental health facility at the top of Overdale has only 30 beds. It has 15 beds for males and 15 beds for females and there is no proper provision for teenagers. It is placed next to a multi-storey carpark very close to a cliff edge and close to a road and there is very little outside space. It is something I think that really needs to be readdressed because these plans are not right. I do not think there is any place for a mother who has got really severe post-natal depression but mostly I am very worried because there is no proper provision for teenagers and young people who may be having very severe mental problems and they need a proper place, a really good place, and the plans as they currently stand are shocking, to be frank. They are single rooms, there is no proper area for our patients, for our Islanders to go. They are not good plans and it is something we really need to address.

10.2.2 Deputy B. Ward:

Would the nominee for Minister for Health and Social Services state what would happen to the present, or near-to completion, mental health unit attached to Cedar Ward if a new mental health facility is constructed at Overdale? Obviously we are going to be spending twice.

Deputy A. Howell:

I am finding it very hard to reconcile the fact that we are refurbishing Orchard House to make it a really good facility and yet where having done that we are apparently going to bulldoze it down after we have built not a very satisfactory building up at Overdale. So, I am not sure what the previous Government have agreed about the St. Saviour site. When I spoke to the previous Chief Minister at length on the day of the hustings he said that no contracts had been signed, he did not believe any contracts had been signed, but he did not know what handshakes had been done and I was quite shocked at that. So I think we really need to investigate what has gone on.

10.2.3 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Infertility is classed as a disease by the World Health Organization and affects around one in 6 couples yet financial support for high-level treatment such as I.V.F. is severely lacking here in Jersey. Will the Deputy commit to implementing N.I.C.E. guidelines for the provision and funding of I.V.F.?

Deputy A. Howell:

I would absolutely agree to doing all I can to support the couples who are having problems with infertility. I think it is at least one in 12, possibly higher, and it is a real tragedy for these couples because they very, very much want to have a child. I know when I had one child and I was really hoping for another, and it was taking me a very long time and it puts such a pressure on you because you really want to. I really appreciate this and I think we should be doing all we can to support couples who would dearly like to have a child.

10.2.4 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Thank you for the Deputy's answer. It is pretty worthy of note as we talk a lot about mental health, about the impact that such situations can have on people's mental health. As a supplementary, would the Deputy agree to look into the possibility of providing formal access to free fertility preservation for cancer patients as soon as possible?

Deputy A. Howell:

Yes, I certainly would, Deputy Stephenson. I remember someone I knew very closely had prostate cancer ... no, had a cancer in his testes and he had radiotherapy and we were very worried that perhaps he should at that time have frozen his sperm but I think it is an issue that is really important. That patients have to go through cancer treatment is a real tragedy but if they in future would like to have a family I think we should give them every opportunity we can to be able to have a family.

10.2.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Very confused by 2 Deputy Wards, I am sure. I too will ask the same question of the candidate. One of the U.K. positives is their national cancer strategy. I would like to ask the candidate: does she feel it is time for a Jersey cancer strategy that specifically deals with the treatment needed for those suffering from cancer?

Deputy A. Howell:

Sorry, Deputy Ward, do you mean the cancer to be treated within the guidelines to be seen within 2 weeks?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that sort of thing that is in the cancer strategy in the U.K.

Deputy A. Howell:

Yes, I think we should be addressing this in Jersey because we should not be lagging behind the U.K. in this area. It is a really important area that if anyone has suspected cancer that they can receive treatment in a timely fashion and we should do all we can to do that.

10.2.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the candidate, would she commit to within her first 100 days, which I would suggest within the first day, to look at the policy on travel for those receiving treatment in the U.K. particularly for family? Because the way we are now, those on low incomes in particular may simply not be able to afford to travel with their loved ones in order to support them due to the very strict nature of it, although there is a clause in there which could be used to enable them to. So can I ask the candidate for Minister if she would commit to that?

Deputy A. Howell:

Yes, I certainly would, Deputy Ward, because I think everyone needs to have someone with them when they go across to the U.K. for cancer treatment. I do know of some cases where Macmillan Cancer have been very generous, and Cancer Relief, in providing extra funding for families. I think there have also been families who have been helped by, was it CLIC Sargent, at one time who are very kind, who did support. I think we need to look at the travel policies so that no one is left to go alone to the U.K.

10.2.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

When it comes to the philosophy of providing healthcare, could I ask the candidate if she agrees with the following quote: “Illness is neither an indulgence for which people should have to pay nor an offence for which they should be penalised but a misfortune, the cost of which should be shared by the community”?

Deputy A. Howell:

I do agree that that is a very good quote. I think all our hospital treatment in Jersey is free. I think thanks to Deputy Southern’s proposition there is now a Health Access Scheme and I think that those on very low incomes at the moment, children receive care free. I think people on the Pension Plus scheme and others receive much reduced care, they do not have to pay so much. I think perhaps we should not for everybody make it completely free though because if you make something completely free people probably do not value it quite so much. Perhaps it is good that if you have to pay a certain amount, then you have a certain sort of value of what you are getting because we cannot provide everything for free. I think we are jolly lucky in this Island at the moment but I think there are some people who need probably more help but we cannot provide everything for free.

10.2.8 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Is that not what taxes are for? That is how we pay for our healthcare treatment surely so that it does not become a burden in that time of need where all sorts of other things are going through our minds. So, the supplementary question I was going to ask her is: does she agree with the principle that was established in fact by the person who originally said that quote I just put to her., which was Aneurin Bevan, that healthcare is a basic human right and ought to be free at the point of delivery?

Deputy A. Howell:

I think we are very lucky that our health system does provide care free in the hospital, we have all our prescriptions free, we have our cancer treatment free. There is much we do get from our taxes but I think we perhaps all have to ... unless we are going to increase the taxes we have to make some balances. If people can pay something then I think that is reasonable but I would never want to feel that people could not go to have the care they need because of financial reasons.

10.2.9 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In addressing the workforce issues undermined in the care system, ensuring the workforce is well supported and enjoys high morale would be boosted by getting behind the ethical care charter which has been passed by the States but has sat on the shelf for 3 years and not enacted, does the applicant believe that that is the case?

Deputy A. Howell:

I am very sorry, Deputy Southern, I am not aware of your ethical care ... did you propose that?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Indeed, I did.

Deputy A. Howell:

I would have to look into that with my apologies. Thank you.

10.2.10 Deputy L. Feltham:

The candidate referenced bullying and wanting to stop bullying within the department. As a senior union representative I have to let the candidate know that some of the most difficult representations I did were with regard to bullying in the Health Department. Would the candidate commit to taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and if so, does she have confidence that the senior management team within the department would be able to lead that from the top?

Deputy A. Howell:

Thank you for your question, Deputy Feltham. I think we should have zero tolerance of bullying. I think at the moment and in the past few years in the hospital it has been very, very bad for a large number of personnel. Although there is a bullying policy within the States, unfortunately you have to report to your line manager and I do not know whether that is ... so although it says we have a policy I do not think it is working according to what it says on the tin. I am not convinced at the moment, I would have to work with the management, but I am not convinced that they would be able to do this. I think it is something we have to address with them but I am struggling at the moment. I would have to work with them but I have reports of bullying throughout the health service.

10.2.11 Deputy L. Feltham:

Like the candidate, I am also aware of the reports of bullying within the service and also some live cases that have been under investigation. Where bullying has been found to have happened within the department, would the candidate ensure that the appropriate disciplinary processes are followed even if that means that it is against some of the more senior staff?

Deputy A. Howell:

Absolutely, I will promise to do that. It is one of the reasons that I have stood for election because of the way the staff in our Health Department have been treated over the last few years, and that is why I will do all in my power to stop what has been happening and to ameliorate the situation because it is not right.

10.2.12 Deputy T. Coles:

Does the Deputy support protected titles and regulations for the allied care sector to ensure that all patients receiving care in the community are receiving this care from a practitioner that is qualified and maintains continued professional development requirements with the assurance that they are not being misled in the treatment that they receive?

[16:15]

Deputy A. Howell:

Yes, I do certainly.

10.2.13 Deputy T. Coles:

Does the candidate for Minister support that these allied care professionals should belong to a governing body as a minimum requirement?

Deputy A. Howell:

Yes.

10.2.14 Deputy M. Tadier:

The candidate spoke about a potential, I will call it an “uplift” for retaining and recruiting staff into the Island. Could she provide more clarity about what that means, what kind of premium are we talking and how will it be funded, more crucially?

Deputy A. Howell:

It was just that at the moment I am aware there is something called a “London weighting” for London. When we first came to the Island in 1982 there was a differential in Jersey for the health professionals. The doctors and nurses received an increment above the U.K. which meant that they wanted to come to Jersey and it made it an attractive place to come to work, but I would have to work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to see how it could be funded. But I think it may be something that we need to look at because we have got to be able to attract staff and retain them for the Island. Unless we have our really good staff we will not have a health service. There is no good talking about building a hospital if we have not got the staff to run it and we have got to do that.

10.2.15 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the candidate agree that one of the overriding expenses for anyone in Jersey, but particularly for working staff, are the accommodation costs? Does she think that is an area that needs to be seriously addressed and if so how?

Deputy A. Howell:

I really do think it is an issue. When my son and daughter came to work here as junior doctors they were able to live in Westaway Court and they were very good bedsits. For some reason those have been lying empty since 2017 and that was very good accommodation for our doctors and nurses. It was in town, it was very close to the hospital, they had a really good time. They could have barbeques, they had all the park, it was great, so it is something that we now need to address.

10.2.16 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I was speaking to a former nurse recently and their view was that the recruitment of staff to the hospital was more important than reducing hospital waiting lists. What is the Deputy’s view of this conundrum?

Deputy A. Howell:

I think at the moment it is a conundrum, but unless we have the staff we cannot provide the care, so we have to look after the staff first. Unfortunately, at the moment I think there is a real shortage of staff within the theatres so that even if we had the beds the operations cannot take place because there are insufficient staff within the theatres. We have to rectify, we have to be able to try to get staff to come and work in our theatres and provide the care. When we have the staff then we can provide everything so the staff is key.

10.2.17 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I believe I heard the Deputy say in her opening remarks that patient care is her number one priority: “Improving patient care, excellent patient care” was her number one priority. If that is the case, how would she prioritise a reduction in waiting lists for elective surgery particularly for those who require joint replacements and whose quality of life is clearly being affected by the delay in those operations?

Deputy A. Howell:

The other day - this is a true story - I took one of our Trinity residents to the X-ray Department for an X-ray on their hip. She came out, the report was that she needed to have an operation for a new hip and on the drive home she showed me a letter. Her letter said that she did need a new hip but

unfortunately she could not even be placed on the waiting list, so there is a waiting list for the waiting list. There is a lot to sort out and we have to do it.

10.2.18 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am not sure that the Deputy answered my question. Am I permitted to repeat it, please, which was how would she prioritise the reduction in the waiting list?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, how would you prioritise the reduction in the waiting list?

Deputy A. Howell:

Well first of all we need to have the staff in the theatres, then we have to have the beds. Then we have to be able to work out who is in the most severe pain, but that is very, very difficult, and then we have just got to try perhaps to get extra orthopaedic staff to come over to cut down the waiting list, to look after some of the patients who are so desperately in need. It is just awful that people are having to wait such a long time in pain.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That concludes the questions so I invite Deputy Wilson to return. Now both candidates have spoken and answered questions, we now move to the vote using the electronic voting system. Any Member wishing to vote for Deputy Wilson should press the P button; any Member wishing to vote for Deputy Howell should press the C button. Members wishing to abstain may press the A button as usual. As regards Members voting remotely, you can vote pour if you wish for Deputy Wilson, contre for Deputy Howell or simply write the name of the person you wish to vote for in the chat. I will ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the successful candidate is Deputy Wilson who received 27 votes, there were 9 votes for Deputy Howell and 12 abstentions. **[Approbation]**

Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement: 27		Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: 9		Abstain: 12
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of St. Brelade		Connétable of St. Lawrence
Connétable of St. Peter		Connétable of Trinity		Deputy G.P. Southern
Connétable of St. John		Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy M. Tadier
Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of Grouville		Deputy R.J. Ward
Deputy C.F. Labey		Connétable of St. Ouen		Deputy C.S. Alves
Deputy S.G. Luce		Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy S.Y. Mézec
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		Connétable of St. Saviour		Deputy T.A. Coles
Deputy K.F. Morel		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		Deputy B.B.de S.V.M. Porée
Deputy S.M. Ahier		Deputy B. Ward		Deputy M.R. Scott
Deputy I. Gardiner				Deputy C.D. Curtis
Deputy I.J. Gorst				Deputy L.V. Feltham
Deputy L.F. Farnham				Deputy R.S. Kovacs
Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf				

Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache				
Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

The Greffier of the States:

So those voting for Deputy Howell: the Connétables of St. Brelade, Trinity, St. Martin, Grouville, St. Ouen, St. Mary and St. Saviour, Deputy Le Hegarat and Deputy Barbara Ward. Those abstaining in the Chamber: the Connétable of St. Lawrence and Deputies Southern, Tadier, Rob Ward, Mézec, Coles, Porée, Curtis, Feltham and Kovacs. Deputy Alves and Deputy Scott also abstained.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can we have those for Deputy Wilson as well, please?

The Greffier of the States:

Those voting for Deputy Wilson: the Connétables of St. Helier, St. Peter and St. John, Deputies Labey, Luce, Doublet, Morel, Farnham, Bailhache, Ahier, Gardiner, Gorst, Moore, Ozouf, Warr, Miles, Renouf, Rose Binet, Jeune, Tom Binet, Ferey, Curtis, Wilson, Stephenson, Andrews and in the chat Deputy Millar and the Connétable of St. Clement.

11. The Minister for International Development

The Deputy Bailiff:

The Assembly must now appoint a Minister for International Development. Deputy Moore, would you like to make your nomination?

Deputy K. L. Moore:

Indeed I would and I nominate Deputy Labey.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations?

11.1 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin:

I am delighted to have been nominated as Minister for International Development and I would like to take a few minutes to explain why I think the role is so important for Jersey and what you can expect from me should I be selected. First, in appointing a Minister for International Development

Jersey sends out a powerful signal around the world. It says we are serious about our commitment to others and about being a good global citizen. It demonstrates that as a jurisdiction conducting business on the international stage we are also prepared to meet our international obligations particularly germane, as we ourselves received overseas aid within living memory. Jersey's long-term future depends heavily on several things: our reputation, the international links we forge with institutions like the U.N. (United Nations) and our identity beyond being a blue-chip offshore finance centre. It is important to state that while our aid programme helps millions of the poorest people every year it also helps us. Second, the post of Minister for International Development helps improve the effectiveness of our aid. We can co-ordinate better with target countries, we can pick up the phone and speak directly to decision-makers and we can have a genuine influence on the policies of developing countries and international organisations. Third, the role of Minister increases the accountability of Jersey's aid. We have a dual responsibility. The first is to ensure every pound we spend has the greatest possible impact on those we are trying to help and, secondly, we have an equal responsibility to demonstrate that to the taxpayer without whom none of this would be happening. It means that there are mechanisms to hold the Minister to account through questions in the States and through Scrutiny.

[16:30]

Being connected upwards to the States Assembly and downwards to a dedicated chief officer is exactly the restoration of accountability and control which the new Chief Minister so rightly pledged to you and which was lost in most departments in recent times. Finally, having a Minister improves co-ordination with other policy areas. This is vital for cohesive, coherent and effective government. Jersey's Overseas Aid programme is well served by its expert independent commission but we also need to work closely with other departments. So I hope you will agree that having a dedicated Minister is necessary to effectively operate the department and give optimum value for Jersey. But why should it be me and what would I like to achieve over the next 4 years? Well I am passionate about overseas aid, about Jersey's international identity and about changing the narrative. I am keen to see us promote all of our strengths on the world stage and carve out a strong, distinct international profile in a post-Brexit era, which I believe is absolutely vital for our future. Since setting up the International Development Office in 2018 I have acquired significant experience in development and humanitarian issues and in representing the Island on the international stage. I also humbly submit that I have an excellent track record of delivery and hard work, not only at Parish and Island levels, but internationally too. On my watch Jersey Overseas Aid has quietly become one of the Island's big success stories, vastly improving our reach, our impact, our accountability and the respect in which we are held. I therefore think I am not only the right choice to continue driving this success, I am also the logical one. There is absolutely no doubt that over the past 2½ years our work has been frustrating and has been disrupted or delayed and it has delayed many of our longer-term plans and programmes. However, we used the time constructively to continue our back office reforms, securing a first-ever perfect internal audit score but, far more importantly, we responded really well to the global crises like COVID and the Ukraine. I would now like the opportunity to make up for that lost time and to build on our notable successes. So finally, my programme for the next 4 years. I should point out that there are 5 other J.O.A. (Jerseys Overseas Aid) commissioners which help make the decisions with me and this independence and expertise has been one of our biggest influences on our success but, if elected, the programme I will drive forward will look like this. We will continue to specialise our aid in 3 thematic areas where Jersey adds real value and where we can further develop our reputation. These are: dairy, financial services for the poor and conservation. Second, we will continue to respond to global crises, many of which affect us all from COVID to the climate emergency, from Ukraine to the rapidly-developing global food crisis. Third, I want to support Jersey in developing its offering in sustainable finance, impact investment and philanthropy. We have networks across Africa, we work with banks and microfinance organisations in many countries and we help set world bank policy in financial inclusion. This is an exciting prospect for the whole Island

and is potentially one of the fastest growing economic sectors and our overseas aid programme adds expertise, contacts and success stories. Fourth, I will push to continue to tie our aid to the size of our economy. We first did this in 2020 reversing several years of decline and, I have to say, embarrassment in our aid budget by linking it to G.V.A. (gross value added) set at a rate that is proportionate and affordable, so if our economy shrinks so does our aid budget and vice versa. Finally, I want to expand the opportunities we offer for Islanders to get involved. On my watch the amount we give Jersey charities has increased year on year. We have also developed bursary schemes, annual internship programmes and a 2-year work placement for junior professionals with the United Nations. Additionally, we have increased the opportunities for volunteering overseas although, as previously stated, these were put on hold for 2 years because of the pandemic. I strongly believe that helping others is part of our national identity whether it is our cows, our finance industry or our expertise in a wide range of other areas and we should feel enormously proud of what we are achieving. I am certainly proud of the work of Jersey Overseas Aid and the volunteers and the professional staff who serve it with such dedication. It would be a huge honour if I am allowed to continue to lead this life-changing and life-saving work on Jersey's behalf. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move to questions. The first question is from Deputy Jeune.

11.1.1 Deputy H. Jeune:

Which of the Busan development effectiveness principles does the Deputy prioritise and why?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I am not familiar with that; the Deputy has some idea of that, I know. I have set out my immediate priorities in my speech and that is what I am going to pursue but maybe she can enlighten me and I can consider it.

11.1.2 Deputy H. Jeune:

Yes, internationally all donors spend their aid money under the Busan development effectiveness principles. There are 4 key ones and they should all be prioritised equally but I would bring out the one about transparency. I would like to ask if the Deputy would commit to signing up to the I.A.T.I. (International Aid Transparency Initiative) to support the States Assembly and the general public to have real-time access to understanding where and how our aid funds are put? Because the last report that we can find around Jersey Overseas Aid is 2020 so it is very difficult to see where the money is going.

Deputy C.F. Labey:

We report to the States Assembly and this is why we became a Ministry. We set up an office so I can be questioned and we face scrutiny each time, so there is far more transparency than before when we just operated as a commission. The real-time access, that would very much depend on the costs of the I.T. systems that we would have to put in but we are, I believe, fully transparent. We have lodged the 2021 accounts so I am a little surprised she is saying the 2020 are the only ones available - but I can certainly look into that - but we have certainly done them so I am sure they are in the system. We like to operate in a very open and transparent manner but what she is suggesting I suspect will cost money and if we spend huge amounts of money on I.T. systems, then that is less for where we would really like to spend it, and that is progressing the programmes and in emergency aid.

11.1.3 Deputy R. Kovacs:

Given the cost-of-living crisis and the future pressures on government spending, how will the Minister designate protect overseas aid spending?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

As I alluded to in my 4 aims, I would like to link our budget to G.V.A., as she may know that the aim, the U.N. aim, is 0.7 per cent of our G.V.A. We at the moment reached 0.27 per cent; the O.E.C.D. average is 0.32 per cent. So our aim is to link our budget to G.V.A. which would secure it and then, increase it by 0.01 per cent year on year so that we at least achieve the O.E.C.D. norms.

11.1.4 Deputy R. Kovacs:

Does the Minister designate feel she will have support for this across the Council of Ministers?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Yes, I would certainly like to think so because I think the work that we are doing now, after significant reforms that were made, is now playing as well to Jersey's strengths. I think that linking it to G.V.A., setting it to G.V.A. like we have for culture. The States Assembly agreed 1 per cent of G.V.A. to culture because there are certain things that tend to fall to the bottom of the pile each time, but linking them to G.V.A. ensures that they do not.

11.1.5 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Given that there is talk at the moment about shifting parts of some Ministerial portfolios and the establishment of junior Ministries as opposed to Assistant Ministers as we have had up until now, will the candidate inform the Assembly what discussions, if any, she has had with the Chief Minister-designate to determine where the International Development portfolio will sit in future?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

At this stage, no, I have not had any discussions. I fully expect that it will be under consideration as to whether it should remain in the Chief Executive's portfolio, as it is now, or whether it could come under the External Relations umbrella, but that is for future discussions. They have not taken place as yet.

11.1.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does the candidate have a preference on either of those because there seems to be some obvious synergies with the External Relations portfolio?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Yes, there are but I have always been very clear that aid and trade should be separate. They can come under the same umbrella but aid and trade should keep their own distance, albeit could be under the one department, because if aid is mixed with trade then there can be compromises and pressures brought to bear with where our aid should be spent. I should also say at this point that the aid budget is cared for by the Commission, the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission, and that is made up of 3 States Members and 3 non-States Members. So we try to retain the apolitical stance when we look at projects and where we should be spending our funds.

11.1.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am happy to keep going if it is helpful. At the risk of considering aid and trade together, does the candidate think that there is an inconsistency in the approach of the work that she with her portfolio is doing to help alleviate poverty around the world and assist those who have been affected by war, with the fact that previous Ministers for External Relations have, as I referred to earlier in this sitting, provided positive P.R. for members of those regimes that are often to blame for some of the disruption that happens in certain regions in the world?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Which is why it is imperative that there are 2 different Ministers and there is a clear separation between the 2, albeit for the sake of ease, that they are both outward-facing portfolios.

[16:45]

So, as the Deputy alluded to, it makes sense to put them under one umbrella rather than have International Development under the Chief Minister's Department but that is a discussion for another day, I feel.

11.1.8 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think we can have the discussion today, that is the purpose of this question time. Is the Minister designate suggesting that those 2 portfolios be kept separate to maintain no problem with that inconsistency between one providing positive P.R. for these human rights abusers and warmongers in some countries while on the other hand Jersey can continue to do, and rightly feel very proud of, the positive work it does through overseas aid? Is it not the case that if we want a consistent approach we should consider these 2 matters together and perhaps re-evaluate our approach on the former?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Yes, well, as the Minister for External Relations designate said this morning, with these regimes and countries that he is alluding to, it is good to have a dialogue with them, have a diplomatic dialogue. We might not agree with them, well, personally, I do not agree with them - but to block them out is not the best thing, it is good to have diplomatic dialogue with them. Aid must be kept separate from them which is why it is imperative that there is, as I alluded to, a separate Minister for that particular role; if he would like to put his own opinion on. As I said, they come under the umbrella of the outward-facing portfolios, so that is the synergy between them.

11.1.9 Deputy M. Scott:

I am aware of what the Deputy said about not wanting to confuse aid and trade; I am conscious that the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission has funded Islanders to go out overseas to assist refugees. I wonder if there could be opportunity to bring refugees over here to help improve matters for them, train them and, dare I say, even contribute to the economy for a bit. Has that ever been explored and is it appropriate?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Offering refugees a home over here is entirely appropriate but a lot of people look to Jersey Overseas Aid for this because we deal with refugees, as the Deputy has just said. We deal with refugees overseas as the name suggests. In recent times we have contributed £6.1 million to their plight in various jurisdictions and we continue to work with them. Our U.N. placements that we offer local people, and we are going to do one a year hereon in, we have got local people in refugee camps working on the front line as another contribution to their plight. But bringing refugees over here is something for the States Assembly to decide but rather than look to Jersey Overseas Aid International Development I would suggest that the first port of call is External Relations and Home Affairs for the visas but, more importantly, our housing, our mental health care, our education, because our facilities and support mechanisms have got to be in place to cater for refugees. If they come over here they have got to be welcome.

11.1.10 Deputy M. Scott:

Can we broaden this because I was not just meaning refugees, perhaps anybody who might benefit from even seasonal work in the Island in terms of expanding the assistance that we give to people who are from poorer countries who perhaps it might be regarded as an opportunity?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Well, yes, bringing people over here to work is an opportunity but, as I said, we have got to ensure our healthcare, education, housing and mental health in the case of refugees because many of them have been through the most horrendous experiences and will need support. But what the Deputy is talking about, it sounds like casual labour that we do not have.

11.1.11 Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Minister designate has talked about developing the Island's identity through international development, I was just wondering if she could explain to the Assembly or give a few examples of how she believes international development, the work of international development, has helped develop the Island's identity.

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Well I think one of our flagship industries is obviously the finance industry; we play on the international stage. We also play on the international stage with digital and many other industries from entrepreneurs, et cetera, so it would be inconceivable that we take the benefits of trading on the international stage and not adhere to our international obligations, so I think that we have got to demonstrate that we are a good global citizen and the work that we are doing. But one of our flagship programmes is the dairy programme and that is, in the countries that we have chosen to be in in Africa, literally changing milk yields in the countries that we are in which is phenomenal. We have also got microfinance programmes whereby the poor can access microfinance, microloans and set up their own businesses so, again, we are using our expertise in the finance industry to help to add value to the grants that we give.

11.1.12 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Following on from the answer she gave previously about the support given for refugees, of course I am aware of the fantastic support that the Overseas Aid Commission provides to the Humanitarian Fund in Yemen. Yemen of course is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world right now and it is a crisis which is exacerbated by the intervention from the Saudi dictatorship next door, a country which previous Governments in Jersey have provided positive P.R. So, would this Ministerial candidate accept that while we may be doing great work on the one hand by providing positive P.R. to that horrendous dictatorship in Saudi Arabia, we are doing bad work? If she would not like to say that that ought to be part of our public diplomatic efforts, would she at least commit as a seat around the table in the Council of Ministers to be speaking against the Government taking action which provides positive P.R. to the representatives of these regimes which are ultimately making her work harder?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Yes, indeed, because as Minister for International Development I speak for the work that we are doing and we have given £2.4 million to Yemen and the plight of the refugees there in recent times. So, I would not like us to be trading with ... or certainly not trading or, as he says, creating P.R. for horrendous regimes, but I would not like to be doing business with them and I would be speaking out against that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any more questions for Deputy Labey? If not then I can confirm that Deputy Labey has been selected for appointment as Minister for International Development. **[Approbation]**

12. The Minister for Social Security

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now move on to the selection of Minister for Social Security. Deputy Moore, would you like to make a nomination?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Last but certainly not least, I would like to nominate Deputy Millar.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is the nomination seconded? **[Seconded]** Are there any other nominations? Deputy Millar, you may now speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

Firstly, I would like to thank the Chief Minister designate for nominating me for the role. I would also like to thank the parishioners of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity for electing me as one of their Deputies. As many of you do not know me well I will begin ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

We cannot hear everything you are saying, we can only hear sort of two-thirds of what you are saying.

Deputy E. Millar:

I will bring the phone a bit further forward. I will begin by giving a little background ... is that better?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, a bit better.

Deputy E. Millar:

I have spent 35 years working for financial services, 26 of them in Jersey. I am director of the R.B.S. (Royal Bank of Scotland) NatWest International Group and a partner of Mourant du Feu & Jeune. For the last 7 years I was the Viscount and have worked in the public sector and have responsibility for public funds as the accountable officer of the department. Some of you may be thinking: "So what do you know about how difficult life is for some people in the Island?" I spent 3 years as the deputy chair of the Income Support Medical Appeal Tribunal. This tribunal allows people to appeal against decisions of the department in relation to the impairment component and at that time often related to the removal of carers' allowance or to benefits for young people and children. It was clear how badly those changes were going to affect people and the stress they caused. It was also clear to me that the system does not work for everyone. As Viscount I was delegate for a number of clients who received benefits and, in particular, long-term care. I have seen first-hand how difficult that benefit can be to navigate and to understand, particularly where the person's circumstances are unusual. For this reason my manifesto said: "I will support initiatives to ensure consistent and reliable social and personal care to those who need it." This relates particularly to the elderly but to all people who need this type of care. It means ensuring both funding and people are available. I have spoken to a number of charities who work to alleviate poverty and of course people have told me on their doorstep about the impact of the cost of living on them. In the last few days someone has phoned me to talk about the complexity of our benefit system and how long it is taking for awards to be made and for people to receive payments. There is no question that there are people in this Island who are worried about whether they can continue to pay for their day-to-day living costs and about the debts they are incurring. Social Security with its remit of collecting contributions and paying pensions and benefits among other things touches all our lives and we must make sure that all those touchpoints are handled respectfully, accurately and efficiently. They should also be handled in a timely manner. Our goal in Social Security and across Government should be to get it right first time. Too often we do not seem to do that. If appointed as Minister for Social Security, I will support customer and local services in their ongoing work to ensure that Islanders can access the help they need, including by payment of benefits at times of crisis in their life or simply to meet the increasing cost of day-to-day

living. We need to keep our benefits and the criteria under which they can be claimed under review, particularly if the economy contracts, as has been forecast in the U.K. and elsewhere. I noted the Minister for Treasury and Resources' comments about the minimum wage and the living wage this morning and agree with him. We must work on getting claims processed faster, so that money reaches people's pockets quickly. It would be a bold, and possibly optimistic, ambition to say that we should aim to eradicate the need for foodbanks and charity, but it is an ambition I believe we should adopt and we should work with charities who provide foodbanks and to find alternative solutions. During our hustings we were told by the outgoing Chief Minister that there was money in the budget from this year to provide hot meals for every child, and that would be rolled out on a phased basis from this year. I would like to see that rollout happening in the fastest possible timescale. No child in Jersey should go without food and we must work to alleviate child poverty in the Island. One responsibility of the Minister for Social Security is to help people get back to work, because it seems clear that work is good for people. It gives them structure and purpose. Ideally, we should aim to help people stay in work in the first place. I will continue the ongoing reviews of incapacity benefits to enable people to keep working to some degree, rather than being signed off sick on a long-term basis, with adjustments for any health issues they are facing.

[17:00]

I will also be asking the Minister for Health and Social Services to develop a strategy for women's health, to avoid women having to leave work or curtail their career because of health conditions that are not properly understood, diagnosed or treated. It is good that we have now learned about the issues caused by menopause and that women's health starts at 12, and not 50. We should also aim to provide lifelong education and training that enables people to find work as school leavers, or to change careers as adults. In my manifesto I said that I believe that education, housing, healthcare, and open spaces should be accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, age or disability. With this in mind I will aim to continue work to develop further the disability, social inclusion and diversity policy. We need a strategy that seeks to remove barriers and empowers people with disabilities to achieve their potential and feel that they are valued members of our society. I also want to review the way we communicate with Islanders, to ensure that communications are clear, accurate and accessible. I have heard that our communications can be a source of great stress and are often seen as heavy handed. An example of this is the recent demands for small business owners to read the report that they had received during the pandemic. This has been the cause of enormous despair and stress to some people. They have been told that the problem now is that there is no appeal process. That seems to me like a red herring. If something is wrong, we should fix it. I would like us to work towards being a service that listens to people so that we can provide the help they need in an efficient and sensible way. It is important of course that we continue to support older Islanders by payment of adequate pensions and benefits and ensure that there are arrangements for domiciliary care to enable them to remain in their homes. As part of that long-term objective of responding to the challenges of an ageing population I will continue the existing work into development of workplace and personal pensions, as well as tax efficient savings products to help Islanders plan and prepare for their own retirement. With longer lifespans, a government pension can do little more than fund the necessities. We need to encourage people where possible to save for their own retirement to enable them to have a good quality of life in their older years. We have a financial services sector that competes globally. We need to work with them to provide services here to enable Islanders to get the best for their money. I will also investigate the use of the Health Insurance Fund to provide an affordable critical illness scheme for the self-employed and small businesses. I would also like to work with the Minister for Financial Services to ensure that the work that is already underway to regulate the provision of consumer credit continues at pace. The fact that we do not regulate the sector has been a bugbear of mine for a long time. At present, our financial services laws protect people, money and investment, but not the most financially vulnerable, the people who have to borrow. We must ensure that anyone who does borrow is treated fairly and is not mis-sold credit

products that they cannot ultimately afford. It is important, however, that people recognise their own obligations to the Island. We should explain to the self-employed and businesses why we need them to pay contributions. It is not an opt out. People need to understand what they are being asked to pay, how it is being calculated and why. The move to monthly payments may facilitate contribution payments but we should ensure that failure to pay is addressed quickly and long before people have amassed thousands of pounds of unpaid contributions that they will struggle to pay while keeping their businesses afloat. We also need to ensure that Government processes work for businesses. Many small businesses are struggling to navigate the new combined system with I.T.I.S. (income tax instalment scheme). There have been high profile cases in the last year or so of benefit fraud and everyone should understand that fraudulent claims will not be tolerated. Underlying all these objectives is prudent management of the Social Security Fund, Health Insurance Fund and long-term care fund is paramount. If necessary, following the actuarial reviews of those funds that have been scheduled, I will take action to ensure that they remain sustainable now and in the long term. I am now happy to take your questions.

12.1.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does the candidate believe that the upper earnings cap on social security contributions is regressive and unfair?

Deputy E. Millar:

I am aware that this is a matter of grave concern, Deputy Mézec. I am afraid I simply do not have enough information about what the impact of removal of that cap would be, what the implications would be for the income that would be derived, nor for the individuals who would suffer some impact as a consequence. I am afraid I am not able to give you any fuller answer to that question.

12.1.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I guess it was more of a question on principle rather than the practicalities, which I think surely she is capable of giving an answer to, because it is about the fairness of having super high earners, or the employers of super high earners, getting a tax break that nobody else is eligible for, even when those, you would have thought, would be the instances where they were most able to pay rather than the least able to pay. Can she not give a view on principle whether she thinks that tax breaks that only benefit super highest earners in Jersey are fair?

Deputy E. Millar:

I am not sure it is accurate to say that a cap is necessarily unfair. There comes a point where taxing people too heavily, even if they are super earners, becomes unfair, particularly when those people are unlikely to ever claim the benefits. As I say, I need to understand the whole issue more but I reserve my position on the fairness or otherwise of caps, because they can be unfair and the notion that we can simply keep squeezing the rich until the pips squeak and that that is fair needs some consideration.

12.1.3 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

My question relates to the Discrimination Law Since 2014 we have had progressive legislation that started with the protected characteristic of race and all the way up to disability. Now we have a suite of legislation that is akin to the U.K. Equality Act, with one notable exception, which is the protected characteristic of religion and belief. Would the candidate commit to undertake a consultation at the very least within the life of this Assembly to explore how the protected characteristic of religion and belief could work in a practical way in Jersey?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, I am not sure it is in your domain, but that is the question you have been asked.

Deputy E. Millar:

Thank you. I think the consultation will sit with the Minister for Social Security, Sir. Thank you, Deputy Ferey, for your question. I am aware that this is the remaining characteristic, and this characteristic has not yet been considered. I note that it is something that causes some people concern. I would be happy to consider a review and a consultation into whether that should be brought into play as a protected characteristic. The difficulty is always going to be with religious belief in the detail and someone's expression of faith. While nobody should be discriminated against for their faith, and this is my strong view, it is difficult that the expression and participation of someone's faith causes discrimination to another person, and that is where the difficulty lies. In principle, I would be happy to have a review into the introduction of that into our own suite of discrimination legislation.

12.1.4 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Thank you to the Deputy for her answer. Staying with the Discrimination Law, does the candidate believe that the most recent addition to the Discrimination Law, that of the protected characteristic of disability, is working for people with disability, or how could it be improved?

Deputy E. Millar:

I believe that there is more work to be done. I think there clearly is more work to be done in terms of how we create an open and fully inclusive society for people who have disabilities. I am afraid I have been told that there are numerous issues. We do need to do more. We need to launch the disability and social inclusion project and I think there is no shortage of enthusiasm. I agree with Deputy Ferey. There is more work to be done.

12.1.5 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would like to ask a question in relation to Islanders who are on income support and the incentive to work. The current position is that Islanders on income support, some of whom have been on income support for a long time, and find it often not of their own volition not easy or impossible to hold down full-time employment are penalised rather heavily, only being allowed to keep up to 28 pence in the pound of any work that they might do. I know, as the Deputy said in her opening speech, that work is good for our well-being. Would she consider reviewing that in an Island where we have a lot of vacancies and work is good, even on a very limited or part-time basis, to help those on income support? Would she consider improving that allowance to make it worthwhile for people who are on income support to earn a little bit more money without being so heavily penalised?

Deputy E. Millar:

The obvious answer to that is yes. I think we should not have a system that pays people not to work and we have heard numerous times throughout today about the recruitment process, and if there are people who are willing to work and can work to some degree or other, whether they are not working full-time because of health or childcare responsibilities, then we do need to review the system to ensure that people can work and that it is in their interest to work and to contribute as best they can to society and to our community.

12.1.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Does the Minister see a problem with the significant number of overpayments that then lead to people on income support being in debt-to-income support, and then drawing themselves below the minimum levels of income? If so, what does she suggest can be done about it?

Deputy E. Millar:

I cannot comment on the level of overpayment side, as I do not have that level of detail. I am aware that overpayments happen. I think that overpayments can happen for any number of reasons. As I said earlier on, I think it comes down to that the department must try to get it right first time in terms of calculating. We also must be clear with people that they need to give proper information. We have to try to get it right. Where there are overpayments, I think people do need a minimum standard and any deductions that are made for overpaid benefits must be structured in such a way that people can continue to live a reasonable form of living, and that they are not pushed into poverty simply by virtue of overpayments that may or may not be their fault.

12.1.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister whether she believes there should be a maximum time period for overpayments, so that people are not, as one constituent told me, and I quote and I know that they will not mind me saying this, that they will be dead before they repay the overpayment?

Deputy E. Millar:

That is a very sad and unfortunate position to be in. That sounds like a very significant overpayment has been accrued. I do not understand why that would happen. I do know that overpayments happen simply because of the speed of processing sometimes. I know I had clients in the Viscount's Department swear overpayments arose because care benefits changed. I think we need to be able to deal with things in a more efficient way. We should not be in a position where people are receiving more benefits than they are entitled to. We need collaboration on both sides to make sure that people are getting the right amount of benefit, but that sounds like a very long payment period.

12.1.8 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Is the Deputy aware of recent issues with the long-term care scheme, and elderly Islanders being asked to unexpectedly top up their care fees? Does she expect Islanders' contributions to the fund need to rise to meet increasing costs?

Deputy E. Millar:

I am aware there has been some press coverage about this recently and I think during the election campaign someone wrote to us and asked questions about this. It does seem that the long-term care payments are perhaps not meeting the cost of care, which is rising rapidly, like many other things in the private sector.

[17:15]

I think it needs a review. I believe there is a review underway or was going to be instructed about the cost of care, about the payments and the co-payments. It is certainly something to be looked into. I think part of the problem is that long-term care is a very complicated benefit. I sat down a few days ago to try to read through all of the material about the long-term care, and I was quite exhausted by the end of it. I could blame COVID for that, but I think I would have been exhausted had I been at my best, and I think anybody in their 70s trying to deal with that would also be exhausted. It is complicated, difficult to understand and navigate, and I think we need to look at what is happening, how cost of care is rising. I believe the previous Minister for Health and Social Services has commented that the long-term care contribution may have to increase in the future to meet the cost of care and we should simply review the whole care environment and whether there are other ways of providing care and how we do that.

12.1.9 Deputy L. Stephenson:

Would the Deputy have any idea of a timescale for such a review or if one is ongoing and, if I may also, would she agree with me that it may seem sensible to have some kind of public engagement on the matter? There appears to be a lot of confusion among constituents of mine certainly.

Deputy E. Millar:

I absolutely agree that there needs to be more public engagement. As I say, the whole problem with long-term care is that it is very difficult to understand for people in terms of what it covers and what it does not cover. I believe I saw there is a Scrutiny finding suggesting that there should be a review of the long-term care of the co-payment, of the caps. I have to confess that I am not aware of the status of that review, whether it has been instructed, when it is intended to report, but if it has not started we do need to start that very soon. I agree, we need to be talking to people about their own experiences and seeking their views and seeking to communicate long-term care issues in a better way.

12.1.10 Deputy L. Feltham:

I would like to ask the Deputy a question about key performance indicators, and whether she believes that the current key performance indicators being used by the department are sufficient to be able to let her know of the success or otherwise of social security policy.

Deputy E. Millar:

I confess that I have not reviewed as far as the key performance indicators, so I do not know what they currently are and I cannot then comment. I am sorry. It is certainly something that I would review. I do not know if the key performance indicators are just that we have given people money, we have given people money within a certain time, whether we need to look towards a more outcome-based system. I am afraid I am talking from a position of relative ignorance, so I cannot really help at present.

12.1.11 Deputy L. Feltham:

Could I ask the Deputy which key performance indicators she would expect to see when she walks into her office?

Deputy E. Millar:

I would certainly want to see a key performance indicator in terms of how quickly claims were being handled, how quickly we were getting money into people's pockets. Beyond that, getting into the subject of how much money people receive, whether it is adequate for them, I am afraid I simply cannot comment. Like many other candidates today, I am new to Government, and I am certainly new to Social Security, but key performance indicators will be something I will be looking at very closely.

12.1.12 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I do not hold a great deal of hope that we are going to get much more from this particular candidate, but one lives in hope. Would the candidate wish to expand the health access scheme so that Islanders with long-term illnesses can access cheaper G.P. appointments? Will she further then work towards abolishing the fee entirely for all Islanders, and what impact will that have on the Health Insurance Fund, which has been seriously depleted by her predecessor?

Deputy E. Millar:

That sounds like a very detailed financial question. As a point of principle, no one should be poor and I believe that no one should be too poor to access healthcare. I am aware that the impairment component of income support gives some people who qualify for it benefits for access to healthcare. I am not familiar with the health access scheme but to the extent that people are not seeing a doctor because of lack of funding then clearly it needs to be reviewed. I do not know what the cost of doing

that would be and I cannot commit to reviewing the payment for everybody, because I do not know what the cost of that would be. I think the Health Insurance Fund was reduced because some funding was devoted or was given to the work on the planning of the Jersey Care Model, because the Jersey Care Model was looking at accessibility of primary care. I believe there is a Scrutiny report that says any further payments towards the Jersey Care Model must be reported on by the Minister for Social Security. What I am saying to you, Deputy Southern, is that I would be minded to look at widening the access scheme if there is a demand and need for it. I do not think we can review the fee for everybody because, as Deputy Mézec discussed earlier, there are people in Jersey who can afford to pay a fee for medical consultation to some degree.

12.1.13 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the potential Minister, if she is successful, report back to this House with her conclusions about the questions I have asked about H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund) and about the Health Access Scheme?

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes. If a review is conducted I will have to ask the Social Security team about the current status regarding the health access scheme, who may be excluded from it at present, who may need to be included in it, and I would report back on that. Clearly, I would report back on any of those reviews.

12.1.14 Deputy M. Andrews:

In terms of the forthcoming budget, will transfer payments be made to ensure that low-income families are not worse off in real terms?

Deputy E. Millar:

Can you repeat your question, Deputy? Which budget, sorry?

Deputy M. Andrews:

In relation to the forthcoming budget, in terms of what was mentioned by the Chief Minister, to ensure that transfer payments are made to low-income families to ensure that they are not worse off in real terms?

Deputy E. Millar:

My understanding of the Chief Minister's budget is that we are looking very closely at the cost of living, to make sure that people are supported as the cost of living may increase over the winter with fuel payments, with heating and energy costs over the winter. My understanding is that we are very much focused on cost of living and supporting those who need support, so I would be very surprised and horrified if the outcome of that budget was that the poorest people were put in a worse position. That is not my understanding of what the Chief Minister hopes to achieve.

12.1.15 Deputy M. Andrews:

In relation to transfer payments, has it been discussed in terms of how much expenditure potentially could be incurred?

Deputy E. Millar:

I have not had those discussions with the Chief Minister or anyone else as yet.

12.1.16 Deputy M. Scott:

My question overlaps with Deputy Farnham's to some extent, as to how the Deputy will ensure that those receiving social security support do not suffer financial loss from choosing to work. Will she acknowledge the value of such people contributing to economic productivity, even if subsidised with social security support?

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes, I think it is the same answer. Given that we do have a recruitment crisis, if there are people who are willing and able to work then we need to try to get people into the workplace and to give them the value of their earnings, but without it then reducing the benefit to a stage where it becomes pointless in going to work. I am not sure how we do that, but I am certainly open to review getting people into the workplace when there is a crying demand in many sectors.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I can see that the time is now up. I can confirm that Deputy Millar has been appointed Minister for Social Security [**Approbation**]. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 19(7) of the States of Jersey Law, all Ministers have now been appointed and are appointed from this moment, and Deputy Moore is formally appointed Chief Minister [**Approbation**].

Deputy K.L. Moore:

If I may, I would like to thank everyone in the Assembly who has participated and sat here through a very long and hot day. We have before us a capable Assembly in its entirety and I do mean the words that I stated last week when I said this is going to be a new way of working, a collaborative one that will draw on the great strengths and talents that we have all around us. It has been a difficult job in selecting a Council of Ministers, but I hope, as we have seen from results today, that Members agree that we have a committed and capable team who are ready to deliver for the Island and to put Islanders first, to set us on a new chapter. We will do that in a collaborative fashion, and we look forward now to confirming our appointments of Assistant Ministers and of course later the Scrutiny Panel chairs. I thank you all for your continuing support [**Approbation**].

The Deputy Bailiff:

Under Standing Order 117A at this point I am required to invite Members whether they wish to adjourn immediately at this point or continue. Is there a proposal to be adjourned? Is that seconded? [**Seconded**] Does anybody wish to speak on that proposal? No. The Assembly stands adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:30]