

# STATES OF JERSEY

## OFFICIAL REPORT

**TUESDAY, 4th OCTOBER 2022**

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[9:32]

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

**COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER**

**Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

Sir, may I just say I will be absent from 11.00 am attending a funeral, just to explain?

**The Bailiff:**

Thank you, Deputy. There is nothing under A.

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

I wonder if this might, before we kick off properly, be an appropriate time to raise a point of order with you?

**The Bailiff:**

Yes, you kindly informed me about it. I am afraid I did not have time to respond to you, Deputy, but please do, yes.

**Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

I just wanted to give you advance notice that I would ask about this. So we can see on the Order Paper for later in this sitting that the Minister for Housing and Communities is down to do a statement relating to P.48, and I commend him for doing that. I have now raised 2 other items which the States Assembly voted for earlier this year, which, as it currently stands, it appears are not on the agenda to be achieved. One of those being the States decision that in this month we would hold a debate on assisted dying, which we are told through the media will no longer be happening but for which no formal notification to us, as elected Members, has been given. So I wanted to ask you, as President of the States of Jersey, whether you had a view on this or whether there was any form of Standing Order that might be invoked to require the Government to present itself when it is not abiding by States decisions in some form or another, so that this Assembly, as the sovereign decision-making body of the Island, might express a view one way or the other on it.

**The Bailiff:**

So you are asking for a ruling on a point of order as to whether that is something that sounds in Standing Orders and can be dealt with under that. I had the opportunity, as you kindly gave me notice, to consider the matter. In my view this is not a point of order that runs within Standing Orders. There are no Standing Orders that permit that kind of direction from the Chair. Indeed, I think it would be inappropriate for the Chair/Presiding Officer to give any such direction. It seems to me that if there are consequences that flow from what you say, those are to be resolved on a political basis by means of whatever mechanisms are available by way of proposition or otherwise, or indeed actions taken by the relevant Ministers. But it does not appear to me to be a matter for Standing Orders.

**Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Thank you, Sir. Just one follow-up question to yourself. One of the many hats that you wear, one of them is also as the guardian of the constitution of Jersey, could I therefore ask you if my assessment of the States Assembly being a sovereign decision-making body of the Island is an accurate one to assist in how we go about holding the Government to account in this Chamber?

**The Bailiff:**

I understand why you ask the question, Deputy, but I am not prepared at this moment to give any answer to it. That is a matter, I think, which is to be resolved, as I say, on a political basis. Although

the Bailiff is the last resort guardian of the constitution, the Bailiff is not necessarily the first resort guardian of the constitution and, consequently, I do not intend to make any statement in that respect.

## QUESTIONS

### 1. Written Questions

#### **1.1 The Connétable of St. Martin of the Chief Minister regarding the use of public expertise and engagement in the formation of policy (WQ.168/2022)**

##### **Question**

Will the Chief Minister outline her plans relating to the use of public expertise and engagement in the formation of policy, with particular reference to whether she intends to continue the use of Policy Development Boards or similar bodies?

##### **Answer**

Action 2 of the Council of Minister's 100 Day Action Plan includes a commitment to undertake a project to set out how Islanders can better engage with government. One of the key outcomes of this project is the development of a Policy Inclusion Framework, which consists of policy engagement good practice guidance and a policy engagement toolkit.

The launch of the Policy Inclusion Framework will be supported by a package of resources and training for relevant government officials, with the purpose of improving engagement with Islanders and ensuring that the Government's decisions are more sensitive and responsive to their concerns. Further information, including draft guidance, will be provided to the States Assembly in advance of a full public consultation on the Framework later this year.

As part of this agenda, I have been clear of my intention to involve young people in policy formation and decision making, and to ensure that older people are listened to and heard. A Participation Standards Framework is being co-developed with young people to enable them to shape how they will be involved in future decisions made by Government. An Older Persons Living Forum is being launched to ensure that the views of older people are systematically considered as part of the development of all Government policy.

I also intend to establish or re-establish a number of Ministerial groups (both Statutory and non-Statutory) on a range of policy matters to drive policy development and implementation and provide suitable democratic oversight in cross-cutting policy areas. This includes, for example, the Housing and Work Advisory Group, the Future Places Ministerial Group and the Population and Skills Ministerial Group. I will ensure that non-executive States Members are included in these groups.

#### **1.2 The Connétable of St. Martin of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding accredited race Stage of the Union Cycliste International (U.C.I.) (WQ.169/2022)**

##### **Question**

Following the recent success of cycle races including the Tour de France Femmes, The Women's World Tour and RideLondon Classique, will the Minister consider exploring the possibility of the Island hosting a time-trial Stage as part of a Union Cycliste Internationale (U.C.I.) accredited Stage race?

## **Answer**

The Minister for Sport is keen to explore ways we can showcase and promote female participation in sport and wants to engage with as many sports as possible as she develops her policies going forward. This includes cycling.

The Assistant Minister always welcomes ideas and suggestions from colleagues and the wider public about how this could be achieved.

The last major cycling event was in 2010 when the island welcomed and hosted a number of Stages of the Tour de Bretagne.

The Department for the Economy is currently reviewing all events held on the island including both sport and culture with a view to enhancing the current offering. The Department is always seeking to ensure a good return on investment be that economically, socially or environmentally.

### **1.3 The Connétable of St Martin of the Minister for the Environment regarding an update on the use of Palm Oil (WQ.170/2022)**

#### **Question**

Will the Minister provide an update on the work that has so far been undertaken to deliver on the actions approved by the States Assembly as part of ‘Actions to Mitigate the Use of Palm Oil’ (P.99/2021)?

#### **Answer**

The approved proposition was made up of 3 parts:

- a) Government of Jersey to lead by example and only use and procure products that contain credibly certified sustainable palm oil where practical and appropriate
- b) any food item produced in Jersey is labelled with a clear Statement of whether the food item contains palm oil or any palm oil derivatives
- c) develop an Island-wide palm oil campaign that raises public awareness of the issue of its use

#### **Update of Part a) of the approved proposition**

Officers are working to understand where palm oil is currently being used across the Government of Jersey. Due to the complexity of the Government of Jersey, an initial investigation was carried out across parts of the organisation, looking at the prevalence of palm oil in a range of government services:

- Health and Community Services’ catering facility in St Peter (providing meals to the General Hospital, Government-owned nursing homes and presently the prison)
- The General Hospital (Thyme Out hospital restaurant kitchen and the hospital Stores warehouse at Five Oaks)
- Hair and Beauty Academy at Highlands College
- The Government of Jersey Broad Street office
- Contracted cleaning services supplier



The research for this initial investigation was carried out by a Student intern over the summer and these areas of government services were selected to represent the complexity of the organisation. This initial investigation has enabled officers to better understand where products containing palm oil are being used across some parts of the organisation and the implications for removing those items or finding suitable alternatives. This research has provided an indication of the prevalence of palm oil so that a full and comprehensive investigation can now be completed in order to scope and deliver part a) of the proposition. A report detailing the findings of this initial investigation will be published by the end of October 2022.

73% of those products sampled in the initial investigation contained at least one ingredient on the palm oil derivatives list that had been created for the Study.

Removing palm oil from use across the organisation will have a significant financial impact as alternatives are significantly more expensive. The war in Ukraine has had a huge impact on the use of palm oil globally as the availability of other oils such as sunflower and rapeseed has drastically reduced, resulting in an increased use of palm oil. A Strategic Outline Case has been written for consideration in the 2023 Government Plan when it is envisaged that the global market for other oils will have Stabilized.

#### **Update of Part b) of the approved proposition**

This part of the approved proposition sets out a requirement to introduce legislation for labelling any food produced in Jersey that contains palm oil or palm oil derivatives. There is temporary Food Standards Agency guidance due to the ongoing disruption to the supply of sunflower oil. As a result, food manufacturers are turning to other refined or fully refined food grade vegetable oils. The temporary guidance States that alternatives to sunflower oil can be used in some products without changes to the label being made – this includes the use of fully refined palm oil. A new primary food law is reaching its final Stages of drafting. If adopted by the Assembly, this will allow for subsequent legislation to introduce new labelling requirements. If not adopted, an amendment to the 2005 legislation will be established.

The costs to introduce the legislation were included in the amended proposition, but the source of funding not identified. Therefore, this has been included in the Strategic Outline Case which will be presented for consideration in the 2023 Government Plan when it is envisaged that the global market for other oils will have Stabilized and the temporary Food Standards Agency guidance rescinded.

#### **Update of Part c) of the approved proposition**

A public information campaign will be launched to coincide with the introduction of legislation for labelling as detailed in Part b) of the proposition. The costs to run a public engagement campaign were included in the amended proposition but the source of funding not identified. Therefore, this has been included in the Strategic Outline Case which will be presented for consideration in the 2023 Government Plan.

**1.4 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and resources regarding High Value Residents (WQ.171/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise how much tax has been generated, per year, from the taxable income (i.e. 1% above the 20% tax threshold) paid by High Value Residents since the inception of the regime?

**Answer**

The Minister is grateful to the Deputy for confirming that ‘High Value Residents’ (‘HVRs’) relates to those individuals who have come to Jersey by obtaining “entitled Status” under Regulation 2(1)(e) of the Control of Housing and Work (Residential and Employment Status) (Jersey) Regulations 2013 and who have access to preferential tax rates as a result.

It has been agreed that information will be provided for the fourth version of the HVR Tax Regime which commenced in 2018. Information relating to the earlier version of the Regime was published in the report “Post-Implementation Review of the HVR Regime Applicable Since July 2011” (R.136/2016).

Taxpayer data relating to 2021 will not be available until after the first quarter of 2023. The income tax generated from income chargeable at 1% was as follows.

- 2018: £134K
- 2019: £296K
- 2020: £570K

**1.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Stamp Duty (WQ.172/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise how much Stamp Duty has been made payable per year since 2012 under Item 46 of Schedule 1 (3) of the Stamp Duties and Fees (Jersey) Law 1998?

**Answer**

The table below presents the Stamp Duty paid under Item 46 of Schedule 1 (3) of the Stamp Duties Law over the period 2012-2021.

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest £000.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount paid</b>
2012	£858,000
2013	£540,000
2014	£871,000
2015	£1,690,000
2016	£981,000
2017	£654,000
2018	£831,000

2019	£1,079,000
2020	£804,000
2021	£2,140,000

**1.6 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding university Students and financial support (WQ.173/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise what additional financial support, if any, university Students can expect from the Government during the current period of high inflation and when such support will be provided?

**Answer**

The Minister for Children and Education, who has political responsibility for the Education (Grant and Allowances) (Jersey) Order 2018, the primary source of financial support for university Students, is finalising a proposal.

We are in agreement that some additional financial support may be required. I will need time to fully consider the details of any options and their affordability.

**1.7 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Health and Social Security regarding free health care (WQ.174/2022)**

**Question**

Is it the Minister’s policy that health care should be provided free at the point of use and that, in particular, all services currently delivered by health care services free of charge should remain so; and will she agree to propose that sustainable funding for such services should be sourced from hypothecated taxes?

**Answer**

The Government Plan 2022 required the Minister for Health and Social Services to “*undertake a wider health economic review during 2022 to inform funding options for increased health care costs and for any potential new health access schemes, to be brought forward in 2023 for the Government Plan 2024-27*” in order that a system of sustainable health funding will be “*operational by 2025*”.

Officers have commenced work, supported by specialist health economists, to estimate total healthcare expenditure for Jersey using the WHO system of Health Accounts and to model current funding sources. This will provide full understanding of expenditure and funding and allow us to draw comparisons with other jurisdictions.

The first phase engagement work, which is intended to support a better understanding of Islanders’ attitudes to health funding, will commence in October 2022 with a survey being distributed to approximately 3,000 Jersey households. This will be followed by a second phase of engagement activity in Q3 2023, in which we will consult the public and service providers on potential funding and financing options. It is envisaged that this will result in a report and proposition being brought to the Assembly by early 2024.

Until the work has been completed, it would be pre-emptive to commit to any proposed funding and financing model.

**1.8 Deputy C. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Chief Minister regarding High Value Residents purchasing properties (WQ.175/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise whether High Value Residents are permitted to purchase an unrestricted amount of property, either as investment properties or as rental homes?

**Answer**

In respect of current policy, all approved applicants are only permitted to lease or purchase one single unit of residential accommodation for occupation as their sole or main place of residence in Jersey.

In addition, they are permitted to establish a property development company, in the same way that other businesses operate in the Island. In common with any other developers, any units of residential accommodation developed must be sold by way of a freehold transaction on completion of the development.

Finally, they may purchase residential property adjoining their main place of residence in Jersey, where it can be demonstrated that the adjoining property more naturally falls within the same curtilage as the property already owned and occupied as their main residence.

As to commercial property, anyone can acquire and own commercial property whether they live in Jersey or not, irrespective of their residential Status.

The population and skills Ministerial group will be reviewing the criteria for 2.1.E residents.

**1.9 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding income forecasts (WQ.176/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise the current estimate of by how much income will exceed forecasts in the current Government Plan 2022-25?

**Answer**

Income forecasts are produced by the Income Forecasting Group, which includes both officers and independent members. The latest report is currently being finalised and will be published alongside the Government Plan 2023-2026.

**1.10 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Children and Education regarding plans for a North of St. Helier Youth Centre (WQ.177/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister outline the current plans for a North of St. Helier Youth Centre, given the adoption of an amendment to the Bridging Island Plan to protect the Nelson Street site for such a facility if no

other site was identified; and will the Minister confirm whether £2 million allocated in the Government Plan 2022-2025 is still available for this project?

**Answer**

I am committed to the development of youth and community centres in St Helier as there is a pressing need to provide opportunities for young people to engage in appropriate activities in a safe and healthy environment. It is my intention to bring forward plans for the delivery of youth provision in the town area, and this includes the North of St Helier Youth Centre. This project will be renamed the 'Central St Helier Youth and Community Centre' to better reflect the desired location of the centre, which is to be located in the middle of town and within the central St Helier district.

Since coming to Office I have committed to reviewing the capital programme for the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department to ensure projects which address identifiable need are prioritised. This plan will be published in the forthcoming Government Plan and I would like to reassure Deputy Ward and members of the Assembly that the newly titled Central St Helier Youth and Community Centre remains a priority for me and my Department.

There has been a significant challenge to date to find a suitable site for this project with Nelson Street being previously looked at. It is my intention to work closely with all of the St Helier Deputies and the Connétable of St Helier to review and assess all available sites to ensure the most appropriate location is found so that we can deliver this important project for the young people of St Helier.

Capital funding for this project is available within the Government Plan.

**1.11 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the development of Springfield Stadium (WQ.178/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise what current plans, if any, there are for the development of Springfield Stadium and the long-term financial support for the Jersey Bulls football team?

**Answer**

*Part (a) – the current plans, if any, there are for the development of Springfield Stadium*

As part of the Inspiring Active Places Strategy, Springfield Stadium is currently being refurbished and redeveloped. This work entails new changing rooms, fitness and spin Studios, and gymnasium. This work will facilitate the decant of sport from Fort Regent.

In addition to the works above, new perimeter fencing works have been completed this summer to improve the spectator provision at the Stadium. This project (circa £1.2m of spend) will allow Jersey Bulls to progress through the leagues for the foreseeable future in line with their Stated ambitions.

*Part (b) - the long-term financial support for the Jersey Bulls football team*

The former Assistant Minister met Jersey Bulls previously to ascertain and understand their plans and ambitions for the future. The former Assistant Minister with responsibility for Sport requested further detail on their longer-term vision for the club.

The government is awaiting receipt of this information before further decisions can be considered. The Minister for Sport is due to meet with Jersey Bulls in the coming weeks as part of her schedule of introductory meetings.

**1.12 Deputy S.Y. Mezéc of St. Helier South of the Assistant Chief Minister regarding an update re Communications (WQ.179/2022)**

**Question**

Further to the response to Written Question 284/2021, regarding annual expenditure on Communications and the number of Staff employed in Communications, will the Assistant Minister provide an updated response?

**Answer**

	<u>2021</u> <u>Spend</u>	<u>2022</u> <u>Spend</u> (Jan to Aug)
	£	£
Staff	2,362,001.07	1,666,690.98
Non-staff	34,711.46	1,455.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,396,712.53</b>	<b>1,668,146.24</b>

There are currently 30.61 staff employed within, and under the budget of, the Communications Directorate. This is a reduction from 2021, due to a recruitment freeze in both the Press Office and the Internal Communications teams, which have both gone from six employees to four. Further savings have been made by team members taking on dual tasks (like working in a department and producing video content for others) which has negated the need to recruit directly into the Directorate.

There are 39 States and Government of Jersey communicators operating under the reporting of the Directorate leadership. This includes communicators employed in projects such as Public Health, who are charged to individual departments and not the Directorate.

There have always been more communicators working in the States than those employed by the Directorate. These employees, who are usually on temporary contracts, perform tasks such as stakeholder engagement (including with senior suppliers), public consultation (such as patient groups), and short-term design work (including when there is increased demand as there is at the beginning of the school term or the new year).

Working under the leadership of the Directorate ensures savings can be made in the bulk purchasing of digital and design materials.

As the Directorate is now within the Cabinet Office, a best value review will be undertaken to make sure that the number of communicators is right for the States and the Government. Ministers have asked for a review into communications (which is much wider than just the work of Directorate) and this will inform where activity is best focussed.

Expenditure for 2022 stands at 1,668,146.24 to date, of which 1,666,690.98 are staff costs and £1,455.26 reflects other costs (marketing campaigns, licenses, equipment etc.,).

**1.13 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Affordable Housing at South Hill (WQ.180/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister, as shareholder representative, outline what instructions, if any, have been given to the States of Jersey Development Company in relation to incorporating a greater proportion of affordable housing in the planned development on South Hill, since planning approval was denied for the first application?

**Answer**

SoJDC continues to liaise with Treasury and Housing Policy officers as they work on their plans to maximise the affordable housing provision beyond the minimum Stipulated by the previous Council of Ministers of 15%, whilst preserving the overall viability of the development together with the delivery of public realm and infrastructure improvements on the site. However no specific instruction has yet been given.

**1.14 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding health and safety Standards in the private rental market (WQ.181/2022)**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise what measures, if any, will be introduced to assist the Environmental Health Department to enforce minimum health and safety Standards in the private rental market?

**Answer**

As Minister with responsibility for the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) (Jersey) Law 2018, I am looking at how the rental sector is regulated.

Minimum Standards for rental properties have been prescribed in law and do just that; they set the minimum acceptable level to avoid harm to the tenant. It is clear from evidence available to the Environmental Health Department that there is a significant problem with rental properties that are substandard. This particularly affects some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Therefore, I am currently considering as a matter of priority the best options to ensure compliance with minimum health and safety Standards. I will provide a further update in the very near future.

**2. Oral Questions**

**2.1 Deputy R.J. Ward of St Helier Central of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding under 18 bus passes (OQ.93/2022)**

Will the Minister advise what involvement he had in the sale of LibertyBus from HCT Group to Tower Transit, and what reassurances, if any, he has received regarding the continuance of the Avanchi18 bus passes for those aged under 19?

**Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

My involvement in the ownership transfer of LibertyBus between HCT Group and Tower Transit has been limited to ensuring that the terms and conditions are guaranteed and unchanged by Tower

Transit. However, I am grateful to both companies for keeping the I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) Department well-informed. The Avanchi18 travel pass scheme remains funded as per the amendment to the 2022 Government Plan, which has not been varied. Going forward, continued funding has been included in the 2023 Government Plan, subject to approval by the States Assembly.

**2.1.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

What consideration was given to taking the service in-house in order to directly control the use of significant subsidies given to our bus company?

[9:45]

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I do not think that was particularly considered in light of the fact that the service at the moment appears to be perfectly good. I do not think we were looking for any disruption, particularly as this had to be handled in a relatively short space of time.

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

Could the Minister indicate whether the terms and conditions he was referring to apply equally to the staff involved?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I do indeed.

**The Bailiff:**

Supplementary, Deputy Southern? Normally one person gets a chance when there's questions of this nature so do you have a supplemental question?

**2.1.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is a sort of supplementary. Now that I know it applies to the staff as well, could the Minister indicate to Members when the contract with this now particular company will take place?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

The terms and conditions ongoing are exactly as they were previously.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

When will the new contract be debated?

**The Bailiff:**

That was the supplemental question, Minister. It was when would the new contract come in?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I believe there is a report going to be issued at Christmas, a discussion, to the best of my knowledge. Further than that, I cannot give any further guidance.

**2.1.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Deputy Southern has just asked the exact question that I was going to ask so if I could follow it on by asking the Minister what consideration, at the point of renewal of that contract, will be given to alternative providers for a bus service, including the option of providing that service in-house so that the democratically elected representatives of the public of Jersey will be able to determine what kind of bus service meets our needs?



**Deputy T. Binet:**

I think that will depend entirely on the performance of the new company that has just taken over.

**2.1.5 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:**

I would just like the Minister to confirm what governance measures are in place between the department and the organisation in consideration that it has in receipt of public money, and how often the company is required to provide reports to the States of Jersey and the department that manages that contract?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

As I have said, the governance arrangements will be whatever they were when the contract was put in place in the first instance, and I have to hold my hands up and say that I am not aware of anything further than that because having been in post for 12 weeks there is a limit to what you can actually physically get to doing. I am afraid, that is an area that I have not looked at in any detail.

**2.1.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Will the Minister commit to putting governance practices in place with regard to the bus contract?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

We can certainly look at that and if there are any deficiencies we will address them. But I should imagine that it is unlikely.

**2.1.7 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Given that this change of ownership circumstance in the middle of a contract is new to us and one we have not experienced before, will the Minister confirm that in the new contract adequate provision will be made for these possible changes should they arise in the future?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

That can only happen at the point where the contract expires and, assumedly, that would be best practice and that is a practice that would be pursued.

**2.1.8 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In the departure of LibertyBus, would the Minister confirm that LibertyBus have actually provided the Island with a very good service, far in excess of that which we had experienced previously? Could he confirm that?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Yes, it appears to be appreciated by everybody and I would say that from my limited ... well, perhaps more knowledge than I did have in the past, I would say that is absolutely the case and I would thank them for so doing.

**2.1.9 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I ask the Minister, and it leads on from the governance, HGT was a social enterprise company; I believe a registered charity. What can we expect from a non-Jersey company that has a profit motive at its heart rather than being a social enterprise?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I think I am being asked to predict the future. At the moment I cannot tell. I am not as frightened as Deputy Ward is of the profit motive. The parent company are doing very good work in Australia. They are at the cutting edge of electric public service vehicles and I think we could be expecting possibly an even better service from them.

**The Bailiff:**

For guidance for Members, Members would have noticed there are only 7, now 6, questions in this particular question period for which 2 hours and 20 minutes are allocated. Strictly that is 20 minutes a question, which is well in excess of the 15 minutes, even for questions without notice, and I am normally allowing 10 minutes but of course if there are reasons why it needs to be more than that I will maintain an element of flexibility, just so that Members are aware.

**2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding the expansion of the Health Access Scheme (OQ.98/2022)**

Can I assure Members that this part of the Assembly will attempt to fill the allotted time to its maximum? Will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, has been given to the expansion of the Health Access Scheme, which groups have been considered for inclusion and in what timescale would they be included; would she further indicate what consultation, if any, has taken place with professional bodies or not-for-profit bodies involved with the scheme, what these bodies were and if none has taken place, why not?

**Deputy E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Social Security):**

I thank the Deputy for his question. This question builds on that asked by Deputy Alves at the last sitting when I was asked to commit to extending the Health Access Scheme to people with long-term conditions. My answer is essentially the same. I will be reviewing the scheme and will consider the role it plays in helping people access general practice service when that review has been completed.

**2.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

For the first time today we see the use of that very vague word “review”. I think the Minister could usefully inform Members when she expects to have completed her review and when she will therefore come forward with mechanisms to expand the system or not.

**Deputy E. Millar:**

It is difficult at this stage to put timescales. The review has not yet commenced. It will be far-reaching, it will have to consult with all relevant bodies, it will have to engage the Minister for Health and Social Services, and it will be designed to ensure that people who need access to healthcare can achieve that through appropriate means. I would hope the review will be concluded by the middle of next year but I am still working my work plan. There is quite a lot to do next year and I have not yet ... although Ministerial priorities have been set out I have not yet finalised the work plan.

**2.2.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Can the Minister just confirm, to leave no doubt about this whatsoever, that this is a review with the aim of expanding access to the Health Access Scheme?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

The review is intended to consider whether health access is appropriate in the Island. The Health Access Scheme was aimed at ensuring people on low incomes could access healthcare. The interests of people on low incomes will be paramount in that review. There are many ways in which primary care may be provided and the review will be far-reaching.

**2.2.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

That could have been a yes or no, and we got neither there so that was not particularly helpful. Can I ask the Minister: if we are not going to find out until some point next year what the conclusions of this review will be, could she not at least, as an interim step, commit to extending eligibility for the Health Access Scheme to those with long-term illnesses, which could very easily be done by simply

saying those who are in receipt of a disability benefit of some sort now qualify to be part of the Health Access Scheme, and provide much needed help to that part of our society?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

Again, I think this was discussed at the last sitting. The health needs of people who are not on low income but have long-term illness will be different. The support needed for people with long-term conditions needs to be understood and may need a different approach, and that may not necessarily be fulfilled by multiple G.P. (general practitioner) visits. The healthcare needs of people differ according to the conditions and circumstances and grouping, such as long-term incapacity allowance recipients, do not indicate the need or extent of how it can be addressed. I do not believe a one-size-fits-all expansion simply by extending it to long-term incapacity allowance recipients is necessarily the best approach.

**2.2.4 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

The Minister has said that the review has not yet commenced and she has been unable to give us a date for when the review will be completed. Can she give us a date for when the review will commence?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

The review will be commencing the early part of next year.

**2.2.5 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

When the Minister says “the early part of next year”, can she confirm that that will be in January?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

It will be in quarter one, I expect.

**2.2.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

May I ask the Minister whether she would include in the review a look at the access to screening tests, blood tests and so on, for those who perhaps are not on income support but may miss out simply because they do not want to pay the cost of the doctor?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

Health access is part of a wider review, as I have already said. The Minister for Health and Social Services already has a review of health funding underway and I am sure access to all those services will be part of that review.

**2.2.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Does the Minister agree that screening programmes are essential and, if you think purely economically, they save an absolute fortune in the long run and also improve people’s lives?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

I agree that screening programmes are essential but I do not believe they sit with Social Security.

**2.2.8 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Minister have any indication from her officers as to how effective and how accurate the scheme has been so far on which she can base her justification for an in-depth review?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

The review is intended to ensure that the scheme is working. It was introduced at the end of 2020 to help people with low-income access general practice services. It enables people who receive income support or Pension Plus to access surgery consultations for a low fee. I believe some 11,000 low-

income people have access to that scheme who may also have a long-term illness. The review, as I say, will commence next year with a view to ensuring the scheme is operable and is working well. I do not have specific facts at my fingertips as to how far it is being accessed.

### **2.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for the Environment regarding reaching net-zero carbon emissions (OQ.96/2022)**

Will the Minister state whether he supports the continuation of the target set by the previous Government of Jersey of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050; if not, will he indicate whether he intends to bring this target forward?

#### **Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade (The Minister for the Environment):**

Thank you very much for the question. The Deputy will not be surprised to hear that I am fully committed to the carbon neutral roadmap and its ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of the Island's international obligations under the Paris Agreement. Matching the U.K.'s (United Kingdom) target of a 68 per cent reduction of 1990 levels of emissions by 2030 and 78 per cent by 2035 and net zero by 2050 is an ambitious target, particularly when you consider that so far we have taken 30 years to achieve a 46 per cent reduction. The carbon neutral roadmap details the need to secure a long-term financing strategy in order to achieve this level of ambition, and until that funding is secured I do not believe it is prudent to commit to a faster pace of emissions reductions.

#### **2.3.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Does the Minister accept the prevailing scientific consensus which has developed since the Paris climate agreement that in fact 2050 is too late? If he does accept that prevailing scientific consensus would he agree that Jersey ought to bring its target forward as well?

#### **Deputy J. Renouf:**

I would accept the scientific consensus that says that the sooner we can reach our net zero target the better. 2050 is the last date by which we would attempt to reach it. If we can bring it forward from that we will. Certainly I will be driving as ambitious an agenda as possible. I would also say that I am highly mindful of the need to bring the people of Jersey with us on this journey. It is a long-term strategy. We need to build and maintain support and indeed within this Assembly. I think it has been one of the strengths of our journey so far that the Assembly has maintained a high level of unity in this area. I would seek to maintain that unity while moving as fast as possible.

[10:00]

#### **2.3.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Should 2050 become economically difficult would the Minister suggest that we move from 2050 as well?

#### **Deputy J. Renouf:**

No.

#### **2.3.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Subsequently, how are we going to assure that 2050 is a targetable date and economically viable when 2030 is not? It is not a question of will and leading the way. Are we not missing an opportunity for Jersey to lead the way across the world, regardless of our small size?

#### **Deputy J. Renouf:**

Yes, I think I have indicated my desire to move as fast as possible and I do believe and share the Deputy's ambition that we should be leaders in this and we have the opportunity to do so. I am trying to hold 2 things here equally. One is my desire to move forward as an Island together, winning arguments, maintaining support and, on the other hand, drive forward with as much ambition as

possible. I detect no lack of ambition around the Council of Ministers' table to achieve our ambitions and I am proud to represent our goal in that regard. I am convinced that we will bring forward that strategy in the timely manner that we need to.

#### **2.3.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

As time moves forward the 2050 target date will lose credibility because of that prevailing scientific consensus, so does the Minister not agree it would be a good idea to get ahead of that and actually establish an earlier target before any future international climate agreements are reached? Would you put that 2050 target aside because it is inadequate?

#### **Deputy J. Renouf:**

As I indicated in my first answer, I think the key thing here is that we can set any target we want but unless we have a credible strategy for getting there, including a financing strategy, it is really just words. I would much rather move forward with a commitment that we know we can keep, which means developing the financing strategy first. Once we have done that and we have a clear idea of how we can achieve an ambitious target then I will be very happy to move forward, potentially bringing the 2050 target forward, if we know that we can actually achieve it.

#### **2.4 Deputy L.V. Feltham of the Chief Minister regarding policy changes and the licensing of new businesses (OQ.95/2022)**

Will the Chief Minister indicate whether she has considered making any policy changes concerning the licensing of new businesses, either for those starting up or entering the Island, given potential constraints upon local employment, housing markets and inflationary pressures?

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

I thank the Deputy for her question. It is an important topic. As part of our 100-day action plan I formed a new Ministerial group, the Population and Skills Ministerial Group. This brings together a significant group at the centre of government that will hold explicit responsibility for monitoring population, accommodation, skills gaps and employment issues in co-ordinating policies across government to address these issues. The group will provide advice to me, as the Minister who has responsibility for the Control of Housing and Work Law, and within which business licensing falls to improve and adapt these controls where necessary and to offer support to local businesses appropriately. We are mindful that both the public sector and existing local business is struggling to recruit at this time and therefore we will be considering carefully the impact of any new licence application when taking decisions.

#### **2.4.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Given the work that the Chief Minister is undertaking, would she be giving any advice to government-funded organisations that may be seeking to attract new businesses to the Island currently?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think everybody needs to be really mindful of the impact and the difficulties that we have in finding appropriate accommodation for any newcomers to the Island. This is of course something that is at the very heart of some of the issues that we have in terms of providing for our public sector and the critical services of health, education and also social work. It is an area that we are very mindful of. It is an area where we need to ensure that we recruit and retain the very best possible people to provide our critical services and perhaps that is not the specific area that the Deputy might be driving at. But I hope it illustrates to her how very important we believe this topic is.

#### **2.4.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

In my constituency in months to come, substantial new amounts of business premises will be opening on the waterfront, having been provided by our States-owned developer. Does the Minister have any

concerns about the viability of businesses that may attempt to set up in these premises in getting staff in areas that we know existing businesses are already struggling significantly with, and does she believe that there may be a risk to our States-owned developer of having these premises remain empty for long periods of time.

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

That is a wide-ranging question. But to answer the first part of it, I think every business should be considering staffing and recruitment, and I am sure they do as part of when they consider the viability of any new business that they wished to open. That would be a matter for themselves. With regards the J.D.C. (Jersey Development Company) and the situation that they might be in, that is also a matter that I am sure their board will be considering.

**2.4.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

In order to help their board consider these matters, could the Minister confirm that they are being included in discussions with this new people and skills group, that they can be aware specifically of what the needs of the Island's economy are for new business premises like this and that they do not inadvertently end up allocating resources to creating premises that will end up being a liability to them because they cannot fill them?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think absolutely every business or organisation considering growth in the Island is taking this situation very seriously indeed, and it is a matter for them and their decision taking. However, what I would like to say about this Government is that we see our relationship with the States-owned entities as something that needs to be nurtured. It needs much greater care and attention and we are already taking steps to ensure that those communication lines are opened and that they continue to be conducted. So, for example, we are now inviting both Andium and the Jersey Development Company to attend meetings of the Future Places Group in future so that we can maintain that conversation and keep a really fluid dialogue.

**2.4.4 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:**

In light of the tensions regarding limited staff and housing resourcing in the Island, will the Population and Skills Strategy Group that the Chief Minister has just mentioned be publishing its methodology for evaluating licence applications for Scrutiny? If so, when please?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Licence applications come before H.A.W.A.G. (House and Work Advisory Group), which is a subgroup of the Population and Skills Group. We have been asking for a meeting so that we can sit down and reconsider our criteria so that we send out a very clear message. Because we understand that people making applications to us, whether it be to come to the Island as an individual or whether as a business we need to make our criteria very clear. That group is really looking forward to sitting down and defining our criteria moving forward so that we have clear rules that people will understand prior to their applications being made.

**2.4.5 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

Could the Chief Minister please advise when Scrutiny might see the evaluation strategy?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

As I say, we are champing at the bit to hold this meeting. We have been asking for it for some time. But it has not been able to happen in our diaries. As soon as it is agreed then we would really appreciate the views of Scrutiny upon it.

#### **2.4.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

May I ask the Chief Minister what the make-up of the group is - and I am sorry I have forgotten the name even though it was just said - and what criteria was used to choose the membership?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

This is something that is set out in law, so the Housing and Work Advisory Group is chaired by the Chief Minister. The Deputy Chief Minister also is a member - I think that is probably as his role in Economic Development - the Minister for Social Security, the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Housing and Communities. Thank you to those who have assisted my memory.

#### **2.4.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister inform Members how many meetings have been held by this new body and what action points and for what Ministers arose out of those meetings?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

As I have said in answers to my previous questions, it has been a matter of some frustration that a formal meeting has not yet occurred for this particular group. We have taken some informal meetings where there have been specific decisions to take and at those times we have expressed our frustration that we have not had a formal meeting as yet and we have asked for it to be put in the diary several times.

#### **2.4.8 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

In short then, does the Minister agree that that means no meetings and no actions on this particular point?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

That is his interpretation but I can absolutely assure the Assembly that we are committed to meeting and to setting out these criteria because we consider it to be of extreme importance.

#### **2.4.9 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Would the Chief Minister consider that one of the criteria for new businesses starting in the Island ought to be the provision of staff accommodation?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think that is quite right, yes. As we said in answer to a previous question, when considering the viability of any business I am sure the consideration of where staff might accommodate themselves would be a key part of the decision making. Of course the bridging Island Plan rezoned sites for accommodation and Andium have also plans to deliver over 1,000 new properties for people to live in over the coming years but, of course, that is a longer-term process. That is why in our 100-day plan we also included a commitment to modern methods of construction because that is the quickest way that we can see to allocate homes and good quality homes for Islanders so that we can continue to support our local economy.

#### **2.4.10 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Just shortly, will the Chief Minister commit to making that recommendation to H.A.W.A.G.?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Yes, thank you.

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

On the back of that question, will the Chief Minister commit, with the Minister for Housing and Communities perhaps, to reviewing the relevant regulations, whether they are building regulations or housing regulations which allow for a new type of key worker accommodation to be developed?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

The Minister for the Environment is working on the supplementary planning guidance at the moment and I think was a matter that came before the previous Assembly. It is certainly an area of minimum standards that needs some very careful consideration.

**2.4.12 Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

I wanted to make it clear, would the Chief Minister agree that any new type of key worker accommodation would have to be developed to the highest of standards but be able to permit a sustainable and realistic opportunity for businesses to provide accommodation for their staff without having a negative or detrimental impact on the local housing market?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Sustainability, quality of life and affordability are the key tenets when we will be taking decisions through the life of this government. I have to say that with regards the previous project that came to the previous Assembly with regards temporary accommodation, my interpretation was that what was on offer were windowless ghettos and I absolutely rejected that proposition because, of course, if we are attracting new people to the Island we should offer them a quality of life. I think we are in good hands here with the Minister for the Environment who will take this issue and give it his fullest consideration.

**The Bailiff:**

Deputy Scott, you have asked to ask another question. For these kinds of questions we normally allow one question with a supplemental for each Member. I know there is a lot of time available but I think if we break that rule we will be left in a very uncertain position, so the answer is no I cannot allow the question.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Sir, do you not consider that a little unfair since you allowed me to have a second question?

**The Bailiff:**

I do not think I did, Deputy Southern. You mean during the course of this question, Deputy?

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Not for this question.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, yes, but the asker of the question always gets a supplementary question and then a final supplementary. They ask their question, they get a supplementary and then a final supplementary. You were the asker of the question and I can assure you I have written down every time you have asked to be listed and you have never been asked more than once.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I stand corrected.

**The Bailiff:**

Thank you very much. Always happy to be challenged. I have Deputy Tadier and then a final supplementary.



[10:15]

**2.4.13 Deputy M. Tadier:**

The line of questioning seems to have gone down the road where the Chief Minister is telling us that she would like to build staff accommodation for workers in Jersey. I am not sure when ordinary workers - because most people in Jersey are workers and therefore staff ... she seems to be saying that she wants to build accommodation for the low-paid economy sector, so presumably agriculture and hospitality, businesses who do not pay any corporation tax ...

**The Bailiff:**

I am sorry, Deputy, this is a speech. Could you please ask a question now or do not ask a question?

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Sorry, I will not ask the question.

**The Bailiff:**

Thank you very much for the speech then, Deputy. Final supplementary, Deputy Feltham.

**2.4.14 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Can the Chief Minister confirm whether public money is currently being spent in attracting new businesses to the Island and, if so, whether she thinks that is a good use of public money, given the constraints that we have discussed during this questioning? Does she think it would be much better to redirect that public money to the public sector recruitment that is so sorely needed?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

That is a very thoughtful question and one I think that we as H.A.W.A.G. need to give a clear view to those people who are working in Locate Jersey because it is something that continues to be advertised; the Deputy is quite correct. We, so far, have taken one decision in relation to a business, we rejected it because we considered that the level of employment that they were looking to achieve was not going to be fulfilled for the proposed salaries that were described in the application process. This is another example of exactly why we need to get our meeting in our diary and set some clear criteria so that everybody knows exactly where we are moving forward at the moment, and we absolutely need to support Islanders and put their needs first by supporting recruitment and retention of people in our critical services.

**2.5 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Children and Education regarding specialist subject teachers (OQ.94/2022)**

Will the Minister advise what gaps in provision, if any, have been identified in respect of specialist subject teachers across our schools and colleges with regards to the delivery of exam subject content and exam preparation for students in the coming academic year?

**Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North (The Minister for Children and Education):**

I would like to thank the Deputy for the timely question because 10 days ago I had a meeting with all head teachers, I have a separate group with the secondary school head teachers, when I asked them to provide to the department gaps in staff provision that they have. What was really helpful to the Deputy's question was when we looked into the specific of the specialist subject teachers. What I found out is that we do not have central records currently with the level of the detail for each school because the allocation of appropriate teachers are for the professional judgment of the head teachers to deploy. Now, to provide an accurate number of the gaps in provision as requested would require a specific definition for schools to work to and then manual collection, collating, analysis and quality check of the data. We must also be mindful that the schools' work for the current ... basically what

I would like to say is thank you to the Deputy for the question and attention and I will commit to the Deputy and the Assembly to provide an accurate picture of the data by the half-term break.

**Please note that the Minister for Children and Education subsequently provided the information below –**

I advised that the dept. did not hold this data centrally and I would endeavour to collate it by half-term, using a definition of "specialist subject teacher" to be agreed with Deputy Ward. I am pleased to advise that Deputy Ward and I met following the Sitting, and we agreed the definition to survey the Head Teachers with as:

“directly qualified by degree / A level award / SKE or qualified by relevant experience”

We surveyed the Head Teachers of our 7 secondary schools, and they confirmed that 21 vacancies / posts are currently taught or covered by non-specialists.

The majority of secondary teachers qualify with one or two teaching subjects that relate to their degree and A level or level 3 subjects.

However, during the course of their career it is common for colleagues to add a subject, such as a biology and chemistry teacher taking up psychology. A minority of colleagues will have a non-school curriculum subject degree, such as law, psychology or engineering, and will be employed to teach, for example, business studies, sport psychology or mathematics.

In addition, we offer, and from this year we are centrally financing, subject enhancement courses to enable more generalist graduates to re-focus their curriculum knowledge on school subjects, or to retrain from one degree specialism to another.

All secondary schools in Jersey started this September with appropriate timetables and sufficient staff to teach their pupils on roll and the courses allocated on their timetables.

There are three dates in the year by when teachers can give notice of employment for the subsequent academic term. In addition, teachers will require parental leave, and these absences may not fit the otherwise statutory notice periods. As such it is always the case that there will vacancies that emerge during the term. These are in the process of advertisement and appointment, some for a January start, some for an Easter start and I can assure Members that schools are committed to appointing subject specialists to each role as the need emerges.

### **Recruitment activity**

Resolving the immediate workforce needs of schools is a priority for me and Government and a new Delivery Unit led task force is working on a range of approaches to develop existing and building new candidate pools and creating new induction processes.

#### **2.5.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

From the answer to that question, can I confirm then that the Education Department does not know if we have enough specialist teachers to deliver G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education), A-level, B.T.E.C. (Business and Technology Education Council) courses this year to our students through this academic year, because we do not have any information on that? Can we confirm that that is the case?

#### **Deputy I. Gardiner:**

First of all, we rely on the head teachers to cover. Second, we need to really understand and I asked yesterday: “What is the definition?” The majority of the secondary teachers are qualified for one or 2 teaching subjects related to their degree and A-level or a level 3 subject. We have a teacher who

has been qualified for 20 years, teaching and preparing for G.C.S.E.s in English and very successful results. During the course of their career it is common for colleagues to add subjects such as biology, chemistry, teacher taking up psychology. A minority of the colleagues have non-school curriculum subject degrees such as law, psychology and engineering and will be employed to teach, for example, business studies, sport psychology or mathematics. What we are trying to say is that the answer is not straightforward because there are variations and also, as the Deputy would know, the gap can occur very quickly when one of the teachers that was employed decided for health reasons to quit. The situation is changing. What is important for me as a Minister, and this is the reason that I am committed to provide, is we need to set clarity in this definition of what does it mean. I am happy to work with the Deputy, because the definition is not clear, what he means by the definition, how we quantify and to give this data back to the Assembly.

#### **2.5.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

I guess my question is to ask the Minister if she could give a clearer answer to Deputy Ward's previous question. He was asking about whether the department has enough teachers to do the teaching that needs to be done. That is theoretically a yes or no question. I heard the Minister use the word "fluctuation" in her answer. If there is fluctuation then the answer is no, is it not?

#### **Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I would like to confirm to everyone that all secondary schools in Jersey started this September with the proper timetables and sufficient staff to teach their pupils on the roll and the courses allocated to their timetables.

#### **2.5.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Will that continue to be the case throughout the entire teaching year?

#### **Deputy I. Gardiner:**

As previously requested - and I remember I promised to provide follow-up information - for the secondary teachers we have 39 supply teachers and we are increasing this pool. I have a table I am happy to circulate later. This is the reason I would continue to have ongoing communications with the head teachers to make sure that we support them with staff in front of the classes.

#### **2.5.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I thank the Minister for supplying the quite shocking statistic that there are 39 supply teachers currently operating in our secondary schools. But I ask does the Minister accept that teaching by specialist teachers is an important factor in delivery what are good results so far, and will she assist head teachers rather than them scrambling around for teaching staff from wherever they can get them? Whether they should centrally assist head teachers to maintain numbers of appropriate qualified teachers?

#### **Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Absolutely, I will support head teachers and on top of this I would like to bring the Deputy's attention to that in addition we offer ... from this year we are centrally financing subjects to enhance courses for specialist courses where we have gaps to enable more generalist graduates to refocus their curriculum knowledge on school subjects and to retrain them from one specialist degree to another to ensure that we will have outgoing support to the head teachers.

#### **2.5.5 Deputy G. P. Southern:**

Does the Minister not consider that that puts added pressure on staff when that could be taken off by adding some form of bonus scheme for particular subjects, in particular for particular teachers.

#### **Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Apologies, I did not describe it exactly but we have bursaries for the teachers ... for the graduates who would like to specialise and they will be available. It is extra training going this year. If you look at the numbers that were published, in 2020 we have 10 trainees, 2019 we have 8 trainees, 2018 we have 8 trainees but in 2022 we have 24 trainees. It means that we are working to ensure that we have more specialised teachers trained in Jersey.

**2.5.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I will simplify the question for this one. Can the Minister confirm that any student in a core subject for example of maths, English, biology, chemistry, physics or combined science will be taught their exam courses by a qualified specialist teacher this year?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

What I would like to confirm is that, as in previous years, our results were outstanding, that the children will be taught to the best possible achievement they can get. What is important and, again, I am inviting the Deputy to work with me for the definition because the definition is varied between different places and the moment that we agree on the definition I can confirm yes or no for this specific effect.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Sir, I do not believe that is an attempt to address the question. This Minister has avoided it altogether.

**The Bailiff:**

So you are asking for a ruling as to whether that was an answer to the question? The question was a confirmation, I think, Minister, that all of the secondary students will be taught by specialists for their core subjects. I think that was the question, was it not, Deputy?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It was.

**The Bailiff:**

You did mention a lot of things you would like to confirm but I am not sure whether you indicated that that was. It may be that you cannot but if you can I think it would be ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

This is what I indicated, that we need to finalise specific definitions for schools to work with, then we will do manual collection, collating, analysis and quality of the data, and I promise to provide this to the Assembly by the half term.

**2.6 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding reduction in the health Insurance Fund (OQ.99/20222)**

Will the Minister advise whether a substantial reduction in the Health Insurance Fund is anticipated over the next 4 years and, if so, why; and further advise what, if any, proposals she has for the funding of primary care after this fund is exhausted?

**Deputy E. Millar (The Minister for Social Security):**

I thank the Deputy for his question. We expect the Health Insurance Fund balance to decrease slightly from £86 million at the end of this year to £80 million at the end of 2026. An up-to-date financial forecast is included in the Government Plan for 2023 to 2026, which is lodged today, and it takes into account the expected income from contributions and the expenses of the fund, including the amounts previously agreed by the States Assembly to pay for the Jersey Care Model or elements of the Jersey Care Model. The Minister for Health and Social Services is conducting a major review of healthcare costs and funding, which will include primary care costs and the Health Insurance Fund.

### **2.6.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Here we have another appearance by the sticky word “review”, which I believe does not have any points of reference. Can the Minister admit that while the fund, the H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund), may end up at £80 million by the end of 2026, it started life as £97 million last year?

### **Deputy E. Millar:**

I believe the Minister for Health and Social Services review was set out in the Government Plan for 2022 and I believe it definitely does have some considerable ... that there are rules and criteria around that and that work has been done over this year and next year as previously agreed by the States Assembly. The fund’s closing position at the end of 2021 was £99.7 million. This was £7.2 million higher than expected due to higher contributions and income achieved than anticipated. The main drive of the improved outlook is due to projected increase in social security contributions, which is in turn driven by the increase in average earnings projected in the economic assumptions. I have to confess, I have forgotten the last part of the Deputy’s question so I may have to ask him to repeat it, please?

[10:30]

### **Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I think the Minister has answered the question.

### **The Bailiff:**

I thought your question was simply, please confirm that it was a certain amount of money and I think you have given that confirmation, Minister. I am not sure there is another part that you have yet to answer.

### **2.6.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

In terms of funding of primary care and how that comes from the Health Insurance Fund, could the Minister confirm that in looking at any proposed changes to how we fund primary care, that she will rule out attempts to do what a previous Government attempted to do, which was to supplement funding for healthcare through regressive taxation, which disproportionately targets those on lower incomes while giving those highest incomes unjustified breaks?

### **Deputy E. Millar:**

I personally am not closely involved with the review that is being conducted under the Minister for Health and Social Services and I cannot comment at this stage how it will look to fund healthcare in future.

### **2.6.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

The supplementary therefore is: is it therefore still on the table that to fund primary care moving forward that it is possible that regressive measures may well be considered and proposed by this Government?

### **Deputy E. Millar:**

As I say, the outcome of the review will be looking at funding of primary care. There may be many options of doing that and until the review is complete I cannot comment.

### **2.6.4 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

Could the Minister confirm that she will look into increasing the rebate to our G.P.s and our pharmacists from the H.I.F.?

### **Deputy E. Millar:**

Discussions are ongoing with both the primary care body and the pharmacists and doctors. Doctors have received considerable funding from the Health Insurance Fund over the last couple of years, other than by the rebate, and it is under discussion with them. Our focus in discussing primary care is looking at patient needs, how patient access and patient services are provided, and that is a matter that is under ongoing discussion now.

**Deputy A. Howell:**

I would like to refute what the Minister for Social Security ...

**The Bailiff:**

I am sorry, you cannot do that. You can ask a question but you cannot make a speech.

**2.6.5 Deputy A. Howell:**

Will the Minister accept that actually the funding for G.P.s has not risen from the H.I.F. for 10 years and for pharmacists, for their dispensing fee, not for 8 years? I think we really need to address this and would she agree to do this?

**The Bailiff:**

I will allow that question; it is perilously verging being outside the parameters of the original question, Deputy, but if the Minister could answer.

**Deputy E. Millar:**

I struggle to see this is a different question but, as I say, the primary care body has received more funding, I do not have the numbers in front of me right now but the primary care body has received other funding than rebate over the last several years and it is a matter that is under review in conjunction with the role of primary care funding with the Minister for Health and Social Services, and we are considering that. There are ongoing discussions with the primary care body and the pharmacists at the moment and I can really say no more.

**2.6.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

The question is: does the Minister agree that £22 million is about to be absorbed by a digitisation programme in the delivery of healthcare and that the sum she mentioned, which is left in the fund in 2026 consists of a mere 2 years' cover?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

I am not entirely sure how the £22 million is broken down. The States Assembly has approved, I see from my figures, the sum of £21 million transfer to the Jersey Care Model and for the digital care strategy. Those monies will be spent as and when the costs are incurred. They are not simply being handed over now, they will be released as money is spent. The £80 million is about 2 years of spend at the end of 2026, that is true, however it ignores the fact that we are continuing to receive some £36 to £37 million into the fund on an annual basis thereafter. So the fund, if we did nothing, there are 2 years of spend but there is nothing to suggest at the moment that the fund will be exhausted, nor that we are going to stop taking contributions going into the fund.

**2.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Affordable Housing at South Hill (OQ.97/2022)**

As shareholder representative of the S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company), will the Minister advise what instructions, if any, he has given to the Minister for Infrastructure to increase the proportion of affordable homes to be delivered on South Hill and the Waterfront above the current 15 per cent target?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):**

As stated in my response to the Deputy's written question, S.o.J.D.C. continues to liaise with Treasury and Housing policy officers as they work on their plans to maximise the affordability housing provision beyond the minimum stipulated by the previous Council of Ministers of 15 per cent for South Hill. This work aims to preserve the overall viability of the development together with the delivery of public realm and infrastructure improvements on the site. S.o.J.D.C. are similarly reviewing their plans for the Waterfront in close co-operation with both my department and the Housing Policy Unit. I have not given any specific instructions.

#### **2.7.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

The Deputy will remember in the previous term of office he spoke about his discomfort at the 15 per cent target being proposed by that previous Government when I provided him opportunities to vote for a higher target. Can he confirm that it is his intention that a government-owned developer, for which he is the shareholder representative, will deliver above the paltry target set by the previous Government?

#### **Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

I thought I was going to be able to answer in the positive to this question this morning, but in light of the Deputy's letter to the Chief Minister yesterday reminding Ministers of decisions in this Assembly it makes it more difficult for me to support him because there was a vote in this Assembly that said the reverse. Notwithstanding that fact and my desire not to play politics, I do believe that greater levels of affordable housing should be delivered on these sites, which is why the review work is being undertaken and the reanalysis being undertaken. Of course it is not just now about the affordability of houses, it is about the whole structuring of the developments. Although he will be aware that in the bridging Island Plan it was implicit that the States-owned site brought forward, aside from those 2 sites, that would assume a maximum of 100 per cent affordability and have to work down from 100 per cent or prove the case down.

#### **2.7.2 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North:**

Does the Minister believe economic profit through cross-subsidisation can generate reinvested capital to artificially lower market prices to support first-time buyers and to home ownership?

#### **Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

If I have understood the question correctly then I believe the answer is yes.

#### **2.7.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

From the Minister's previous answer about previous States Assembly decisions, he is of course aware that he is able to bring a rescindment motion if he wishes to seek a mandate for an increased target. Could he let the Assembly know whether it would be his intention or not to do so and, if it is not, will he support another Member's intentions to bring a proposition aiming to do the same thing?

#### **Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

I think the point of my conversations, the Minister for Housing and Communities' conversations and the Minister for Infrastructure's conversations with both S.o.J.D.C. and Andium through the New Places Committee is that they will consider what is possible and then we will return to this Assembly once that work has been undertaken, if necessary.

#### **The Bailiff:**

Very well, that brings questions with notice to an end. We move now to questions without notice, the first question period is for the Minister for Housing and Communities.

### **3. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Housing and Communities**

#### **3.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

In answer to a written question from me, the Minister has confirmed that the total number of applications which are live on the Affordable Housing Gateway for social rental housing and also the numbers on Andium's list for first time buyer housing is 2,864. Could he confirm how many homes are due to be built by Andium and the S.o.J.D.C. for people who qualify for those Gateways over the next 5 years, and which number is higher?

**Deputy D. Warr of St. Helier South (The Minister for Housing and Communities):**

Thank you, Deputy, for that question. I am just curious to know where you are getting the 2,000 ...

**The Bailiff:**

Through the Chair, please.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Sorry.

**The Bailiff:**

You are curious to know where the Deputy is getting the ...

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Sorry, the Deputy. Sorry, Sir. Getting the figure of 2,000 from because from the all the figures that I have here, we are matching with the Gateway of around 1,000 builds versus approximately 1,000 in demand. Could the Deputy just clarify where his figure of 2,000 has come from? Of course he may be including internal transfers in that figure.

**Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

I am taking those figures from the answer to Written Question 190 which he provided. Yes, within the social housing needs some of that is transfers but those are applications for different homes and the total number for first home buyer housing is 1,971. That is a figure that has been absent from previous dialogue on this.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Sorry, Deputy, as I say, I am trying to comes to terms with the figure because what I see at the moment is that under band 1 we have 321 requests, under band 2 we have 46, under bad 3 273 and band 4 we have 253. My maths makes 893 on the Gateway. From the figures provided by Andium Homes we have 610 new homes currently being built and 431 homes which there are signed contracts for. So in my rough maths here I make that 1,041 being built versus 893 on the Gateway.

**3.1.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Thank you. That ignores a very significant part of my question, which was not purely based on social rental housing but for first-time buyer homes as well, which Andium's own figures say that the current number of applications are 1,971. As Andium is a provider of both social rental housing and first-time buyer housing, is it not the case that the projected number of new homes to be built is substantially lower than the amount of demand that there is, even by their own figures that they are providing?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Again I refer to Andium and they are talking about a target of 3,000 homes. They are still on track to build that total number of homes. As far as I am concerned, they are building to the demand that is required.

**3.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:**



I just would like to ask the Minister for Housing and Communities when we might expect to see more social housing available for downsizing in St. Brelade?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. I am not aware of there being any downsizing opportunities, unless you are referring to the bridging Island Plan, and I am not entirely sure exactly what arrangements have been made there. But at this moment in time that has not come to my attention.

**3.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is a relatively straightforward question. What measures does the Minister have in his pipeline in order to reduce inflation on the Island?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Goodness me. Thank you, Deputy, for your question.

**The Bailiff:**

I thank the Deputy for his question.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. I will get the hang of this over the next 4 years, Sir.

**The Bailiff:**

Many people do not have the hang of it yet, do not feel bad.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Obviously there are factors way outside the control of this Island's economy that drives inflation. I am assuming the Deputy is talking about the supply of housing versus demand, which is obviously also inflationary but I struggle to understand how I can control inflation, I really do.

[10:45]

**3.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

That was a gem from the Minister. The Minister might consider freezing or reducing rental rates on the Island in the private sector and social sector from Andium, for example. Is the Minister considering this?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Let us get the terminology right here. Thank you, Deputy, for your question. Freezing rents, as we have already had a previous discussion, is certainly not on my agenda. There are a couple of reasons around freezing rents. Freezing rents has maybe short-term benefit to obviously those people who are currently paying rent but the problem with associations like Andium, as a States-owned entity, is that it is impossible to maintain the supply of housing, maintain the upkeep of housing to a standard which, as you will well know, when these housing schemes were run by the States themselves were in an appalling situation. I would also add Andium Homes are at 80 per cent of market rates, rather than 100 per cent, and their increases, annual increases, are capped to 4 per cent. They are keeping increases below the rate of inflation. Referring to the Deputy's earlier question, I guess there is a measure in which we manage to keep control to some degree of inflation.

**3.4 Deputy M.B. Andrews:**

Does the Minister support institutional private capital investment in housing?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. We have been approached by about 3 organisations in this respect, in the social housing market and area, and we are currently looking at the options being supplied. At this moment in time our primary effort is with Andium but obviously we are always interested in other alternatives.

**3.5 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In an earlier answer to Deputy Scott, the Minister suggested he was not aware of the plans for right-sizing in St. Brelade. Has he considered the future of the old Les Quennevais School in 5 years' time once the Health Committee have finished using it?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Absolutely.

**3.5.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Will the Minister consider this site suitable for right-sizing and will he be putting those plans into operation either with a third party or with Andium Homes as soon as possible, given the time it takes to implement these projects?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. The reality is, yes, we will consider all options. If that gives us an opportunity to right-size people in the St. Brelade area, absolutely there is no reason why we should not be considering doing that. We have to think strategically in all these situations so I would be looking ... if that is a strategic option for us in the long run I think that is a good plan.

**3.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

A matter of weeks ago the Minister tweeted about having put a letter on the door of an empty property. Now that some weeks have passed does he consider that was a good use of Ministerial time?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. It absolutely was and I am ... it is quite interesting the stir it caused. The positive out of all of that is it has got people talking about empty homes and vacated properties, which I had seen no commentary on at all before my efforts into politics. It certainly was not outside in my ... maybe in the bubble that is the States Assembly maybe it was a big deal but it certainly was not in my realm. Now I get asked many, many times about how that is progressing and I have to say we are going to be having a meeting with the Connétables tomorrow, the committee, talking about vacated and empty homes in their various Parishes and see what options are available to us. So, no, it was not a waste of time, it is has brought it to the fore and it is very important we start to use all our property in the most effective and efficient way.

**3.6.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

I would like to ask the Minister how that activity has informed his policy-making and whether indeed the time spent on that activity was useful in inputting into the Government Plan and the Common Strategic Policy?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. What it did do was inform the scale of the issue or attempt to inform the scale of the issue. We have started out with a number of something like 4,000 homes, we are now down to maybe 500 homes, which we believe have been abandoned. That has been a worthwhile effort. It is forming part of my Ministerial plans going forward as to how we get these buildings back into service again and operational again. To a degree I want to turn it into one of

these things where it is just not fair that people can have vacated properties which there is no attempt to do anything at all, which is doing nothing for the environment and how do we get these back into use again when there is so much pressure on the land that is on this Island.

### **3.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour:**

Will the Minister agree to publish and keep regularly updated the rent charged by Andium Homes?

#### **Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. I believe that is published already. I may be wrong on that case and I am happy to come back to you if I am wrong, but as far as I am aware Andium track private sector rents and if they do not publish that I will try and find out and establish that information for you. You may be able to correct me on that front.

#### **3.7.1 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Yes, they are not regularly updated and I know this will be discussed a bit later on as well but, for this matter now, does the Minister believe Andium tenants should have sufficient advance notice of the new rental cost when having to move to another property?

#### **Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. They do and one of the points I think you may be alluding to here is about Andium tenants who have been moved recently to updated properties. Andium go out of their way to make sure that they give a degree of time for their clients to understand the implications of moving them to new properties.

### **3.8 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I would like to ask the Minister's advice for somebody. How much does the Minister believe is required for a deposit and would be a reasonable monthly income to gain a one-bedroom flat at the cost of £370,000?

#### **Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. Could you just clarify, is that to go within the ... under Andium to sell or are you talking about private sector?

#### **The Bailiff:**

A number of things arise. Firstly, you must please address questions: "Could the Deputy please clarify whether or not ...?" Normally, this is not an opportunity for questions in response but sometimes I will permit some clarification if that genuinely will help the answer to be forthcoming. I think that possibly is the case here. But if you could, it is a knack and it takes time for people to pick it up, but it is never: "Thank you, Deputy, for your question" it is always: "I thank the Deputy for his or her question" as the case may be. It is a discipline that we have to adopt, Minister. Are you able to give that clarification, Deputy? I will not treat it as a further question.

#### **Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, Sir. I will differentiate. For a one-bedroom flat at the cost of £370,000, what would the Minister suggest is required for a deposit and a reasonable monthly income to gain a mortgage for that property or home?

#### **Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. What is a reasonable amount? I mean that is about affordability, is it not? What you can afford, what I can afford are different things. I cannot see that there is a figure, a sum that we can specifically reference and say: "That is the sum that is affordable in this situation." It depends on the individual's circumstances. One of the policies we are currently

working on is trying to identify what we mean by the word “affordability”. That is a piece of work that we are currently working up a policy on.

### **3.8.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I will let it go but that was not answered. Supplementary question. The Minister recently, very publicly complimented the 63 affordable homes that were being sold at £370,000, therefore by calling them affordable it must *ipso facto* be his definition of affordable. So I ask the Minister again: what deposit would he expect people to have to buy those affordable homes and what would their monthly income be in order that they are affordable for that person or couple for a one-bedroom flat?

### **Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. I will get there in the end. The concept of affordability I come back to has yet to be properly defined. Affordable homes was mentioned in the publicity material by La Masurier, that was their term. They used that term as affordable, so they obviously did some homework on that and said: “These are what we would define as affordable homes.” The problem we have as a government is how do we quantify affordability? How do we work out, how do we give some indication of what affordability is? It is really important when it comes to the bridging Island Plan and building on greenfield sites because, as we have seen recently, we saw £3.5 million paid for a site which ordinarily would have been £70,000. The question is: how do we stop these huge inflationary price increases if we do not have some kind of way of identifying affordability? The other thing I want to pull back on also is we have a home-buyer scheme through Andium. Andium provide a 25 per cent share partnership ... I have got some numbers here which identifies how those figures will fall down. Let us try and find them while I am answering this question. Bear with me while ...

### **The Bailiff:**

Well, I think you have run out of time to do so, I am afraid, Minister.

### **Deputy D. Warr:**

Well, I will have to come back on that one. I am happy to share those figures though with the Deputy.

### **The Bailiff:**

Well, thank you very much. That brings the question time - and I have allowed a minute of injury time for my intervention earlier - to this Minister to an end. The next Minister is the Minister for Infrastructure.

## **4. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Infrastructure**

### **4.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is the same question as the last one. What measures, if any, does the Minister have under consideration or in action to control inflation on the Island?

### **Deputy T. Binet (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

It is a pretty similar answer to that which was given by the Minister for Housing and Communities, and that is to say that there is very little we can do to control inflation from the Island. In terms of our own department, I can say that we are looking to be as efficient as we can in every area. If the Deputy has some other suggestions which would be helpful to us, I would be very happy to listen.

### **4.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

So in effect the Minister is saying: “I have no means by which I can control inflation on the Island in the areas that I am involved in”; is that the case?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Can I refer the Deputy to the answer I gave before, and that is we are being as efficient as we possibly can. If the Deputy has any suggestions that he thinks will be helpful to us, I would be more than happy to listen.

**4.2 Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

Could the Minister please update the Assembly on our hospital review process and just provide assurance that it is proceeding, and the findings will be delivered on time or sooner, if possible?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Taking that in reverse order, I think it is highly unlikely that the report will be released before 20th October. We had the sad demise of the Queen which has caused us quite a hiatus, and not a lot of work was possible during that time. But I can assure the Deputy that work is going well and - he also knows because he was there - I invited the Deputy to a meeting and he met Mr. Alan Moore who is overseeing the process, and relations are much more friendly than they were when this all started. The Deputy has kindly offered his considerable experience and advice to help the process going forward which is greatly appreciated.

**4.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

When the Minister made his announcement in public that work on the hospital would cease, that Overdale was no longer to be the chosen site, had he already discussed that with his Ministerial colleagues, for example, the Chief Minister, the Minister for Housing and Communities, the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for the Environment?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I am a little confused. Could I ask Deputy Tadier to tell me where he heard that I had ordered all works to cease?

**The Bailiff:**

Well I think the answer to the question is if you did not order works to cease then that is the answer to the question.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Thank you for answering the question on my behalf. That is not something that I have done, certainly not that I can recall.

**4.3.1 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I am not sure which alternative universe we have entered because I remember these comments being made in the media. But would the Minister confirm that if it is the States Assembly's decision in the future that we wish for the hospital to continue being built at Overdale, and no decision by this Assembly has been made to the contrary, will he respect that decision?

[11:00]

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Perhaps I should clarify the first one first. Yes, I can confirm that I am in this universe, and I am not quite sure which universe Deputy Tadier inhabits because I was very clear to the media. I think I undertook 6 interviews, and I told each one of them that I would go through the whole process in its entirety. Some of them chose to report me selectively, and perhaps if Deputy Tadier had had any concerns he might have got in touch with me rather than taking everything that he is taking these comments from, from the media.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, that was the first part of the question. The actual second part of the question was I think ...

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I think we live in a universe where the Minister answers selective questions.

**The Bailiff:**

I think the second part of the question that you have been asked ... now it has gone out of my head, I am afraid.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

The Minister has answered a question that I did not ask. The question, to aid everyone's memory, is that if this Assembly is clear with the Minister that he wants work to proceed for the hospital project at Overdale, as it has in the past, will he respect that decision?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I find this quite extraordinary. I did not realise I was in a position to do anything but respect the decisions of the Assembly. It is very plain, nothing changes until the Assembly changes its mind. I simply said that in its current form - because this is information that had been made available to me - in its current form, the hospital project could not proceed, and that is the terminology that I used.

**4.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

The jewel in the crown of the St. Helier South constituency is the Lido at Havre des Pas. Earlier this year the States Assembly approved proposition 61 which asked the Minister for Infrastructure, along with the Property Holdings Department, to effect reasonable endeavours to maintain the facility at Havre des Pas, including establishing a steering group to maximise the benefit that that premises provides to the community. Could I ask the Minister if he has any update to give the Assembly on work done to maintain the Lido and to establish that steering group?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Firstly, I would like to thank Deputy Mézec for being kind enough to forewarn me of this question which was very much appreciated. Sadly, I have got to report that there are some difficulties with Havre des Pas. I was informed when I first took office that it was a complicated situation, particularly because the building is old and in very poor condition. I have attended, as has Deputy Mézec, every meeting of the residents which has been extremely useful and I have had several meetings with the tenant and with the I.H.E. Department to discuss the background, which goes back a long way and has various complications on both sides. Recently a survey was undertaken which has revealed some safety issues and at the moment I am currently dealing with all of that. We are having a series of meetings to try and resolve what is quite a difficult situation. I cannot say anything more than that, some of it is commercially sensitive, but I am very happy to come back to the Assembly with a full report once all of these issues have been resolved.

**4.4.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

I thank the Minister for his answer and for the particular interest he has shown in the Lido, which I know is much appreciated by the community down there. Would he, therefore, commit to having a meeting at his earliest convenience with myself and the other political representatives for St. Helier South, including the Parish Constable, to discuss developments of this proposition since it was adopted, including the establishment of that steering group to make sure that we can all have confidence that the work being done to maintain this vital part of Havre des Pas is something we can have confidence in is being done adequately?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Yes, I can confirm that I will be very happy to do that as soon as we possibly can.

**4.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

What does the Minister consider to be the maximum spend he will accept for a new hospital?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I am afraid I cannot answer that question at all, and it will not be down to me in isolation, I am quite sure. Could I ask that we park that question until the review has come out and we have made further progress?

**The Bailiff:**

Well, that is the answer to the question, that you cannot come up with the information at this point. You do not know if you cannot ...

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Quite correct.

**4.5.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can I assume then that the Minister would accept the same cost as previously if that is what comes out in the review?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

As I say, that will not be a decision for me, that will be a decision ultimately for the Assembly, but the review is looking at a number of different options. I think it would be very useful if we just hold fire on that sort of question until such time as we have reached a conclusion.

**4.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

I had a few appointments at Overdale lately and I could not help not to see how deteriorated the buildings there are now. Can the Minister state who is responsible for the current very deteriorated state of the buildings there, and how does the Minister intend to remediate this?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Sorry, I did not catch which buildings they were.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

At Overdale.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Well I have to ask, there are a number of buildings at Overdale: there are the derelict buildings at the back of the site and the more modern ones at the front. If you could be specific, then I could possibly ...

**The Bailiff:**

If the Deputy could be more specific.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Sorry, if the Deputy could be specific, then I could be more helpful in terms of answering that more specifically.

**The Bailiff:**

I think it is a fair point, we do have time. I would not normally allow any kind of elaboration but, generally speaking, do you have specific buildings in mind, Deputy?

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

It is mostly on the old ones but I see deterioration on the new part as well on the outside building. I can take the Minister there at some point maybe to show if needed.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Yes, I can agree that some of the more modern buildings are, they are not in a state of dilapidation, but they are looking a little bit poorly but, I am in danger of sounding like a broken record, if we could wait until 20th October. Once we have got a direction of travel, then we can look at taking further action to ... I do not think it is worth spending money on maintenance depending on what happens. So I think everything is on hold until we get the results of the review, if that is okay.

**4.7 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

The Minister's department has suffered for some time with staff shortages, not only on the road side but also the Property Holding's side. Could he tell Members what the shortage rate or percentage rate of the staff is at present in the department?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Unfortunately, I cannot give precise numbers but I could get that answer for the Constable before the end of the day.

**4.7.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Is there effort being made to recruit new staff members where there are shortages?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I can confirm that there is indeed.

**4.8 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin:**

The Minister may be aware that the reclamation site at La Collette is full and has been, for all intents and purposes, for some months now. Is it the Minister's intention to continue to tip inert waste at La Collette?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I can confirm that we are looking as a matter of urgency at a number of different options.

**4.8.1 Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Does the Minister consider it right that his department continues to fill this site despite a planning application not being approved?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Can I assume that we are referring to inert waste; if I could ask the Deputy to confirm?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, the department put in a planning application to build to a specific height of superfill at La Collette and they are building higher and they have not had the application approved.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

We are in a very difficult situation, as you know. We have got a housing crisis; we are building as many houses on the Island as we can. There is a lot of construction going on, and that requires a lot of demolition, and the demolition requires the inert waste to be processed. At present there is not



anywhere else for it to be processed and we have, sadly, no option but to process it at La Collette. As I say, we are working as a matter of urgency to look for alternative ways of dealing with it.

**4.9 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:**

We have heard this morning about the bus service. The provision of bus shelters falls under the Minister's remit. Will he tell the Assembly, please, how long he thinks it is reasonable before a bus shelter is delivered when it has been agreed that it is a necessity? So how long should it take from agreeing with his department that a bus shelter is necessary to it being delivered by his department?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I am not sure if I am supposed to choose a specific number of days. All I would say is, as soon as possible. If the Deputy has a particular concern, if she could air that concern, I shall chase it up and make sure that we move as quickly as we can.

**4.9.1 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

The Constable will certainly follow up with it. The Constable. The Minister mentioned days. The particular bus shelter that I have in mind has taken, I would say, 4-plus years, so it is almost as long as our hospital, so it is not a good situation for my parishioners to be in. I look to Deputy Morel who has also been working with me to get this delivered and ...

**The Bailiff:**

This does have to be a question.

**The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

My question ...

**The Bailiff:**

Well I am not likely to stop simply because you raise your hand and try and stop me.

**The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

I beg your pardon, Sir.

**The Bailiff:**

Not at all. But, no, if you could just ask the question specifically, that would be helpful.

**The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

Yes, my specific question is: will the Minister meet with me to ensure that this is delivered as soon as possible?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I am happy to do that.

**4.10 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

I would like to ask the Minister what work he is undertaking in partnership with the Constable of St. Helier to improve road safety, in particular for pedestrians living in St. Helier?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I meet once a fortnight with the Constable of St. Helier and we discuss a wide range of things, including road safety. As the Deputy will know, there has been a road safety review, and we are

currently working on a road safety strategy, and the Constable is included in those discussions once a fortnight.

**The Bailiff:**

That brings an end to the opportunity of questions to this Minister. The next question period is for the Chief Minister.

**5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister**

**5.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Today's *Jersey Evening Post* contains an impressive double-page spread about the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) and the Government Plan, which I think goes into greater detail than that which was provided in the press release which was sent to them yesterday. Would the Chief Minister like to commend their journalists for clearly working into the night to get this spread provided for the paper today, or was it the case that they were provided extra detail before midnight when States Members received the final documents?

**Deputy K.L. Moore (The Chief Minister):**

I am aware that States Members had a briefing with ourselves on Friday and information has been circulated, both to States Members - well, it was on Thursday night in advance of our briefing on Friday - and then again to the media yesterday in advance of their briefing yesterday afternoon. There was obviously some time for questions and answers and I can only assume that that might have been ... unfortunately, I did not take part in that question-and-answer session yesterday. I can only assume that that might be as a result of answers to questions.

**5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

This is the same question, this chance possibly it might be answered. What measures, if any, does the Chief Minister have on the consideration or inaction to control inflation on the Island?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

So, as the Deputy is well aware, we have limited levers with which we can wrestle with an important issue like inflation. However, there are some things that we can as a government attempt to do in order to restrain inflation in the Island. This is not a measure that we ourselves have been able to implement, but the increases recently in interest rates will of course be causing many home owners and potential home owners to be taking their own decisions which will have a resultant impact and, I hope, on our local economy, but equally we can look to freezing duties, which is what we have done in our Government Plan in terms of freezing both alcohol and fuel duty. In our mini-Budget we implemented measures to support Islanders who are feeling the impact of recent inflation.

**5.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Yes, I did not quite understand how the ordinary mortgage-holder is going to influence the percentage rate of his or her mortgage.

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think what I am referring to is the potential for changes in the housing market as a result of affirmative action that people might or might not take as they see their interest rate on their mortgage change and the impact that it may have on the household budget.

[11:15]

**5.3 Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

The Chief Minister is on record, I believe, as saying that the current Our Hospital project is unaffordable in its current format. Out of the £804.5 million budget agreed by the previous

Assembly, she will also know that a considerable amount less than that was allocated for the construction of the hospital, and the rest is made up of contingencies and optimism bias, which is being put under pressure as there is a delay. Will she agree that any review that is provided being led by Deputy Binet will contain evidence of the affordability issue on the hospital? So what I am trying to say is, that if the review is going to say the hospital cannot be built for the sum agreed by the States, we would like to see evidence because I understand there are other building firms expressing an interest ...

**The Bailiff:**

This is a very, very long question, Deputy.

**Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

I have just finished, thank you.

**The Bailiff:**

Halfway through a sentence but there we go.

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Well, clearly I cannot pre-empt the findings of the hospital review but what I can say about the affordable and appropriate approach that this Government takes to delivering future health facilities for Islanders, which we absolutely agree are much needed, this was a topic, as the Deputy knows, that was much aired during the election period. I can only assume that the great support that myself and other successful Deputies, as I look around this Assembly, received was in some part as a result of Islanders' views regarding the hospital project and its need for a pause and some reconsideration. That is why we are here today representing the public.

**5.3.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

Just to be a little more concise than my previous attempt, will she agree, will she ensure, working with Deputy Binet and the Council of Ministers, that any review will provide evidence that the current project is unaffordable within the current budget? Evidence, please.

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Deputy Binet has committed to an evidence-based approach in this review, and so we would expect absolutely nothing less of him. The evidence that we have been shown to date identifies that the current project, as it was presented by the Deputy to the previous Assembly, now exceeds the spending envelope that was agreed by the previous Assembly. So, whatever approach is taken and adopted following the findings of the review, this Assembly will have to be asked to consider an alternative.

**Deputy L.J. Farnham:**

May I seek a brief point of clarification in the Chief Minister's answer?

**The Bailiff:**

No, I am sorry, I am afraid a point of clarification of an answer is not provided for within Standing Orders, Deputy.

**5.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

Would the Chief Minister please explain why, unlike in the previous Common Strategic Policy, references to reducing income inequality do not appear in the recently-published Common Strategic Policy published by the Council of Ministers, given that this is a standard measure of social policy success?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

The common strategic priorities that we have laid out as this Government have the shared intention of Jersey becoming a community where everyone can thrive. I think in the description of “thriving” and the 7 priorities that we have chosen, quality of life and affordable living is centre to those. So, every decision that we take will have the quality of life of Islanders and the impact that our decisions take on improving their quality of life at its very heart. There are many measures included in the common strategic priorities also because we are an outcomes-based focused Council of Ministers. We certainly do hope that through the decisions that we as a Council have taken, and as this Assembly takes, over the coming years, we shall see an improvement in both the quality of life and that does of course mean the affordability of life for all Islanders so that they can all thrive.

#### **5.4.1 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

Will the Chief Minister accept that research shows high levels of income inequality give rise to social problems that generally need to be resolved by funding provided by the taxpayer?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

We have a market economy, and Jersey has a strong economy, an economy that we have a desire to protect and support so that it remains strong into the future. It has, as we look at other places at this time, put us in a great position, and it is our aim to ensure that that clear position stands going into the future. That will mean taking sometimes prudent decisions because that is what those who have gone before us have also done, sometimes in difficult circumstances. To get back to the Deputy’s question, there are many different ways of measuring the impact that finances have upon Islanders and we are well aware that Islanders face a high cost of living, particularly after housing costs. We will be taking and bringing decisions to this Assembly in order to meet that. We can also look at rental stress and, of course, we want to see the number of Islanders experiencing rental stress reduced. I think every single Member of this Assembly would agree with me in that and together we will seek to improve those measures.

#### **5.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can I ask the Chief Minister, who was a real promoter of the C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) benchmarks for our legislature, one of which is to provide constituency offices and staff to support Members in their constituency, what is being done to undertake that and what timescale we can expect in order that we have the sort of support that we have for the new structure within constituencies?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. Of course the findings of the Democratic Accountability Group of the previous Assembly was one of the reasons why I put constituency offices in the 100-day plan. I think perhaps it was a slightly ambitious wording of that part of the plan, and we are at various states in terms of reaching it. It would be one of the items, one of the 3 items, requiring some additional work. However, I did on Thursday visit the new constituency office for the Members of St. Helier, and I have also conducted some discussions, both with the Greffe and with the chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee), in relation to how we can better progress a proper approach to constituency offices. But for the time being, they may not quite meet the ultimate description as supplied by the C.P.A. benchmarking report.

#### **5.5.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

May I ask the Minister whether she believes that one room for 36,000 constituents is adequate? Second, whether it is important to provide these offices in order to support the new structure that we have and show it to be worthwhile before we throw it out if we are not careful?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I have to say, I am a big fan of our new voting constituencies. I think it is as a result of that that we saw the great change that Islanders voted for in the last election. I think through having these constituency offices embedded in their local communities, that enhances the way that Members will meet with their constituents and also respond to their needs. I do feel very strongly that these should be regular and consistent, and I look forward to all Members having these opportunities. Just last week, myself, Deputy Stephenson, Deputy Gorst and Deputy Farnham attended our first constituency meeting at St. Mary for our district. We were really surprised to see people queuing outside, enjoying the company of each other as they waited for their opportunity to meet with us. I think that only emphasised the very importance of these opportunities within our voting districts.

**5.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

The Government has outlined its intention to undertake a value-for-money review. Could the Chief Minister define what she means by “value” in this context?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I am sure with time we will share with Scrutiny the paper that underpins this. I think what is really important is to reassure staff that this is about finding a way to improve our internal processes and ensuring that we deliver for Islanders with the resources that we have, and that means an approach to simplifying processes, ensuring that we operate an administration that is simple to administer. But we are very grateful to all of those people who contribute to our public sector, and we want to reassure them at this time that they have nothing to be concerned about in terms of their own roles. We simply want to ensure that we can direct and dedicate our additional resources to improving our critical public services, particularly in terms of safety, health and education.

**The Bailiff:**

I am afraid that brings question time to the Chief Minister to an end. That concludes all of the periods of question time.

**STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**6. The Minister for Housing and Communities will make a statement regarding the Implementation of Empty Property Tax P.48/2022**

**The Bailiff:**

The next item is a Statement of Official Responsibility to be made by the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding the Implementation of Empty Property Tax, P.48. As Members will know, after the statement has been made, there is a period of up to 15 minutes in which the Minister can be questioned on that. It has been emailed to Members, apparently. Have Members ...

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Would you like me to read it?

**The Bailiff:**

Not yet, I am just establishing that it has been circularised to Members.

**The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

I do not have it.

**The Bailiff:**

Apparently, it has now just been delivered to everyone. In the circumstances, I will then invite the Minister to deliver the statement at this point.

**6.1 Deputy D. Warr (The Minister for Housing and Communities):**

I must first point out that Deputy Tadier's proposition asked the Minister for Housing and Communities to "initiate the necessary arrangements for the preparation of an options paper identifying potential mechanisms with a view to publication before the end of September 2022." I can confirm that necessary arrangements have been initiated and I have delivered on that. I have been in discussions with the Greffier's office and can confirm that the September date, as confirmed by the Greffier's office, was an aim, not a deadline. Nevertheless, in the interest of openness and transparency, I would like to update Members on what is happening, but I am going to be brief, I do not want to waste time, particularly as I have already shared this letter - which I thought we had already shared this letter - to Deputy Tadier with my fellow Members. I have been working with officers across various departments within government to draw up an effective options paper, one that I believe will bring tangible solutions. I am meeting with the Comité des Connétables this week. It is important that I work constructively with them in developing options, drawing on their wealth of parochial knowledge and securing their support to address the problem. The Connétable of St. Peter has already identified properties, and I thank him for his help. It is vital we get this right. My objective is to bring vacant properties into the market, and I will present options that will do exactly that. Many Members will know how important this matter is to me. It is vital that we make the best use of homes we already have. I would ask Deputy Tadier to work with me on this so that we can make much-needed progress in this area. I look forward to bringing an options paper to the Assembly within the next 2 months.

**The Bailiff:**

There is now a period of 15 minutes in which questions can be asked. First is Deputy Mézec.

**6.1.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Can I commend the Minister for bringing forward this statement? This ought to be the default in instances like this where deadlines set by the Assembly are not met. So could I therefore ask the Minister to confirm that if there are any subsequent delays and he is not able to reach the deadline he has set in the final sentence of the statement for publication within the next 2 months, that he would endeavour to keep us updated proactively on this?

[11:30]

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I will do.

**6.1.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

I am very pleased at the thought that Deputy Tadier might be assisting the Minister in developing options in terms of vacant properties which may be vacant for all manner of reasons. One of those options, I just wonder if the Minister might consider, is the possibility, as is the case happens in other jurisdictions, that where you have a property that is left to go derelict, perhaps because somebody wealthy has inherited that property and just wants to hang on to get some development going from that, the possibility of introducing a tax on failure to develop properties?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for her question. That is obviously one of the options that we will consider. I cannot go into any more detail than that; we are just simply going through that process at the moment establishing what the best options are.

**6.1.3 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Can I ask the Minister what methodology he and his officers are using to ascertain what the best options may be?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for her question. Methodology-wise, first of all is we need to identify the properties, so this is why we are meeting with the Comité des Connétables tomorrow to establish how we can identify what properties are vacant, how we achieve that. It is not a very simple exercise at all, as I have subsequently discovered. So we are working through those at this moment in time and we will come back to the Assembly in due course.

**6.1.4 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

With regard to implementation, the number of properties are probably neither here nor there or what those properties are, so has the Minister undertaken to have any conversations with either the Tax Department or the Minister for Treasury and Resources about this?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Not at this moment in time.

**6.1.5 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Could the Minister confirm when it became apparent to him that the September deadline was not going to be met?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. The answer to that question is I am not entirely sure, to be honest with you, so I will refer to my officers on that front.

**6.1.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Would the Minister agree that where it becomes apparent that a deadline is going to be missed substantially before that deadline, that it is right to proactively come to this Assembly to give us as much notice as possible that a deadline is going to be missed? I commended him for bringing this statement but we are having this statement after that deadline has already passed. In future would he be more proactive than that and encourage his Ministerial colleagues to be as proactive as he has been?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. Absolutely. Obviously, this is something held over from the previous States Assembly and has come under my remit subsequently; obviously, we have been working on an awful lot of other projects as well. So, I apologise that this one slipped lower down the list and will endeavour to get this one back up, as I have already said earlier.

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

I am just wondering: has the Deputy got an agreed definition of what is a “justifiably empty property”?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I thank the Deputy for his question. No, is the simple answer to that. There are clearly a lot of reasons, as has already been established, as to why properties are vacated and empty. Is the criteria 6 months, 12 months, 18 months? I think we have yet to formalise what that means.

**The Bailiff:**

Are there any other questions for the Minister? Then I close questions following from this statement.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**7. Jersey Police Complaints Authority - Appointment of Members (P.87/2022)**

**The Bailiff:**

We now move on to Public Business. The first item is the Jersey Police Complaints Authority - Appointment of Members, P.87. The main responder is the chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, and I ask the Greffier to read the citation.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I just have a question, apologies, before we start. If you are a member of Jersey Police Authority, which I have recently become, do I have to remove myself from the vote from the Jersey Police Complaints Authority? It is a genuine question, I simply do not know the answer.

**The Bailiff:**

I would not have thought so, Deputy, and I think we will take that as the current ruling for the time being, absent an opportunity to think about it at greater length. Very well, please read the citation, Greffier.

**The Deputy Greffier of the States:**

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion in accordance with Article 2 of, and the Schedule to, the Police (Complaints and Discipline) (Jersey) Law 1999, to appoint the following persons as members of the Jersey Police Complaints Authority for a period of 3 years, commencing immediately: Blake Albert; Allison Le Couteur and Jenna Newlands.

**7.1 Deputy H. Miles of St. Brelade (The Minister for Home Affairs):**

I am very pleased to recommend to the Assembly the appointment of Mr. Blake Albert, Ms. Allison Le Couteur and Ms. Jenna Newlands as members of the Jersey Police Complaints Authority. As Members will be aware, the Jersey Police Complaints Authority supervises the investigation of complaints against the States of Jersey Police. The independent oversight is crucial to maintaining and building trust and confidence in our police force. The authority is constituted under the Police (Complaints and Discipline) (Jersey) Law 1999 and in accordance with that law must consist of a chair, as well as not less than 6 and no greater than 8 members. The Chair and the members are all volunteers who give up their time to serve on the authority for no remuneration. As a result of retirements from the authority, the appointment of new members is required to ensure that the authority is operating within the membership levels required under the law. This also ensures that the authority has the necessary capacity within its ranks to undertake its functions effectively. If the Assembly approves these appointments, the authority will have 7 members in addition to the chair, and I am pleased to report that it will have an equal number of male and female members. Details in relation to the professional background of all the nominees are included in the report attached to the proposition, and Members will see that nominees bring skills and experience from a range of backgrounds which will no doubt further strengthen the authority. Some Members may recall that the Jersey Police Complaints Authority is due to become the Jersey Police Complaints Commission when the Draft Police (Complaints and Conduct) (Jersey) Law that was passed by the Assembly early this year is brought into force. At that point, the process for making appointments to the commission will change and Members will be appointed by the Minister, rather than the Assembly. So this therefore may be the last set of appointments to the authority that a Minister for Home Affairs will bring to the Assembly. I would like to take the opportunity to express my thanks to those nominees and all of those who have previously served as members of the authority for offering their time and expertise in the service of our community. Members of the authority are exemplars of the spirit of volunteering that is essential for our Jersey community life, and they should be commended for their service. I am pleased to recommend the appointments to the Assembly, and I make the proposition.

**The Bailiff:**

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



### 7.1.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can I speak in favour of this proposition and say that, looking at the proposed appointees and the information that we are given about them, on the face of it they appear to be excellent appointees. There is a diversity of professional experience in this, and notably there appears to be nothing in the information we are given about them that could give rise to any concerns about potential conflicts of interests and no involvement in having represented those people who the complaints authority exists to hold to account. I would, therefore, just like to ask the Minister for Housing and Communities to perhaps take note of this when putting forward his proposition on the Rent Control Tribunal.

#### The Bailiff:

Mr. Solicitor General, your light is on for reasons best known ... or at least it is showing on my screen. It is gone now, it is all right. Whether it was a ghost in the machine or an errant file, I could not say. Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? Then I call upon the Minister to respond.

### 7.1.2 Deputy H. Miles:

I thank Deputy Mézec for his comments and call for the *appel*, please.

#### The Bailiff:

The *appel* is called for. I invite any Member who is not in the Chamber to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been adopted: 39 votes *pour*; no votes *contre*; no abstentions.

<b>POUR: 39</b>		<b>CONTRE: 0</b>		<b>ABSTAIN: 0</b>
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Connétable of St. Brelade				
Connétable of St. Peter				
Connétable of St. John				
Connétable of St. Clement				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of St. Mary				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Deputy G..P. Southern				
Deputy C.F. Labey				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat				
Deputy S.M. Ahier				
Deputy R.J. Ward				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy I.J. Gorst				

Deputy K.L. Moore				
Deputy S.Y. Mézec				
Deputy P.M. Bailhache				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy B.B.S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy D.J. Warr				
Deputy H.M. Miles				
Deputy M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

## **8. Cost of living crisis - measures affecting Andium Homes rent increases (P.92/2022)**

### **The Bailiff:**

The next item is the Cost-of-living crisis - measures affecting Andium Homes rent increases, P.92, lodged by Deputy Ward. The main responder will be the Minister for Housing and Communities. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

### **The Deputy Greffier of the States:**

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion that tenants of Andium Homes who downsize within the Andium estate, or who move from one Andium property into another refurbished Andium home, should not face inappropriate sudden increases in rent upon moving and to request the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as shareholder representative, to instruct Andium Homes to implement a scheme whereby any increase in rent in such circumstances is suspended for one year from the start of the new tenancy, with any such increase then introduced incrementally over a period of between 5 and 10 years depending upon the tenant's ability to pay.

### **8.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I will keep my introduction brief, as is going to be the fashion of this sitting. This proposition came about through consultation with constituents - not my constituents - in St. Clement, but they felt they would come to me. There is real concern about an increase in rental costs for Andium Home tenants

when they are moved out and then moved into refurbished accommodation, really significant increases that are putting people into serious rental stress or driving people on to income support. So the context of this proposition, I emailed the Minister for Housing and Communities on 8th August 2022 and received a reply on 17th August, 9 days later, which simply pointed out the policy I was already aware of. I had said in my original email that should there not be an adequate outcome or action taken, I would bring something forward; therefore, I am being true to my word. I note that there are comments that arrived at 9.51 a.m. this morning, and I am extremely disappointed that the comments would arrive that late before a debate. This was lodged in time on 12th September. I recognise that it has been a challenging time for myself; however, I have been in meetings, I was on teams, a meeting with the Minister for Housing and Communities recently for the Scrutiny Panel, so it is clear that I was available for speaking to or consulting with. Therefore, addressing the comments is going to be slightly challenging because of being very quick, given that we were also involved in questioning, thank heavens, that we are. So in Written Question 166/2022, which was answered only about Le Marais and, to be quite frank, that was not what the question was for, but let us just leave that for now, it identified that there were 80 tenants that face an increase. That is 80 people in our social housing provider to face an increase, 29 of them not on income support. The mean - the mean - average of rent rise was £236.82 per month; the median was £226.92 a month. I note that when you look at the cost of living mini-Budget, the amount of income that would have gone to those people is effectively wiped out, if they are not on income support, by these changes. What we are doing with our social housing provider is creating a huge level of rental stress from those who are moving. I note very importantly, it is in the report, and I will read from it in a moment, that the refurbishment was to meet decent homes standards. To meet decent home standards. We are now saying to tenants: "You will now pay for that decent home standard that we were providing as a social housing provider." So what we are getting to here is a very simple fact, that the drivers behind this are wrong, they are not working. So, what I have asked for us to do is for this Assembly to represent your constituents and say that we will delay any rent increase for one year, then it will be incrementally introduced, given a review of whether it is genuinely affordable for those people.

[11:45]

I say to you, if you do not believe that is the case, it will be up to you to explain to your constituents why you believe they can take this hit in one go. I am afraid that I struggle to do that. I mentioned that Le Marais was the answer to the question, but there are other places all over the Island as the refurbished people are moved, and the driver behind it is to get everybody on to the 80 per cent rent. I understand that, I understand the policy, and I hope that the Minister is not simply going to quote policy again. The problem with that policy is, it is driving people who are on long-term contracts, they have been on these contracts for many, many years, into a contract they have no control over, no choice over, but is putting them into serious rental and financial stress. The reason for that is because not simply that is the only way ... sorry, I refute the idea that that is the only way that we can pay for this refurbishment. I refer you to the report, from the annual report of Andium Homes: "Rental income is our key funding source and so the adoption of a new 80 per cent rent policy presents a challenge to our business model." Yes, it does recognise that; however, it is more of a challenge to those paying the rents. "However, our business model is not reliant on rental income in isolation." It is not reliant on rental income in isolation, I am going to repeat. "It is reliant upon the relationship between the social housing rents policy and the financial return we deliver to the Government each year." We have recognised a cost-of-living crisis which is disproportionately affecting those with least income in our society, those people who qualify for social housing, yet at the same time we are pushing them into a new contract, which is higher rents which is simply not affordable for many or will take away any help that is given for the cost-of-living crisis. As for this notion - and I scanned the comments paper that arrived so late - as for this notion that it is okay because people on fixed incomes, pensioners, can go on to income support, I am sorry, but that is a poor reflection of our society and a poor reflection of us, if what we are saying to people is: "It is okay, we can now put

you into the income support system.” I have no problem, I am not one who demonises those who have to rely on income support. I am the one who stands here and constantly says: “Let us limit rents. Let us increase pay. Let us make sure people have a decent standard of living through what they earn.” However, there is an issue of income support for so many, and there are proud people, people who have lived their entire lives without claiming who are now being told because you are ... they have no choice to move anywhere else into the private sector. They do not have spare homes that they are letting out, somewhere they can just pop to and get rid of their tenant. They are reliant upon social housing and have been all their life, and now they are being told ... I have got to keep a straight face here, and I have got to keep calm because I find it remarkable that we are doing this: “Because we are now putting your social housing up to a standard that is required for decent living, you will now be forced on to income support to survive.” That is an inadequate response. So what this proposition does, would stop that happening for one year, and it would give the opportunity for the Minister for Housing and Communities and the Minister for Treasury and Resources to look again at that model for these people because otherwise we are creating a system whereby more and more people will be trapped in the cycle of poverty with income support. It is no good to say: “Well, that is okay, they can go to Citizens Advice and get help with their forms.” I challenge Members to go through and make an income support claim. I have a degree, I am quite proud of my education, I would not want to make an income support claim. They are challenging, they are difficult, and also they are intrusive. So, people who are on fixed income who may want to earn a little bit of money doing whatever as they get older, then have to declare that and you have the offset. That offset might go wrong, and they might not declare it properly, after 3 or 4 months the money builds up and, lo and behold, they end up with an overpayment. We are putting people into this situation where it is unnecessary. Because let us look at it this way, that income support money is going to Andium and then Andium are making a repayment to income support and circulating that money while those people in the middle are victims - and I use that word wisely - they are victims of a system that is letting them down and driving them into poverty. How can we sit here in this Assembly and talk about dealing with poverty, and talking about a mini-Budget that is going to even things up and enable people, and then drive a significant number of our people, tenants in social housing, into exactly the poverty that we are trying to do something about? So I bring this proposition simply to make that change. It gives some time, it gives them an opportunity for review, and it gives the opportunity to look again as to whether that is what we want to do to our constituents, our parishioners, the people that we see day in, day out. I will leave it at that and we will see where we go with the debate; I hope it is quite a short one but there we go. I make the proposition. Thank you.

**The Bailiff:**

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

**8.1.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Firstly, I would like to apologise to Members for the late issue of these comments. It was on Friday afternoon at some time I was told that the comments could not be signed off unless they had my signature, despite having been passed through 6 other Ministers in the course of consideration and deliberations. At that point, when I took time to read it, I asked if some changes could be made. I also asked if I could speak to Deputy Ward and to Andium, and I did do that. So I am afraid the time it took for those discussions to be had, and for me then to make my suggested amendments to the comments, meant that the comments were sent over to the Greffe, I think, at some point after 5.30 p.m. on Friday afternoon and, therefore, they have not been circulated until this morning, so I can only apologise to everybody concerned. The reason for my call with Deputy Ward was to seek his deferral and some consideration that we might be able to work together to find some amendments, because I completely understand where he is coming from here in terms of listening to constituents and trying to find a solution. However, the Deputy has been very passionate, and quite rightly so,

about the improvements of standards within Andium, and he has described to the Assembly the money-go-round that we are subjected to, and States finances have been subjected to, for some time, and that goes for Andium too. The last Assembly took the decision to move to the 80 per cent of market rate for Andium tenants, and that was the right thing to do; however, it had a commensurate impact on Andium's finances. If we continue to push their finances to do something here, and to do something there, then we risk, unfortunately, the stability of those finances; therefore, we risk the ability for Andium Homes to continue their programme of building new homes for tenants and for sale, and for also continuing the improvements that they wish to make to their property stock. Because of course it was, as a result of the housing reforms that were brought back in 2012, I believe it was, that our stock was simply in a place where Andium had become unable to maintain housing stock - well it was previously the Housing Department - as we would hope as States Members. So they embarked on a voyage to reform housing so that they were able to borrow the money and improve the quality of stock for Islanders who require housing through the system that we have through social housing. So, in short, I am grateful to the Deputy for his consideration and for making his suggestion, but I would urge Assembly Members to help us find a solution that is both helpful to people in social housing, but equally helps to protect Andium and its budget so that we can resolve the money-go-round, so that we can continue to strengthen Andium and its ability to improve its existing housing stock, and to continue its programme of building which, as I mentioned earlier, has at least 1,000 new properties on its books over the coming years.

### **8.1.2 Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:**

I will be speaking briefly because I will be speaking later in the in-committee debate. It is my considered opinion that we are in for a bit of a rough time with what has been happening in the world. We have had major disruption with Brexit, with COVID, and now of course we have Eastern Europe. As I say, I will be speaking later in the main debate - the in-committee debate - but it is my considered opinion that we are having a rough road ahead. There will be a lot of realignment needed in the finances of the Island and finances of the world generally and we need this buffer to keep people safe meanwhile, so I will be supporting this proposition.

### **8.1.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

I am grateful to Deputy Ward for bringing this proposition. It touched upon an issue which I have experience of from having served as Minister for Housing previously. In fact, the refurbishments and the moves of tenants in Le Marais began when I was Minister for Housing and many of the moves from Hue Court took place while I was Minister. I remember attending Le Marais with officers from Andium so that I could meet with tenants there and speak to them first-hand to understand some of the issues and concerns they may have had when being asked to move so that that refurbishment could take place. Similarly, I also attended in person at Hue Court to speak to tenants there when they had concerns of how that was handled as well. I will not issue any word of criticism against Andium for how they try to handle those personal interactions with their tenants. I have seen them go into people's homes and sit down with them and try to be as clear as possible with them. But with the best will in the world, when you are asked to leave a home that you have been in for years and years and move somewhere else that can be a stressful time for people. Many of these tenants are very well settled in their homes and have a life there and are used to things where any kind of change to that will cause them anxiety. Many of these people have lived in their homes for years and years and years. The reason this becomes an issue for them is because when tenants move within Andium's housing stock to a new home they essentially become a new tenant. Their previous rental contract ends and they take on a new one, and when you become a new tenant for Andium your tenancy is set on the terms which the current rent policy dictates it must be. There is not a transition and whatever terms you were on, on your old contract, are ended at that point. So the question that Deputy Ward raises is when people do go through that transition how should it be managed, should it all be done in one go and is there adequate enough support in place for people in

that circumstance. I have come to the view that there ought to be a different kind of transition arrangement as part of a more socially-just rent policy. The rent policy that we have, though it is slightly different to the one that was adopted when Andium was created - and let me assure you I have the scars on my back to prove that because of how difficult it was to get it changed - it is a rent policy which is set up to take money from social renters and put it into the Treasury. It is not a rent policy which is set up to resemble what social housing is meant to be, which is that it is meant to be a way of providing homes which are genuinely affordable for those who need the help.

[12:00]

I have just been flicking through the Government Plan, which was sent to us just after midnight, and I am very disappointed to see that there is a line in it on page 66 that says: "Affordable homes for rent are subsidised on average by more than 20 per cent of market rate." That annoys me because I happen to know that the financial return which Andium Homes provides to the Treasury every year, which is about £30 million, is £10 million more than their tenants receive in income support. That means in actual fact social renters are subsidising the government, not the other way around. There is a net subsidy to government of £10 million, much of which will come from the earnings of social renters which they receive independently from government. So this approach to this rent policy I think is broken. The Minister for Housing and Communities spoke during the election campaign about his concerns about the current rent policy and it being pegged to the market rate, which I hope is a positive sign that he will be looking at this issue in his term of office. Provided there are good terms of reference for any review of it, we can happily support that work as it is something that we have concerns on as well. But we are in a cost-of-living crisis and the question then becomes do you wait for a wholesale change of rent policy or do you make some minor tweaks in the meantime to try to help people. We have, until this point, made some minor tweaks to it. We set a rent increase cap when I was Minister for Housing so that social rental tenants could be protected in times of high inflation. We implemented 3 rent freezes for Andium in the previous term and we changed the rent policy from the 90 per cent policy to the 80 per cent policy. So I think that there is no harm in saying we can do a further tweak to it to ensure that when tenants are moved not through their own choice but out of necessity - because we do have to maintain properties in the social housing stock and make sure they are fit and decent homes for people to live happy lives in - that there is a bit of leeway in that when people's lives are turned upside down during that process; that they do not suddenly have this hit all at once. For some tenants they may not notice it because income support, which they may already be claiming, may simply be increased for them to pay that difference; but some will notice it because some will be paying their rent not purely from income support but from a combination of income sources which might include disability benefits, it might include the state pension. Those are benefits which are not necessarily uprated every year to take into account the increase in rent. The rent component does take into account but other sources of income do not, so tenants can get worse off year on year if their rents are going up. There comes also with it what Deputy Ward spoke about, which is the bureaucracy of the benefit system which, let me tell those new Members in case you have not had interactions with constituents yet, they can be difficult. They can be very upsetting as well when you find people who through no fault of their own have found themselves subject to a mistake somewhere along the line in the benefit system, often not their fault, often something they had tried to do the right thing on and communicate with the department and be absolutely transparent as possible, but for which the department makes a mistake which the tenant is then asked to pay for by paying overpayments back. Often the department are not flexible enough in doing that to those tenants. So it is not a nice position to be in. It can take months sometimes even to get your claim open because of the amount of bureaucracy you have got to overcome. For some people who perhaps are attempting to enjoy their twilight years it is hassle that will spoil that for them, and a more humane approach I think should be necessary. Another social housing development which I was privileged to see when I was Minister for Housing, but one which I had no involvement in, was the redevelopment of Troy Court which was done by Les Vaux Housing Trust. I remember visiting the

old homes there which really were in a state. I remember seeing flats that were full of mould. I saw one with stuff growing from the ceiling which I do not even want to know what it was, it was that bad. But the Housing Trust did the right thing; they took on a substantial amount of debt and have redeveloped those homes, and frankly I think it is an exemplary social housing development. It is absolutely beautiful, set in a lovely location, the homes themselves are in excellent quality, they have lovely frontage and greenery all provided there. I was told by the Housing Trust when they did that, and the tenants who lived in the first blocks to be demolished unfortunately did not get the benefit of staying in Troy Court because there were not new homes to move in to when the first ones were redeveloped so they had to find housing elsewhere in the social housing stock. But those who were lucky enough to be able to simply move along to the next block when it was developed were not given rent increases at that time. I understand and I hope it is still the case but the last time I looked into it I was informed that the rents that Les Vaux aspired to charge were 75 per cent of the market rate rather than the 90 per cent it was at the time for Andium, or 80 per cent as it is now. I raise that as an example to show where the will exists what can be done. They of course have greater flexibility because they are not dependent on the financial relationship between them as a housing provider and the government in the way that Andium dependent on that. But the beauty of the Andium system is that there is some democratic accountability there, and that we can decide if we want to have a different arrangement with Treasury, one that has a greater aim of providing a more humane and affordable rent system for those tenants rather than a system of providing extra money into Treasury to subsidise any government services, and the money that we get from Andium is not ring-fenced for housing initiatives elsewhere. If we want to change that we can. It is our prerogative to do so, and what Deputy Ward's proposition enables us to do is to make an in-principle decision that we would like when those tenants are asked to move to facilitate refurbishments, through no fault of their own, and have to go through that stress and anxiety doing that, that as well as the personal support that Andium endeavours to provide to them as their landlord in trying to be a good landlord, that the rent system which is imposed on Andium by the government - it is not Andium's rent system, it is what the government imposes on them - that we enable them to provide a bit more leeway for their tenants so that they can have an easier journey into their new homes and not simply be hit by rent increases, which some can scarcely afford and those who might be able to afford it, it comes at the cost of getting tied up in a bureaucratic system which can be very difficult and stressful for them. While the do nothing option here is certainly the easiest one, the do something option that Deputy Ward is proposing I hope would make a difference for the people he is trying to help with this. The Government does have the ability and the leeway to look at its financial arrangement with Andium to make sure they can do this without jeopardising all the other good work that we want Andium to be doing in other refurbishments, and developing more homes which are so desperately needed. So if there is a will here there can be a way, and I hope the Assembly will support Deputy Ward and give that indication that we do want that will and that way.

#### **8.1.4 Connétable M. O'D. Troy of St. Clement:**

I am a bit conflicted, as the Assembly might understand. I am dealing with a couple of Andium tenants at the moment with problems with rent. I was not aware that there was a wholesale problem. I was called down there a little while ago when they were refitting the Le Marais flats and we changed the fittings for the showers because they were dangerous. I have good rapport with Andium. I do respect their business model as do I the Jersey Development Company, and there is no doubt with this proposition that Andium will lose a certain amount of money. However, given inflation - which is our enemy, as some people think - it is also our friend. In this particular case Andium's 80 per cent rental will be increasing with inflation because the market is going up markedly. In this particular instance, as far as I am concerned as a businessperson, you take your clients with you. If you have got a situation where you need to move people from place A to place B and it is because of circumstances that you want to protect, et cetera, you talk to them and you take them along with you.

You have to give them some form of compensation for putting their life on hold. I think this is a reasonable proposition and I think in this instance I will be voting for it.

**8.1.5 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

I think this proposition is reasonably drafted. It refers to: “Tenants of Andium Homes who downsize should not face inappropriate sudden increases.” I do believe that gives some scope for investigating what is meant by “inappropriate”. I am not so enthusiastic about the Andium model as perhaps the Constable of St. Clement. I do believe that it is flawed and I do not quite understand why Andium has had to pay for a transfer property in circumstances which the States of Jersey Development Company has not had to do likewise, but that is a different conversation I am sure. But that is the sort of bottom line; that we are working with a model that does create problems within our community. I realise that there are tenants that seem to still have an issue, from what I understand from the comments on this proposition. I also understand the kind of concerns about having fairness when you are dealing with the community in terms of if you give somebody a concession should you be giving it to another. It is something that we could spend a lot of time investigating, reviewing and revisiting. I would also say I am not entirely sure if it is the Minister for Treasury and Resources who is the appropriate person but I am sure he will comment on that. But because this does give the scope to investigate what is meant by “inappropriate” I support this proposition.

**8.1.6 Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement:**

I am glad that one of my parishioners has reached out to Deputy Rob Ward and would like to know what I can do, and I will be working with my parishioners to work out that they can come to me as well. I really thank him for speaking with them and taking on their concerns. However, I have a real challenge with this proposition. In no way do I want to vote against this, but the way I see it I am hearing conflicting cases around the data around the impact that this will have. There are parts of this proposition that if we could vote on individually that we could accept. I take it as my responsibility for not proposing amendments to that, and I take that hard. What I would look to the Assembly to consider is rather than rejecting this is to consider a motion, whether it be a reference back or a movement on. I appreciate the frustration but I want this to come in a form that I can support, and I am not going to vote against this for the sake of saying I could have brought no change. I would like to hear other Members thoughts on what we would need to know to make an informed decision. I see that in the impact this is suggesting 27 tenants would be impacted yet the scale sounds like it is far greater. I would really like to have that data. I appreciate that as this has come from a Backbencher we cannot expect the mover of this proposition to have all the data, so that will be on the Government and Andium Homes to provide that. But I would urge Members to consider a reference back or a movement that will allow us to bring this in a form and a shape with the relevant information that I think is currently lacking - I do not say that is lacking on behalf of the mover of the proposition - that we can all support something that moves the spirit of this.

**The Bailiff:**

I am asking you, Deputy; you have thrown out reference back, you have thrown out move to the next item. Those sorts of things can only be considered on the basis of a proposition during the course of debate. Are you at this point making any such proposition?

**Deputy A. Curtis:**

No, Sir.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Sir, can we have a ruling on whether a reference back may be made to a Backbencher? I believe it is certainly not custom and practice. I have never heard of it happening.

**The Bailiff:**



Well, there is nothing in Standing Orders that prevents it. It is generally speaking not often that you get a reference back for a Backbench proposition because normally the Backbencher does not have the facilities necessarily to provide the additional information if it is a reference back for specific information. But that does not mean that is not possible and I have certainly I believe known it done on at least one previous occasion, a reference back to a Back-Bench proposition. So I cannot rule that it is out of order; it is not. There is no such application before the Assembly at the moment, so Deputy Warr.

[12:15]

#### **8.1.7 Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy Curtis, for bringing this point to the fore. I have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing Deputy Ward's proposition. I respect his good intentions and the endeavour to assist families who are experiencing the very real challenges of trying to make ends meet. The biggest problem I have is that what he is asking within his proposition does not tally with the financial and manpower implications. In the proposition the Deputy starts talking about "downsize within the Andium estate". In the final notes about financial and manpower implications the Deputy talks about it affecting 27 tenants. Now, it is miles more than 27 tenants because it is across the whole estate, and this is where the confusion comes. My biggest concern about all of this is this constant perennial chipping away at the Andium model. I asked Andium for an impact assessment of the Deputy's proposition and they came back and told me they estimated the cost per annum to the whole estate would be £200,000. That is not just a one-off payment; that is £200,000 year one, £200,000 year 2, and over 5 years we are talking about £1 million. That is unfunded right now. This has got to be found within the Andium estate; that is the point I would make. On top of this - and Deputy Mézec has made the point - he successfully reduced the level of rent from 90 per cent of the market to 80 per cent of the market; another chip. Then we had the rent freeze for 2 years; another chip. We then also restrict the rental increases, instead of going with inflation we are capped at 4 per cent; another chip. Basically we are unpicking our social rents policy piece by piece in piecemeal. It is effectively death by a thousand cuts. If Deputy Ward's aim is to provide more affordable homes then changes to the policy such as this could result in exactly the opposite. If he does not agree with the current social rent policy then look at it in its entirety. Let us continue to protect our lowest income families; let us review it properly. I urge Members to vote against the proposition.

#### **8.1.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews:**

Firstly, when I looked at the proposition I do agree the wording could have been potentially a bit more explicit. I think it was not very clear. I think it was very helpful that Deputy Warr stood up and spoke to just make it a bit more clear in terms of how much will be lost. We know with Andium Homes their model is not really effective; it is not working. We have a rental policy that is aligned to the private housing market that essentially is in a position of partial market failure, and we are seeing that many people are in a position of negative savings where their expenditure is more than their rate of savings. This is having an impact in terms of our labour market and this is partly the reason why we have an undersupply of labour. I have given this proposition time and I thought it would also be important to mention several components during this debate. Firstly, we have to look at the relationship between Andium and Government, and when we look at the relationship there is a £30 million return. However, Deputy Warr stated there would be a £200,000 loss, so when you are looking at the accounts Andium will still be in a fairly reasonable position. I think longer term what we really have to be looking at is how we are going to implement a change to Andium Homes' rental policy. It also means we have to look at the composition of households. We all are very much aware that we have an increasing dependency ratio so we really have to be looking at how many households will be economically active compared to those who will not be. Of course with an increasing dependency ratio there is going to be a need for an enhanced level of government redistribution, so this is also going to be more costly essentially to the taxpayer. I think it is important to mention we

are simply arguing about issues but we are not really addressing the needs of our economy. I think if we have a stronger economy, if we have more robust industries, we will see wage labour be able to take home more wages. That is going to allow households to have the opportunity to have increased levels of savings. They might have the ability to afford downward payments. However, the relationship between perpetual renters in Andium Homes and those who are seeking to enter home ownership is weak and we need to ensure that we look to modify that. Therefore, I was absolutely hesitant about where to go on this but having listened to the Minister for Housing and Communities I will be supporting this proposition, and I will be supporting Deputy Ward, however, I do understand there is a need for clarity and I was also one of those Members of the Assembly who needed clarity. I think it is important to recognise we are giving tenants the opportunity to see their rate of savings improve, their rate of consumption will also increase; their ability to purchase goods in our domestic economy will increase. Also I have to say, quite honestly, I have been fed up with consecutive Conservative Governments ignoring the needs of the people of Jersey, and I think what we do need to see is a Government that will reflect the interests of the people. Sir, I must thank you for allowing me to speak.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, you are actually entitled to speak, Deputy, so no thanks are necessary.

**8.1.9 Deputy A. Howell:**

I just ask Deputy Warr when he does his review with Andium Homes could he look; if a tenant has been a tenant for many years why do they have to enter a new agreement when they are forced to leave their home to go into a new property. I just wondered if you could find the answers for the Assembly to that question. Andium Homes do a great job but I am very concerned that many of these tenants have been in their homes for many, many years and we are not being very fair to them.

**The Bailiff:**

I should point out, Deputy Howell, that Deputy Warr has no opportunity to speak again and, therefore, to answer any questions so he would have to circulate any answers, were there to be any, outside of the context of the currency of the debate.

**8.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:**

I would just like to make a couple of points, if I may. One thing I would want to remind everyone in the Assembly is that we have, as a Council of Ministers, set out a set of principles for the way we want to go forward. One of those things is that we are supporting incomes and we have put a lot of effort in the mini-Budget and there will be further efforts through the Government Plan to ensure that we are able to support people's income. So it is not true to say that we are leaving people in Andium Homes in a position where they are completely unable to pay. That is an important principle. But there is another important point I think here which has not been mentioned yet, and that is that we are about - if we pass this proposition - to create a 2-tier market in Andium Homes in that we will have a set of tenants who are moving into a refurbished property, some of whom will be paying the 80 per cent rate, some of whom will have been subsidised. That is not a good principle and is liable to create envy and difficulties within the Andium model. I think it is indicative of what happens when piecemeal attempts are made to tinker with elements of the model. In particular I think it has been instructive listening to this debate to hear so many other things tied up in the debate; there has been criticism about how income support is, there has been criticism saying that Andium's model is broken. Those are things which are best addressed through propositions which deal with those issues, not through a small, piecemeal addition to a policy which is required in order to create the funding model that we need for Andium to deliver what it is going to do. So I think we should resist these attempts to make small adjustments and instead move forward by taking proper reforms, considering

all the factors that would be required to make a fair policy, and not do it piece by piece in this way, particularly as it has unintended negative consequences.

#### **8.1.11 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I just rise to my feet to address one or 2 little important issues that have been referred to by the proposer. The fact is that the mini-Budget that we have just passed has left many of our clients still in rental stress because, whether we like it or not, rents on the Island are enormously high, beyond anything we could have imagined even 3 years ago, 5 years ago. We would never have imagined the prices that rentals for housing - including Andium housing - should be so high. But they are. There is no doubt this will leave many people in rental stress. But the second point I wish to make, and I think this is the important bit, is that Deputy Ward referred to the reluctance of often proud people to go and seek income support. He is talking about those people who are not on income support at the moment because they are too proud, they have not got the form and filled it out, but also because the form is difficult. It is 26 pages and it is complex and it is hard to do. It is hard to understand and that may also be a barrier to a proud, but lacking understanding, audience. As evidence, we only have to look at the mini-Budget we passed last week, in my absence, where we talked about 1,000 people claiming community benefit nowadays but we suspect there is 7,000 out there who could claim. Now, that is a far simpler process. The community benefit is very straightforward; it is 2 sides of A4 I think to fill in, so not difficult but still has that air of pride about it that people will not do that, especially - we all have them - our constituents who are more elderly and they have got through the war and survived Hitler but sit there and look at this and say: "Yes, but I am too proud to go and claim. I will not claim charity." Often, 9 times out of 10: "That is charity." "No, it is not, you have paid into it and it is a benefit due to you." But try and convince them otherwise. The fact is that in this particular case for community benefit that air of pride is there. I think in terms of applying for benefit for your rent, becoming a member of income support, becoming a member who claims income support, again also a barrier. So I think we are talking about a quite serious problem which, as Deputy Warr says, will cost £200,000 a year. But hang on, what are we talking about here? It will take 5 years for the cost to be £1 million. That is £1 million of £30 million. That is not an enormous amount of money and we could perfectly safely let the new system - if we pass this - go for 3, 4, 5 years and still be comfortable and then to: "Ah, a long-term solution is this." Give yourself 3, 4, 5 years to find the long-term solution, one that treats our tenants better than currently.

#### **8.1.12 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour:**

To answer Deputy Howell's earlier question about how we arrived where we are at the moment; there was part of a housing transformation programme a number of year ago when Andium decided originally to move to 90 per cent of rents. The original plan was for that to be done in a big bang where everyone's rents would increase. It was decided at the 11th hour to make that an incremental increase whereby only new tenants and tenants that changed properties or downsized were under the new contract. So that is how we have arrived at the situation that we are in at the moment.

[12:30]

There is a disincentive for Andium tenants to particularly downsize if they are under-occupying, which is not a good situation to be in. However, I do not think this proposition necessarily addresses that point. Perhaps we need to look at a better way of incentivising people who are obviously in need of moving either to a better property or to downsize or indeed upsize. It should be remembered of course that income support rates - if it is passed by this Assembly - will increase for 2023 which again will put more money in people's pockets. The changes to the mini-Budget all around put lots more money into people's pockets. Andium rents were frozen in 2021 and 2022, as has already been said, following the pandemic. In my experience, rental increases are clearly communicated to all tenants at the earliest opportunity so there is lots of notice before the rent does eventually go up.

#### **8.1.13 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

Deputy Southern in his comments said that, if the Minister for Housing and Communities' figures are to be believed, £1 million over 5 years is not much when taken off the £30 million. I would respectfully suggest that that is £1 million that Andium will not be able to spend on refurbishing other properties in their estate. I speak from a position of some familiarity with Andium Homes because I deal with them on a very regular basis in matters both large and small. We meet to talk about their refurbishment of their flats in town, which I have to say looking back over the last few years they have done with remarkable speed and efficiency. I do not need to list the outworn estates that Andium have taken up and done tremendous things with. But of course they are also delivering brand new estates across the Island, not just in St. Helier. But they are not just interested in producing new homes; it is Andium who come up with the inspired idea, first mooted by former Senator Syvret, that the Millennium Town Park should be doubled in size and that they should not be building on the former gas works site. It is Andium who create community competitions and community initiatives right across their estate, encouraging their residents to get involved in all manner of activities including beautifying their estates and neighbourhoods. It is Andium who have dealt with me personally with many individual constituent's complaints, concerns by their residents, concerns by people who want to be in the Andium system. Within the constraints that they are under they have always worked incredibly efficiently and tactfully and sensitively. So I am not in a position today to do what the Minister for Housing and Communities described as death by a thousand cuts. I have confidence in Andium Homes, which is why I cannot support this proposition. I think they are doing a good job and I think we should go on working closely with them. Of course there are improvements to be made to the whole social housing piece, and we have a new Government and at this stage I have confidence that the new Government will make whatever improvements are necessary. So, regretfully, while it is well-intentioned, I will not be supporting Deputy Ward's proposition.

#### **8.1.14 Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

I am pleased to particularly follow the Constable of St. Helier and Deputy Ferey because I wanted to just go back in my own mind and consider the state of Jersey's social housing before the creation of Andium. As the Chief Minister said then, the very clear money-go-round that took place. This Assembly - and I am sure that Deputy Southern will not mind me saying he along with many other Members - fought for greater investment in housing and for redevelopment of what was the then can only be described as woeful state of social housing. A lot of time and effort was given by Members of this Assembly to create a model that would work, and that model may be currently struggling at the edges for all sorts of reasons but that model has worked. I see Members on the front row shaking their head. Twenty years ago the social housing in this Island was woeful. Today all social housing meets the decent homes standard. That has been delivered by Andium, and we cannot get away from that. Those in Andium houses have far better conditions than they had 20 years ago. Andium have worked within that model; it was then 90 per cent and, as Deputy Ferey reminded us, it was only adjusted I think in this Assembly to ensure that rather than everybody moving over time to 90 per cent, only those who transferred to new houses went up to that particular level. The transfer between old stock and renewed stock is the issue that has caused Deputy Ward to bring forward this proposal. I am not certain from the information that I have that tenants were surprised by their rent rise, but that is perhaps something that we can take outside of this Assembly. We heard even Deputy Mézec saying that when he was Minister for Housing he spoke to the previous tenants of Le Marais and went through that process of commending the need to move out so that those buildings could be repaired. So that model has worked and has provided social housing to a decent homes standard. Andium invests something like £13 million of their income each year in a rolling maintenance programme. That is perhaps something that we in Government should think about in regard to our other infrastructure assets; properly putting money aside to invest in infrastructure. I know it is something that the new Minister for Infrastructure feels very passionate about. So Andium do have a strategic business plan, they are proposing to deliver 3,000 new social homes by 2030. But we in this Assembly - we are democratically elected and so it is right for us to make decisions - have been

eating away over time at that model, dealing with immediate concerns that we might have. We have asked for a 2-year rent freeze; that was the right thing to do but it does affect their financial model. We have moved from the 90 per cent to 80 per cent for all of the reasons - although I do not think we have necessarily seen the full picture of the impact of that. This again could be considered a small step, as I think the mover of this proposition tried to indicate, although the Minister for Housing and Communities quite clearly has told us that it is not clear whether it is a small step or it is not. It will be money that cannot be used by Andium. But I have also sensed, as other speakers have said, that there is a desire to think about the Andium funding model going forward. I do understand that the current model has delivered all of that good that I have just outlined, and the Constable of St. Helier outlined even more eloquently that I can with all of the social good that Andium have delivered as well. But if we are to deal with the housing crisis, not only do we need Andium to continue its investment in social housing and its existing stock and all of that good maintenance work, but they will also need to partner with the Minister for Housing and Communities to help deliver on the housing crisis with new sites, with new affordable housing schemes, and all of those things that the Minister for Housing and Communities rightly will be bringing forward in his proposal. That model is under stress as well because of increasing interest rates. I, in my conversations with Andium, have already indicated to them that we will need to consider a model going forward to help deliver on the housing crisis. I know that the Chief Minister, as she said, met with Andium on Friday, in preparation for this debate and I understand that she indicated her wish to think about that model going forward. As she said, she spoke to the Deputy and suggested that he work with her and the Minister for Housing and Communities in undertaking that piece of work, rather than just doing this piecemeal proposal before us. The Deputy said that this was not material because Andium had more sources of income than just their rental income, and of course they do. They have 2 sources of income, and they judiciously sell off properties in order to already balance the model, because of the adjustments that we have made to them. So, they have the rental income, and they also have the sale of properties. They are their sources of income. I think that we find ourselves in a situation where the Andium model is now finely balanced as we see in their business plan. I do want to see us partnering with them and the S.o.J.D.C., as the Chief Minister, said to work smartly on helping to deliver new models of home ownership and greater home ownership, but I do not want to see the provision of social housing and appropriate repairs and development of social housing impaired because of that. I want both to take place, and I know that the Minister for Housing and Communities is committed to both taking place. I understand the concerns that Members have raised and those who have had contact from their parishioners, which is why I would have preferred to have taken the Chief Minister's approach, which is to seek to defer this proposition for a short period of time, to allow that work, more evidence to be brought forward, and more substantive proposals to be brought before the Assembly. For reasons that the Deputy will no doubt outline in his summing up, he did not take that approach. That is exactly ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sir, may I have a point of order?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

I can give way if he wishes clarification.

**The Bailiff:**

What is the point of order?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sir, it is being suggested I did not meet. I had a meeting arranged for Monday at 10.00 a.m. It was cancelled by the Minister, Sir. I think that is a very important point to make, given ...

**The Bailiff:**

It is not a point of order and of course you do have the closing speech.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sorry, Sir. Thank you.

**Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

I think the point I was trying to make, and I withdraw if I have indicated anything other that is untoward and not correct in the approaches that have been made to the Deputy, of course I do, is that the better approach would have been, in my mind, to defer this proposition so that that work can be undertaken not just either through a meeting but more formally undertaken, so that Members were fully informed of the implications for Andium and their model going forward, and what it meant for their desire to deliver more homes and improve social housing, in partnership with those tenants. Therefore, for me, the only conclusion I can draw this morning, or more likely this afternoon, is that I have to come with a heavy heart to the conclusion that I have to vote against this proposal today because of all the reasons I have outlined, and I, together with other Members as well, will work with the Minister for Housing and Communities and the Chief Minister on that work of review to make sure that Andium is sustainable and is able to deliver on the housing priorities of this Assembly.

[12:45]

**LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED**

**The Bailiff:**

The adjournment is proposed.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sir, if there are no more speakers, I can sum up in 10 minutes. I think talking at the clock so we can lobby at lunchtime. It is not fair.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, I think the position is that the adjournment is proposed. We can take a vote on the adjournment but if the Connétable is prepared to accept we could find out how many Members wish to speak and if the Members of the Assembly wish to continue for 10 minutes or so then that may be a useful way forward. Could anyone who has not yet spoken and who wishes to speak indicate by lighting their ... there is only one indication of an intention to speak ... there are 2, in which case the adjournment is proposed. The Assembly stands adjourned then until 2.15 p.m.

[12:46]

**LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**

[14:16]

**The Bailiff:**

We resume debate on P.92. Does any other Member wish to speak?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I would like to share with the Assembly where I find myself. We heard speeches for, because we all care about the people. We heard speeches against. What was common between the 2 speeches is the absence of details. It is my second term and I always make clear that I am separating between private rent and social housing in my views. There is the principle, which I support, and there are details that are completely absent, and it is difficult for me to make a decision based on evidence provided by both sides, from us as well, because we did not have time, for valid reasons, to have the

conversation. We have been busy with the Government Plan, with the constitutional policy, with the mini-Budget and there are lots of things and everyone was overwhelmed, but what I also found out when I was elected is that I had not much knowledge about the Andium operation model. What I would think is that it would be really beneficial for all to have a meeting with Andium to ask questions, to grill them on their model, to allow Deputy Ward to have a proper meeting with the Chief Minister because it happened on Friday and we did not progress, and it should be different to have Deputy Ward meeting with the Minister for Housing and Communities, to ask the questions. We can always vote for and we can always vote against. What I am proposing is Standing Order 85, to move to the next item, and we can always discuss this on 2nd November, the next sitting.

**The Bailiff:**

Very well. The Deputy is proposing moving to the next item, pursuant to Standing Order 85. I must allow the proposal unless it is an abuse of the procedure of the States or the infringement of the rights of the minority. More than 10 have spoken, which is the guideline, and I do not therefore think it is out of order in those particulars. All I therefore need to do is to ask if it is seconded. **[Seconded]**.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Sir, can I raise a point of order?

**The Bailiff:**

Well, you can.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

It is just the interpretation. I know normally that the rule of thumb is that 10 should speak. I would like to test what is meant by the infringement of the rights of the minority. For example, this morning I was not able to be here for this debate until now. It is very likely that I, as an independent Member, or as a Backbencher, rather, would have put my light on to speak earlier if I had been here, and I have been precluded from therefore taking part in this debate, if indeed we allow this to go ahead. So, I would consider that as infringing the rights of a minority, i.e., me.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, I understand why you say that, but I rule that that is not infringing the rights of the minority. If that were infringing the rights of the minority then anyone could block a proposal to move to the next item simply by saying: "I have not spoken, and I would like to speak."

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Sir, that is not what I am saying. My argument is that, as you know, I had to attend a funeral this morning, and I was not able to be in the Assembly until now and of course I would not make that argument if I had been just sitting on my hands all morning waiting for somebody to propose that we move on to the next item. I would just like to know what that right of the minority means, and if it has ever been tested.

**The Bailiff:**

I do not know whether it has been tested or not, but that is still I do not think a right of the minority because it is not as if we reached a gap. We reached the end of the time this morning and people had spoken in sequence, and so it does not seem to me to amount to anyone that has been denied the opportunity to speak. You may have been called in your due course, but the reality of it is that I think that this is in accordance. What I should inform Members is that it requires 20 to vote in favour. It is a qualified majority, 20 must vote in favour for it to be adopted, but I am afraid my obligation is now to put it immediately to the vote. I am going to ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sir, is there no debate?

**The Bailiff:**

No. No, it says the Presiding Officer in consideration: "... shall immediately put the proposal to the vote without debate". That is Standing Order 85(3), I am afraid.

**Male Speaker:**

Sorry, Sir, can you just confirm what we are voting for and against?

**The Bailiff:**

The vote is on whether or not the Assembly move to the next item. If the vote is for the proposition the debate on this matter comes immediately to an end and the Assembly move to the next item of business. That means that this proposition can be returned on a future occasion and proposed again, but the debate on it ceases and therefore it cannot be voted on. So, a vote for is to effectively postpone or move to the next item in any event. A vote against is to maintain the continuance of the debate. Just to emphasise, there is no discretion afforded to the Chair if a sufficient number have spoken. It must be put to the Assembly without debate and 20 Members must vote for it if it is to be passed and adopted, so it is a matter for Members. I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sir, *contre* is against it happening?

**The Bailiff:**

*Contre* is against it happening. If you vote *contre* you want to continue with the debate on this item. If you vote *pour* you want it to go to the next item of business on the agenda and the debate on this item to end. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting.

<b>POUR: 19</b>		<b>CONTRE: 20</b>		<b>ABSTAIN: 2</b>
Connétable of St. Peter		Connétable of St. Helier		Deputy C.F. Labey
Connétable of St. John		Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy M.R. Scott
Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of Trinity		
Deputy K.F. Morel		Connétable of Grouville		
Deputy I. Gardiner		Connétable of St. Ouen		
Deputy I.J. Gorst		Connétable of St. Mary		
Deputy K.L. Moore		Connétable of St. Saviour		
Deputy D.J. Warr		Deputy G..P. Southern		
Deputy H.M. Miles		Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy J. Renouf		Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy R.E. Binet		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy H.L. Jeune		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
Deputy M.E. Millar		Deputy R.J. Ward		
Deputy A. Howell		Deputy C.S. Alves		
Deputy T.J.A. Binet		Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
Deputy M.R. Ferey		Deputy T.A. Coles		



Deputy A.F. Curtis		Deputy B.B.S.V.M. Porée		
Deputy B. Ward		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy K.M. Wilson		Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
		Deputy M.B. Andrews		

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Sir, can we ask for the votes to be read out, please?

**The Bailiff:**

Very well. The debate continues. Does any other Member wish to speak?

**8.1.15 Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I had not really expected to speak so soon, and it may be my single vote is the one that could have sent this down already, but what I wanted to say was this. I have considered this over the adjournment and thought very hard about it and when you read the proposition, which is what you must do as the proposition is the important bit, you get to the line that says people should not face inappropriate sudden increases in rent and that is absolutely right, and I am sure that everybody in this Assembly would agree with that. The problem for me is when we get further down, and the reason I did not vote for the reference back is that I wanted to try to persuade Members to vote against this today in this Assembly, and not come back at a later date, because what worries me is the detail or the lack of it, as we go further into this proposition. What it says then and goes on to say is that increases in rent should be suspended for a year, fair enough, maybe I could live with that, but then it gets to the bit about increasing the rents over a period of between 5 and 10 years. I then think to myself: “Hang on a second, so you get a year’s delay and then you could potentially have that increase inflicted on you over 10 years in incremental measures” and I am asking myself what happens at the end of year 11, are people then paying the rent that they would be expected to pay next month? Is there added increases? How do we get to the new figure? I do really worry. As much as I want to absolutely protect people who cannot pay for these increases, are we setting a benchmark here? The word “all” is in here as well, that all these rents should be suspended and then these incremental increases applied. I really worry where Andium could be potentially in 10 or 11 years’ time. I can see if this goes through people applying to move because they are looking, and they will say: “Hang on a second. In 11 years’ time I could be paying an awful lot less than I would be if I just stayed normally” so I do worry about this. I would like the proposer to go back and talk to the Minister for Housing and Communities and the Chief Minister and come back with something, but I think we should vote on this today. Very unfortunately I will not be supporting it.

**8.1.16 Deputy M. Tadier:**

You think you have seen it all, but I do not think I have ever seen a reference back moved by Ministers and whipped by Ministers, so we might have a better way of government, but certainly not a more democratic way. It is very strange to do this ...

**The Bailiff:**

It obviously was not a reference back, Deputy. It was a move to the next item.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

A move to the next item, of course it is, that is right, and it is even worse in that respect, I think, because it is not asking for any information.

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

Sir, a point of clarification.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I will not give way. From the Member who voted to cease the debate to give way for a point of clarification for a debate he did not want to have, I do not think that is going to happen. Let us get back to the question in hand, because I am allowed to speak now. I could not speak earlier, so thanks to those 20 Members for allowing the rights of the minority to stand in this Assembly. There are 2 things that always did not sit right with me when it came to housing, and in particular to Andium housing. That is the fact that, first of all, when people are moving into an Andium house, property, flat, whatever it is, it came after a period of time without any carpets. That was a new development, so it was certainly not the case when I started off as a Member. There was a certain amount of dignity that existed in social housing, as it was called back then, because it was social housing. You would move in and there would be carpets in there, and I rented all my life in the private sector and never once rented a place that did not have carpets or flooring in it. Of course, that just goes without saying. It then became the norm in a kind of sadistic way to say: "Oh, we are going to move you into this new place" and it is difficult enough even when you might have a little bit of money behind you to move into a new place and then try to make it your own, but to find out that you have got to put your own carpets and flooring in. I have seen people in Clos des Sables in that situation where they have been living with bare floors, concrete floors, and they have had to wait a year before they could put their own flooring in to do that. The idea is it is better for them, because it means then they have a choice in what they live in, then of course they are told to rip floors out when they go. It is a complete waste of time. I do not know how that sits with the new Assistant Minister with responsibility for the environment. It is certainly not useful to do that kind of thing in our States-owned social housing sector. The other thing that did not sit right with me was when people were asked or rather told that they had to move out because essential maintenance was going on, and they were moved a few metres down the road or maybe to a different part of the Island. They did not know whether they were going to be able to move back into the apartment that they had for many years, so no security of tenure, and then if they were to move back into their place their rents were going to be hiked up to the new rent regime and that never sat right with me either, and I have asked lots of questions on that in this Assembly. Now, I do not know if I consider it a good or a bad thing, but for the last year or so I had to sit through my wife re-sitting some law exams. My wife studied law at university, and she wanted to upgrade and keep her law modules up to date. In the background invariably I would hear little bits of case law, whether it was to do with European law, and I found some of this seeping into my brain sometimes as I was falling asleep or waking up.

[14:30]

One of them was the principle of equity that intertwines through many aspects of law, including in trusts and in contract law, and it is the point that it cannot always be used necessarily to make judgments, but a theme throughout it is the equitable treatment of all parties involved. It seemed to me that it is completely inequitable to ask people who are some of the least well-off in our society who have access to social housing and who need it to be put in a position where they are penalised for things that are outside of their control. So, I was very pleased when I saw Deputy Ward bringing this proposition because it deals with not exactly the same cases that I was talking about, but it certainly deals with the same principles. I remember when the increases in rents at Andium, under the new model, because of course it used to be a housing department, and just to speak briefly on the issue that we had earlier, the problem throughout Housing was never the fact that the rents were not high enough. The problem is that the people who were paying those rents, any potential profit that there was in the system for reinvestment, was not going back into the system. It was going to the Treasury. When we talk about cross-subsidies in the system, it was not the taxpayer paying to subsidise people in social housing; it was people in social housing paying to subsidise the taxes that were going to the taxman. I will call it a taxman because I think it was at the time, but to the Treasury.

This is the issue we have. We have never got to grips with that and we have always put the burden back on the tenant, saying with this new model, which I think with 90 per cent rents, which most people now agree - there is a consensus - that was never the right thing to do, we have seen that we need a different model that puts the social back in social housing. Maybe it also puts the carpets back in social housing. I mean, let us deal with the nuts and bolts here. This is what we are dealing with here. Rather than moving people out of a property that they have lived in, a home that they have lived in for many years in their lives and saying: "Now your rent is going to go up" this is about giving them some security of tenure. Remember, not all of them are on income support. Some may be on income support; some might be partially on income support. Others may be in a position where they pay their rent in entirety on their own. Think about those people who do not have the safety net or the full safety net of income support to catch them, who are going to be put back in a precarious situation, who might then not be able to move into the private sector because they are caught in those marginal areas in that financial bracket. Those are the people that I am really concerned about and those are the people who I think this proposition is trying to help. Simply, we can vote for this today and the conversations can continue. This is not a case of Deputy Ward lodges a proposition in ample time, which meets Standing Orders in its wording and its lodging period, and then at the last minute the Ministers say: "Oh, can you come to a meeting on Friday with Andium?" which I think Deputy Ward has already addressed earlier, and of course it is all very last minute and they say: "Well, we have not got enough information. Let us move on to the next item." That is not good Government; that is not good governance. The way to do it is that we should be getting behind the principle of this proposition. It is an in-principle proposition and then the conversations ensue, let us see how we are going to do this but the principle, and that is what this Assembly here is doing, those of us who hopefully have still got an open mind on what this proposition is trying to achieve, we say: "Yes." Have we been convinced by the argument that Deputy Ward and others have made? If you have been convinced by the argument that this is something that we need to do, that there is a fundamental unfairness in the system that needs to be addressed, then vote for the proposition. That is how politics works. It does not need to be rocket science. If you agree with this in principle, vote for the in-principle and let the Ministers do the work and come back to the Assembly.

**The Bailiff:**

Deputy Gardiner, do you wish to speak in the substantive debate having just made a ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Yes, thank you.

**The Bailiff:**

Yes. You are entitled to do so.

**8.1.17 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

It is important to address that this proposition to move to the next item came from me personally over the lunchtime, and why I decided to bring it forward because there was a decision taken when we do not have understanding and evidence. What is happening here now and the points I make are valid. I personally think that we need to review the system when we pay into rent support and after receiving back £30 million or so and it is going around. We do not need these loops. We need to have a much simpler system because we know how much we pay to Andium to be paid back. But this proposition is not about the system. This proposition says we need to freeze the rent and we need to increase the rent between 5 and 10 years. Again, if it would be 2 paragraphs, I would say yes to freeze the rent, and come back with the proposal if it is 5 years, 10 years, 20 years? No idea. This is why I asked let us pause, let us understand and let us make the same vote in 3 weeks' time, but it was rejected. Fair enough, I receive the will of the Assembly. When I am reading through the report, it is up to

£400. Is it £100; is it £200; is it £300? Is it property over £1,000; is it property over £2,000? I have no idea. Sixty per cent of the people who got this increase, they will not feel it. There are people who live in Andium, and we know that people who live in Andium for years and years and years, and their income is above current Andium threshold, not all of them on lower income who receive support. We know that 70 per cent of Andium's market rate, we know that 20 per cent of Andium are 60 per cent of the market rate, and to be honest, I do not have any problem with it because for me I have no idea. I challenged Deputy Mézec in the previous Assembly when he talked about 90 per cent, 80 per cent. I know that some private properties are less than 80 per cent, how we calculate. There are lots of opening questions which we must address and I struggle with this proposition. For me, when we look at what is in front of us, it is not to change the system. It is very prescriptive, what we need to do over the next 5, 10 years, and to make this substantial decision without allowing Members to have a proper meeting with Andium, to understand Andium, to have us working. Yes, it did not work out. We are not all perfect, we are all not overwhelmed, but I am not sure where I am on this proposition. I will still consider it and I am not saying for voting yes, I guess. I do feel that I would be in a better place to support in another 3 weeks than now because we really do not know on what basis we would be voting.

#### **8.1.18 Deputy E. Millar:**

I am not going to say a great deal. I would say that I made my own decision to support Deputy Gardiner's proposition because I also feel that this proposition has the risk of unintended consequences. I do not believe I really have a full understanding of what the implication of this would be. I also fully understand some of Deputy Tadier's comments. It appears to me that he is suggesting that Andium should be leaving tenants in properties that are substandard, have old kitchens, old wiring, rather than ... it seems me entirely appropriate for Andium, as a responsible landlord, to maintain its properties, to upkeep its properties and to ask tenants, with considerable periods of notice, to move to new properties which have been refurbished. Tenants are not being moved into substandard properties, they are being moved into refurbished properties. It is appropriate that when they are being given new kitchens, new bathrooms, whatever else Andium are doing, that they are being moved into modern properties. The suggestion that there is something oppressive and persecutory about that I just find completely bizarre. I also have severe reservations about this House interfering with Andium's business model without a full understanding of what the implications of that are.

#### **8.1.19 Deputy K.F. Morel:**

The road to a very bad place is paved with good intentions. This is unfortunately exactly where we are. I could not agree more with Deputy Millar and Deputy Gardiner. As an Assembly, we will be voting on this from an uninformed position. We do not know the effects of this proposition, and in fact I would argue that the way they are presented in the report to the proposition massively underestimates the ongoing effects of the proposition. The proposition itself says that it is not about the tenants on one estate in Jersey; the proposition is about all Andium tenants across the whole of the Andium estate moving forward, so where in the financial implications it says this affects 27 tenants, it does not. It affects hundreds, if not thousands, of tenants because as Andium refurbish homes, which they do, as Andium build new homes, which they do, every time a current Andium tenant is asked to go into that new home or asks themselves to go into that new home, they will be subject to this proposition. So Andium will not be able to ask them to pay any extra at all, even if they are on income support, so hundreds, if not thousands, of tenants over the coming years will have their rents frozen by this. The impact of that will be enormous on Andium's finances. It will not be a token element of just a couple of hundred thousand pounds. Over the years, it will become millions of pounds. Honestly, when I look at Jersey's States-owned entities and arm's length organisations, I look at Andium and I think: "You know what, above all of them, you have delivered." Andium has delivered new housing across this Island. Now, maybe some people do not remember what States

tenancies used to be like, States homes used to be like. They were not appropriate; they were appalling. I know it was controversial when it was created, but Andium has turned the Island around in terms of its social housing. Its business model has worked and continues to work. I do not think we should jeopardise that because Andium gives us good quality homes for people to live in at, on average, 70 per cent of the market rate. I think that is fundamentally important to understand that fact. On average, Andium tenants pay 70 per cent of the market rate, not 80 per cent, not 90 per cent; they pay 70 per cent of the market rate. As Deputy Gardiner just said, 20 per cent of Andium tenants pay 60 per cent or less of market rate, so we know that Andium protects people from high rents. That is what it does; that is what Andium is doing. I do not think we should jeopardise that. In the proposition it is suggested as well that there are sudden rent increases. Andium has assured us that this does not happen. There are no sudden rent increases. People are notified months in advance of their options about moving when there is a refurbished or new home to move into, so I think it is really important that we do not get sucked in by that sort of language. These sudden increases do not exist. Andium is also well-known, and I am sure all of us have spoken to constituents who will speak about good experiences with Andium when they are in need. Andium is there to help people. They have people whose jobs are dedicated to helping those who are struggling with rent. Andium is not trying at any point to exploit in any way any of its tenants, it is trying to do exactly the opposite of that. It is trying to protect and help its tenants and it does so while delivering new homes, refurbished homes, which are 100 per cent up to standard, which is also really, really important to understand. A few facts about last year at Andium. Last year, Andium delivered 151 affordable homes. It did that because of the business model that we have created for it, which works. Last year 100 per cent of their homes met the decent homes standard. Last year - and this is really important - they invested £67 million in homes and land for homes. They cannot do that if we break their business model. That is what really worries me here. Now, Deputy Gardiner's proposition for moving this on to the next item, had that won, we would have been able to have, as an Assembly, a meeting with Andium where they could have told us everything about their business model and we could have asked them any questions we wanted. We can still have that meeting, but obviously we have got to decide this now beforehand, which I think is a shame.

[14:45]

But I stand with Deputy Luce. This is not the right thing to do, this proposition. It is well-intentioned. We know that Deputy Ward is deeply concerned about poverty in this Island, and rightly so. So are the other 48 of us, but Andium helps deal with poverty in this Island, and so I ask Members support Andium, do not be against Andium. That is not the world we need to be living in. We need to be supporting Andium in the good work it does and help them to help the thousands of people that they already do. They have got 4,700 tenants across this Island. They would have many more with their home-building programme, which is bringing at least 1,000 new homes online in the coming years. We are jeopardising those 1,000 homes if we support this proposition with yet another chipping away at Andium's business model. States-owned entities like this, particularly like Andium, are not there to be toyed with by us. They need stability in order to be able to invest. They need stability in order to be able to say to their financiers that they have a stable backing of a stable government behind them. If we start to jeopardise that in Jersey, if we start to jeopardise the very stability upon which we help the poorest in our society, then I really have to question what we are doing in this Assembly. Let us applaud Deputy Ward for bringing a thought-provoking and well-intentioned proposition, but let us not jeopardise the good work of Andium Homes by accepting the proposition, because it will affect thousands of tenants over the years. It is not the 27 tenants that are talked about in the financial implications; it is many, many more than that. Deputy Luce was absolutely right, the implications of this will go long, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 years into the future, so please, please reject this proposition.

**The Bailiff:**

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and I call upon Deputy Ward to respond.

**8.1.20 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

*Merci.* Do not worry, that is as much French as you are getting. I would like to thank everybody for speaking in a debate because we have not had many this sitting, have we? It is nice to have that, but let us deal with some of the mythology that is coming out here, let us deal with some of the fearmongering that is coming across in this debate. It is quite strange that we are hearing the similar sort of fearmongering that we heard in the last Assembly whenever something was brought forward. It is Chicken Licken politics: "The sky will fall in, the sky is going to fall if you do this." The Andium model, let us deal with that first of all, the business model. The business model for Andium is voted on in this Assembly. It is a political choice because they are an arm's length organisation owned by the States Assembly, so we have that choice as to what happens in terms of their monies and their investment. Now, Deputy Morel talks about - and it is not just Deputy Morel, so many - unknown effects. Let me tell you some known effects. Some known effects are people on the lowest incomes in our Island are going to face significant rent rises that are going to wipe out, I say to Deputy Ferey, the so-called generous contribution from the mini-Budget because a rent increase of £262 a month is around - now I am regretting this, with Deputy Alves - about £2,000 and something a year, which is going to wipe out any of the £500 increase. If you are a pensioner, by the way, you have got to be on a full pension, remember, and I think only 3,000 out of the - is it - 9,000 who are on a full pension that will see the full income from the mini-Budget. That was not spoken about very much, was it, because it was not good P.R. (public relations)? But that is where we are. As for unintended consequences, I put a written question in about how many tenants it would be and what I got back was: "I am only going to tell you about Le Marais estate." I will read the question out. I did email back to say that was not the case, but I am afraid I lost focus on it after so many being ignored. I should have brought it to the Assembly: "Will the Minister advise how many Andium Homes tenants have moved into a refurbished home with Andium in the last 2 years and face an increase in the rent due to this change?" I got back ...

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Can I raise a point of order?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, I am not going to give way.

**The Bailiff:**

If it is a point of order, you do not have a choice. I have to take a point of order.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Just with reference to this email about the numbers of individuals being talked about, he references 27. The 27 was in answer to one of his questions.

**The Bailiff:**

That is not a point of order.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I am sorry, I just thought it was a point ...

**The Bailiff:**

A point of order requires a ruling from the Chair and there is no ruling there. You simply want to make a speech, so please do not.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I do not want to make a speech.

**The Bailiff:**

You want to say something in the Assembly which is for other people to listen to and that is not a point of order. Thank you. Carry on, Deputy.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It does not surprise me it is not a point of order. It is as disjointed as the interaction has been with me over this proposition. It was lodged on 12th September, 6 weeks' lodging time. That is the way this Assembly works. You have 6 weeks to read the report. Somebody asked me outside: "Why did you not lobby people?" and I was being absolutely honest, I am not very good at lobbying. I am not very good at going up to people and saying: "Oh, will you vote for my proposition for this?" because I have a huge respect for people in this Assembly because this is what I do, I read the report and I come up with questions and then I discuss them. Perhaps I am wrong here and perhaps I need to go up to ... I cannot imagine doing it, but that is why I do not lobby, because it is up to you to read the report and you have had plenty of time. It was on Friday I was communicated with and there was a meeting arranged for Monday with the Minister because that is all I could do and then it was cancelled on Sunday night. I would say that officers working on a Sunday night is not a good idea for their work/life balance, particularly when they have families, but that is an aside. To go through the some of the concerns, Deputy Luce, you raised things about what is going to happen in the future. The proposition says at the end: "... over a period of 5 to 10 years, depending upon the tenants' ability to pay." If these changes are not affecting the tenants' ability to pay, there is no delay, it is not a problem. What this proposition does, it prevents us driving people into poverty, driving people into reliance on income support, driving people into this limitation of what they can keep in their pockets to have a better standard of living in our social housing provider, not the private housing provider, not the free market of the private housing provider in that fixed market, but the one that we control in this Assembly. You have a choice today. You can either go with this fear politics: "If we do this, we destroy this the business model of Andium and they will not be able to build new homes and they will not be able to make a return to government and we will not be refurbishing them." Well, we are just building brand-new homes that do not need refurbishing yet, 1,000 more. That is 1,000 more rents that we are collecting. If you do this for this ... so therefore what we have to do with the business model is we have to drive people into poverty or into income support to support this model. Now, that wider debate is exactly the debate we should be having. I totally agree, but that is not what this proposition was about. If I had brought that proposition about the wider issue, what would I have got? I would have got from some Members in the Assembly: "Oh well, we do not have enough data to do anything on that yet. We do not know what we are doing. It is too big a proposition." We are in a catch-22 situation as a Backbencher or as a ... yes, I am going to call it a Backbencher because I like that term. We are in a catch-22 position. You could bring something that is specific, doable, workable, manageable and people say: "Oh, there is not enough data, I am afraid." I do not know what data you want. I can give you some data in a moment, okay, or we can bring something that is so high and convoluted and wide, what we get back is: "I am afraid we cannot do that because it is too high, convoluted and wide." What we seem to be doing is closing down debate. We seem to be closing down the action of Backbenchers and the ability to bring a proposition in this Assembly, the very thing that makes this Assembly special, the very thing that makes our democracy special on this Island. I have said many times, and I said to a school the other day during Democracy Week, we are very lucky. If I was an M.P. (Member of Parliament) in the U.K. I would bring nothing to this Assembly, but I am not. I can bring something with 6 weeks and it is voted for, but unfortunately the current Government's approach is to ignore it until the last minute, but then tell you: "We do not have enough information so you are going to have to delay it." I am extraordinarily disappointed with that approach of trying to move it to the next sitting. The next sitting is in 4 weeks. In those 4 weeks, I do not know how many pensioners or families or people will face a rent increase, drive them

into Social Security or take away their income directly and they do not have a choice. They simply do not have a choice. It is okay to sit here and say: "Well, the business model has to work" but the reality of people's lives is the key thing, but let us go through. Deputy Millar talked about unintended consequences. Let us tell you about the unintended consequences, shall we? People are worried, people are fearful of how they are going to pay their rents, people are fearful that for the first time in their lives they will have to go to Social Security on their fixed income and give up 3 months of bank statements to show everything that they own. They are fearful that their savings that they put together will mean that they do not qualify for that income support and they will have to spend those savings on the increase in rent driven through by this Assembly because it failed to vote for this proposition. That is the unintended consequence, that is the one we need to look at, and it is those unintended consequences that you are responsible for, for your constituents and you perhaps ... and I say to the Constable of St. Helier, you can use the new constituency office to meet those constituents and explain it away to them. Deputy Tadier was quite right regards the ... no, so I would like to ... Deputy Gorst gave us a history of social housing and I get it. Yes, it has improved, it has got better, the standards have improved, marvellous. This has been seen to be that I am anti-Andium Homes. I am not. I have worked with Andium. We have worked in our constituency. Deputy Alves knows we worked with some groups, we formed a tenants' association, fantastic interaction. The poor quality of work was fixed, the leaking balconies were fixed, the door was fixed, okay, but they were there in the beginning and we worked with Andium, but they had to be. We are more than happy to do that, more than able to do that. Deputy Gardiner, the absence of details. The proposition says that we will freeze rents for one year, so when people move in they have got a year where they will not see the increase and then we will look at their ability to pay and it will be spread over time so it is manageable. There is one detail that I would like to read to the Assembly. It is the title. Always read the title, it is really important. You get marked for it in your coursework: "Cost of living crisis - Measuring a ... a measure ..." I cannot even read it. **[Laughter]** I set myself up for that one. "Cost of living crisis", it is all in the timing, good comedy: "Measures affecting Andium Homes rent increases." The cost-of-living crisis, because that is where we are, and by increasing these rents we are increasing the crisis and the cost of living for many people. Let us get to this argument: "Oh, it is more than the 27." This makes this even more important. It is even more important we address this issue because we are going to have thousands of people being driven to income support or to poverty, or the so-called mini-Budget that is going to save them from poverty, they are going to lose it in their rents and some. That is the unintended consequences of not thinking through what we are doing here. That is the unintended consequences of having a business model and only thinking about that and forgetting the people who are the unintended consequences of that business model. I for one am going to stand here throughout my time in this Assembly and make sure that I fight against that sort of inadequacy of our response. Deputy Southern, you have a real understanding of proud people because you have dealt with them throughout your entire career and I say every time there is a case I cannot deal with, I go to Deputy Southern and he deals with it, so I thank him publicly for that. I am sure there are other Members in this Assembly who may have done the same thing. I look across the Assembly. Deputy Howell, you raise a very good point: if tenants have been in Andium for so many years and built their life on that rent, which will have increased each year but not gone up to the 80 or 90 per cent, why have they suddenly got to be put on to that level? They are not ready for it. They have spent their life, they have budgeted, they have planned. We have had someone in the past in this Assembly disgracefully suggest that people use foodbanks because they do not plan properly - a disgraceful idea - but then we have got people who are planning really carefully and suddenly they are hit with this increase because of a policy. A policy. It is not "computer says no", it is "policy says no." Is that where we are with this new Government? Is that ... I am not going to use the phrase. Deputy Andrews, thank you. Looking at the wording, I like that. I would say there was a glimpse of the firebrand there and it was marvellous, absolutely marvellous, and I look forward to that and I encourage that. Deputy Warr: the comments were released at 9.51 a.m. this morning. I am sorry, but I see that as cynical. I see what you have done here as cynical in terms of trying to move this



along. This needs debating now and you, as an individual Member of this Assembly, now need to stand up and vote. You need to decide where your vote is going to be and the outcome of that vote and its implications, not its unintended consequences, its intended consequences for individuals and for people who will face rent rises, significant rent rises.

[15:00]

Some other people. I do like to get a song reference in and I was struggling. I would like to thank the new Constable of St. Saviour because we have not agreed on a lot in the past. I understand that, but I thank you for the support on this and it is a new day, it is a new dawn **[Laughter]** and, Sir, I am feeling good.

**The Bailiff:**

Good.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Thank you for that opportunity.

**The Bailiff:**

Yes. I was about to make a remark about speaking through the Chair because you addressed the Constable directly.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sorry, Sir, apologies, I got carried away. Deputy Mézec is absolutely right. This is not a criticism of Andium, please. There is a phrase in sport, often in football: "Play the ball, not the player" and I think too often some of the speeches have played the player today. That is okay, I am big enough and ugly enough to take it, but play the ball. What is going on here? The reality is that people are being moved out to refurbish to come up to a decent standard. They have no choice because they are not going to stay in that substandard home because it is against our laws. Then they move back in and they have no choice, because they cannot go to the private sector because it is unaffordable, and then what do we do in Andium? We put their rents up and say: "Well, if you cannot pay it, just get it off income support and being trapped in the system." There is a fundamental flaw in what we are doing. Yes, review it; yes, come back to it; yes, I will have a meeting, if you want, with Andium. I have spoken to Andium hundreds of times. Of course we can meet and we can discuss and we can review and produce reports and produce reports of reports and reviews of reviews, but the reality is that we have people who are at home at the moment who are going to face an average increase of around £260 a month in their rent because they have moved back into something that is a better standard, which is social housing. I do not agree that just because we have got it up to a decent standard they need to then be thrown into that poverty trap. I say to Members in this Assembly, you have a choice today. Do not be fooled by the Chicken Licken politics, do not be fooled by the fearmongering, but do think about your constituents. If you are going to say it is okay for the rent increases, then please, arrange appointments with each of them individually and explain your reasoning to them, because I cannot explain that reasoning to constituents in my district because I do not agree with it. I will finish there. I am sorry if I did not cover everybody. I have got a new book, I have even got it labelled - I bought a labeller, it is very exciting - but I may have missed some people out. Deputy Scott, you used the word "inappropriate" and you are correct. It is often semantics in this job that is important, but there are some inappropriate things going on. It is a very nice word. You mentioned the word "inappropriate." I do not know what a better word is than that for what I am trying to discuss here. I think that is just about everybody covered. Deputy Renouf, I think I have covered the issues that you brought up. In terms of a 2-tier market, let us deal with that. We have a 2-tier market now, we have 2-tier residency now. We already have that in place, but to solve it, what we do not want surely is a one-tier, unaffordable, poverty-driven market which puts people into a situation that does not work. That is the reality of where we are. I urge Members really

to take the first opportunity we have had in this Assembly to vote for something that is going to make a positive impact for people’s lives that is beyond just the mini-budget. That is the only debate we are having with a vote. Please take your opportunity. With that, I call for the appel. Thank you.

**The Bailiff:**

The *appel* is called for. I invite Members not in the Assembly to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting.

<b>POUR: 16</b>		<b>CONTRE: 24</b>		<b>ABSTAIN: 2</b>
Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of St. Helier		Deputy A. Howell
Connétable of Grouville		Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy B. Ward
Connétable of St. Saviour		Connétable of Trinity		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Connétable of St. Peter		
Deputy M. Tadier		Connétable of St. John		
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		Connétable of St. Ouen		
Deputy R.J. Ward		Connétable of St. Mary		
Deputy C.S. Alves		Deputy C.F. Labey		
Deputy S.Y. Mézec		Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy T.A. Coles		Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy B.B.S.V.M. Porée		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
Deputy M.R. Scott		Deputy I. Gardiner		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		Deputy I.J. Gorst		
Deputy H.L. Jeune		Deputy L.J Farnham		
Deputy R.S. Kovacs		Deputy K.L. Moore		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		Deputy D.J. Warr		
		Deputy H.M. Miles		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy M.E. Millar		
		Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy K.M. Wilson		

**9. Introduce an immediate reduction in road fuel duty (In-committee)**

**The Bailiff:**

Members will know that the next item of business is an in-committee debate. Members will recall that at the last meeting in September it was agreed that there would be an in-committee debate arising from a petition which has reached the required 5,000 signatures and that is on whether there should

be an introduction of an immediate reduction in road fuel duty. I had originally intended to allow a half-day for this, which is the normal position, but it seems to me we have available to us today 2 hours and 25 minutes before we would normally adjourn. Therefore, I propose to allow that time for this debate. I will draw it to an end at 5.30 p.m. unless Members wish to continue into tomorrow morning. Obviously, ultimately, it will be a matter for Members, but it is for me to set the initial guidelines, and so that is what I propose to do. Could I remind Members that they are entitled to speak twice, or more than twice, that there will be no vote, there is no proposition before the Assembly, so there will be no vote taken. It is the opportunity to express views on the subject matter of the petition. This is a matter for the Minister for Treasury and Resources to start the proceedings and then to sum up the proceedings at the end, which is the normal way of doing it. It is a matter for the Minister of course as to how those duties are performed. But if we start the debate now I would call on the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

### **9.1 Deputy I.J. Gorst (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):**

This is a petition, which was started on the website of the States Assembly prior to the last election and required, when it reached the appropriate number of signatories, a comment by my predecessor. Members will be aware of what that comment was. I perhaps approach this subject from a slightly different perspective to my predecessor. I do believe that there are - how shall I phrase this - inefficiencies or questions, which are not well-answered in regard to how the fuel market is operating in our Island. Previous Ministers have asked for reviews of that market and for work to be undertaken by the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority) and yet I, for one, and others share this belief. I am often accosted by an Islander as I am making my way to the office in Broad Street who provides me with an update on his correspondence with various garages and he takes a keen interest in monitoring fuel prices. Not just fuel prices, also supermarket prices as well. His personal monitoring shows some interesting trends, particularly trends during a time of volatility, a time of high inflation, and a time of increasing cost of energy due to the war in Ukraine. So there are inefficiencies in the fuel market. The Council of Ministers in the run-up to preparing measures for the mini-Budget, we did consider whether duties should be removed from fuel, but in the run-up to those discussions, Ministers instructed the economists in the Economic Department to do a fuel market review. That has only just reached Ministers' desks; it reached mine on Friday and my colleague Minister I think over the weekend and other Ministers. It is being lodged for the information of Members and the public in the normal way to consider. My reading of that review is that further work needs to be undertaken by the J.C.R.A. There is a wide discrepancy in the prices that Islanders will pay at pumps. There is use of loyalty cards and that in itself raises questions, which are unanswered. Ministers ultimately decided in their proposals for the mini-Budget that in the absence of further good evidence upon which to act the best approach was to put money into Islanders' pockets so that they could themselves decide how to spend that money, dependent on which of the difficult price increases they themselves as individuals or households were finding most difficult to pay and could deal with that accordingly. Of course there has been great fluctuation in the price of fuel between the lodging or the submitting of this petition, the agreement of this Assembly to the mini-Budget, and Members will see from the fuel price review those fluctuations. For example, the fuel price now, or at 21st September, varied between 162.9 and 193.9. That has come off considerably, certainly more than 10 pence per litre, during the period that this petition has been live. What Ministers have done, and Members will have seen this in the Government Plan lodged today, is decided that they would not increase duties during the course of 2023. Had we followed normal policy then duty would have increased by 7.9 per cent. We are not proposing that, which of course would lead to a monetary increase of greater than the reduction that the petitioners are calling for. I recognise that the fuel market is volatile. I recognise that Ministers have made a commitment to continually review the difficulties that Islanders are facing around the increasing cost of living and monitoring inflation across markets. Therefore, for my part, I think that we debate this petition having taken action, having seen the price of fuel reduce, and we, as Ministers, are interested to hear

the views of other Members and whether they think further action is required at this time or that we should adjust the position that we take. So I look forward to hearing what Members have to say on this petition and the plea or prayer of the petitioner.

### **9.1.1 The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

I may be going on a slight ramble but I will get there eventually. I am a self-confessed baby boomer born in the 1950s. I remember the missile crisis in Cuba, 1963, and the threats we had again in the 1980s. I worked in the film industry for many, many years. I was working with a German film crew, Bavaria Films, making a film over here many, many years ago.

[15:15]

They kept disappearing into huddles and whispering and I said: “What is going on?” They said: “Nothing, nothing.” I said: “Come on, tell me what is going on.” I was led away by the arm and I was told: “It is coming down, the Berlin Wall is coming down.” So I said: “No, you must be joking.” “Yes, we are going to storm the wall next week when we go home.” I said: “They will shoot you surely.” They said: “No, there is going to be too many of us, they will not bat an eyelid. Come with us, Kevin, and we will dance on the wall together.” Well, as usual, work got in the way and I did not manage to go but within 3 weeks they were dancing on the Berlin Wall. Mr. Gorbachev then dismantled the former Soviet Union, which was terrific, we were all friends, trade increased and we had cheap fuel and cheap gas from Russia. We had China, which was the powerhouse, if you like, cheap goods from China, cheap fuel and gas from Russia, everything was great. We have had trouble in recent times; we have had Brexit, which put a big strain on the U.K. and indeed ourselves, COVID, which meant shipping lines were disrupted, containers on one side of the world, ships on the other side, and that was a major disruption. Now we have Ukraine. We have Russia, which is one of the major grain producers in the world, has invaded Ukraine, another major grain supplier in the world. The fuel goes up. Basically everything goes up. We have had major disruption of course with the pipelines through Ukraine and Nord Stream 2, which comes through the Baltic, so fuel is going to be absolutely crucial. If fuel goes up with us, everything will go up, it is a complete knock-on effect. We have had some good grain harvests in the west but there is nothing saying that will continue next year or the year after. If all goes well in the world the next few years we will be in for a bumpy ride. If it does not go well, I will leave that to the imagination. But I fully support putting a cap on road fuel because basically it is our life force at the moment.

### **9.1.2 Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:**

I remember all too well the days of queueing up in the Chelsea Hotel to get my road tax and motor tax and my relatives on the mainland are constantly complaining about the enormous sums of money they all have to pay for their various vehicles, however many they have. My approach to this problem is slightly different. I am making an assumption, perhaps I am incorrect, but I do believe this duty goes to the maintenance of our roads. If I am making an incorrect assumption I am hoping somebody will put me correct. But I am very grateful for the States of Jersey for paying an awful lot of maintenance around our Parishes and I am sure my colleagues behind me will reiterate we have our country lanes and they do cost a great deal of money to maintain. Most of the mileage in my own Parish is owned by the States. Are they covering their costs? That is my question to the Minister; is that tax covering the cost of road maintenance in Jersey?

### **9.1.3 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

This is just a brief observation based on the publication, which has just been recently circulated. I am quite interested to try to understand the margins in Jersey being significantly higher than the U.K. and, while I appreciate costs in the Island are different, the wholesale cost of the fuel is split out, so that is indicated quite clearly. But, whereas the U.K. margins might show a value of 23 per cent, ours are at 29 per cent, and it just seems an extraordinary difference, which might need the fuel

companies to review their operating model. Whether this is the same for both - well, no, it is not the same for both - the La Collette one is higher, the other firm is less. So it is difficult to understand how that increased margin is justified, so maybe in summing up the Minister for Treasury and Resources might be able to elaborate on that.

#### **9.1.4 Deputy H. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

I do not support the reduction in fuel duty. That comes as no surprise. But I absolutely recognise that we are in a cost-of-living crisis, which has been exacerbated by oil and gas companies. However, please also consider the long-term changes we are trying to make through the carbon neutral roadmap that will benefit all. Our cost-of-living and climate crises are intermittently linked. Climate change is a threat multiplier, meaning its effects intensify other global threats, like security, conflict, economic stability, and poverty. The U.K. in its spring statement in 2022, the U.K. Government announced that it also will reduce the rates on fuel duty for 12 months, yet organisations like the A.A. (Automobile Association) have many concerns, because according to them less than half of the fuel duty cut has been passed on to drivers filling up at the pumps. Also the new Economics Foundation said only 7 per cent of the savings from cutting fuel duty would go to the poorest fifth of households, given that more than half do not have a car. By contrast, a third of the savings from the fuel duty cut will go to the richest fifth of households. Data from Jersey itself, from 2014/2015, and understandably this may have changed recently due to cost of living, 10 per cent of spending on motor fuels was by the poorest fifth of households and 33 per cent by the richest fifth. Similarly, only 10 per cent of savings from cutting fuel duty would go to the poorest fifth of households with approximately a third going to the richest fifth of households. Therefore, cutting fuel duty is perhaps one of the worst-targeted income support policies. While any cuts give some help to those who are struggling, they provide most benefit - or to a greater extent - to the well-off. Taxing petrol and diesel through fuel duty is one of the most important policies to nudge consumers towards less-polluting transport options. It is based on the polluter-pays principle to generate income from the source of the pollution as well as providing encouragement to using less petrol and diesel forms of transport. The Climate Emergency Fund receives revenue from this fuel duty and this fund provides the funding for the carbon neutral roadmap, including initiatives to strengthen public transport and active travel that will ultimately help us to be less reliant on private transport and paying less for petrol and diesel purchases. Any reduction in the fuel duty - the Government Plan has proposed to freeze it - but any reduction should not be taken from the portion of the revenue that is intended for the Climate Emergency Fund. In our transport system it is far too often difficult for people to manage without access to a car. This means that those without cars can be vulnerable to exclusion from social and economic opportunities while those with cars are vulnerable to increases in the cost of driving, effectively tackling social and environmental transport challenges requires a concerted effort to remove the barriers to managing without a car whenever that is possible. The previous States Assembly approved the carbon neutral roadmap with specific deadlines and commitments to meet as we discussed earlier today. The majority of scope 1 emissions in Jersey come from on-Island road transport and transport to and from the Island by ferries and planes. So I hope that these ambitions that the previous States Assembly signed up to are not disregarded so that we can make progress on the carbon neutral roadmap.

#### **9.1.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

We need to get to the bottom perhaps of how we consider duty on fuel in general to be ring-fenced and what the purposes of that ring-fencing are, if it is ring-fenced. Because we know that an element of that, as the Constable of Grouville has already said, at a given point when I am old enough to remember the discs that you used to have to put in your car window for your road tax. It was not my car I was driving; my parents had it. Not too dissimilar to the stickers you used to have to put on surfboards. I do not know if you still need to do that, but they were there for a different purpose. So only a small portion of the duty that you pay on your road fuel is for road maintenance or a service

charge, if you like. Of course the duty that exists on road fuel pre-exists any modern concept that we have of carbon offset. So it would be wrong to presume that automatically by giving a discount or alleviating duty on fuel would be targeting those 2 areas. There is an *a priori* purpose to duty on fuel, which existed before the road tax and before any carbon fund was set up. I would also like to ask the Assistant Minister with delegated responsibility for climate change, and what a responsibility that is to have of course on those shoulders, how she feels about, for example, luxury yacht owners who do not pay duty on fuel. Because, as I see it, the environment does not care where the carbon comes from, if it comes from the back of somebody's vintage Mini that they might be driving around either because that is their relic that they drive, that is all they have, or it is a collectable car, or if it is a modern and more-efficient petrol car, or a luxury yacht parked in the harbour. Of course we know that luxury yachts do not pay duty on their fuel, so they are certainly not contributing to whatever the other purpose of duty on fuel is. Of course they do not drive around on the roads, so they do not need to contribute to road upkeep, but they do contribute to carbon emissions more generally. She also talked about the ferries that come in and out or the planes. I am presuming that the ferries can also access duty-free fuel. I do not know enough about that but I would have thought they are boats, therefore somebody who comes into the Island on a Condor ferry will not be paying any duty for that. Whereas others who travel by road do have to pay for that. I am also concerned - and I am not sure what the answer is to this - about double taxation. So you have G.S.T. (goods and services tax) and duty being applied to a product and of course that then becomes compounded. So if I have that wrong the Minister for Treasury and Resources on my left will correct me. But it seems to me that those taxes should be applied separately. So if a litre of fuel, let us say, costs 50p, you should apply the duty and then you should apply the G.S.T. to that same 50p. You should not apply G.S.T. to a litre of fuel that already has the duty applied to it, which then of course makes the G.S.T. much higher. There is a question, and we do have to look at there are 5,000-plus people who have signed this petition, so whether or not we think that ultimately - and we are not being asked to vote for this today - it is certainly problematic from an environmental point of view to reduce or take off G.S.T. or duty in part or in its entirety, but that does not mean we should completely close our ears to what the petitioners are asking us for and why they have put that in place. It would be slightly disingenuous if we just came up with the argument to say because we are in a climate crisis there is no way we can alleviate this. Because, of course, as I have said, there are so many other levers that can be used when it comes to either carrot or stick mechanisms to either encourage or discourage certain types of behaviour. Ultimately, my concern is that we are not moving fast enough. G.S.T. or duty on fuel is not going to be an answer, even if it is part of the answer. As somebody who hopes to be alive for maybe the next 40 years, I do not think we can wait until 2050 for whatever action we are taking in regard to climate change and carbon emissions. As a small Island, it is often said that the impact we can make on the wider environment is negligible, but I would say that we have to look at our per capita emissions rather than simply the fact that we are a dot in the channel. I will leave those comments there but I hope that is of some use to somebody listening somewhere.

#### **9.1.6 Deputy M.R. Ferey:**

In the public mind this petition got to 5,000 signatures very quickly, probably because it is born out of the cost-of-living crisis that we are all facing. But my concern is would any forced reduction be reflected at the pumps, which has already been mentioned by some contributors. The experience and the fear in the U.K. is that it will not be. If I go back just a couple of years, the Jersey Consumer Council used to regularly publish *Fuel Watch*, which showed the cheapest or the variation of pump prices. There was a substantial variation between those prices, so I think we are going to have a similar debate when it comes to G.S.T. on food about how that looks in the real world.

[15:30]

But to stay with this particular petition, which has already been reiterated by people with an environmental concern, is this does not fit with the climate change emergency and does not encourage good behaviours.

#### **9.1.7 Deputy T.A. Coles:**

To try to avoid too much repetition on the words already uttered by Deputy Jeune and Deputy Tadier, and somewhat by Deputy Ferey, reducing the duty on fuel during the climate emergency does seem very backward-stepping and almost like we are trying to encourage more people to use vehicles than is necessary. If the Treasury was to consider reducing the duty levied against fuels, if they are prepared to take that loss to the Treasury, maybe we should consider that loss coming in a different form. Something that helps maybe increasing the budgets in the carbon neutral roadmap to get more active travel quicker, to help people decarbonise their homes better, or even just simply look at our tax allowances. I am not sure whether all the components in the mini-Budget have been increased by 12 per cent. But looking at the motor expenses at the moment a car has received just 60 pence per mile as a flat rate. If that is increased by 12 per cent in the budget that would go up to about 67 pence per mile. And these were for people who need to use their cars and motor vehicles for work purposes, so keeping our economy moving and help benefit themselves. I am sure now that we have received the Government Plan this is something that maybe might be an amendment that comes on and, if it does come by me, I will try to improve my wording. But these are the different things we should explore rather than just simply saying: "Let us cut duty." There is more that we can do to apply that will benefit people more directly. As Deputy Jeune mentioned, by just reducing the duty at the pump will benefit the wealthiest in this Island more than the poorest. Again, it is less targeted, so if you have people who need their vehicles to carry out essential items, we have carers who have to travel between one client and another, many of the times they have to pay for that cost themselves, it is not built in to what their employers would reimburse them for. So any effect on the duty on fuel should be directed where it needs to be rather than just a superfluous over-the-top cut it back.

#### **9.1.8 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:**

At first glance, a reduction of road fuel duty is attractive. But what does it mean? In terms of household spend, 2.25 pence per litre, it means very little, probably the saving on a round trip to St. Helier would be around 2 pence. We should be looking for alternatives. How can we use less fuel? Some 7 years ago, working with colleagues, I managed to reduce fuel expenditure by around 15 per cent for a large fleet, a company that was spending in excess of £100,000 a year, so a significant saving. This was achieved by both the use of technology and driver training. Driver training can help assist drivers in their behaviours, therefore reducing the amount of fuel needed for the same journey, be that anticipating events on the road ahead, less-aggressive acceleration, and/or braking. Most of us have choice and we need to encourage people to make that choice to use alternative means of transport, therefore using less fuel. We heard this morning about the good work that is done by LibertyBus. I supported the introduction of under-18 bus passes and will continue to support this going forward. This month is International Walk to School Month. How many people knew that? International Walk to School Month; I would urge the Minister for Education, the Minister for the Environment, and the Minister for Infrastructure, to get behind this initiative both this year and in future years. In May we had Alternative Transport Week where people were encouraged not to use their cars and to find alternative means of travel. We can find different ways to save money. I look at the work at Les Landes School, at what they have done to encourage their pupils to cycle to school, and I look forward to the day when similar numbers are able to access St. John's either by foot or cycle, cutting out unnecessary car journeys. In terms of fuel costs, we should be putting a lot more focus on the fuel surcharge applied to freight to this Island. The cost of fuel surcharge in September I believe was £143.34 per trailer. In comparison, the fuel surcharge on Brittany ferries to cross the channel was £52.36. This fuel surcharge is being passed on and does impact on everyone's cost of living. There is a lot of merit to Deputy Tadier's observations about marine fuel, although I would

err on the side of caution when it comes to our local fishing community. I believe the measures planned for the budget are sufficient to balance the costs versus helping to reduce the demand.

### **9.1.9 Deputy J. Renouf:**

Just a couple of points, if I may, to add to points that have been already made. The problem with a cut in fuel duty is it is an extraordinarily blunt tool if the aim is to tackle the cost of living. Several people have already made the comment about where the benefit of this mostly falls and it is clear that it is not a targeted measure. When you think about this you need to consider it in the context in which we considered it as Ministers, which is in the context of the mini-Budget and the Government Plan. In other words, as part of a package of measures. Very clearly we set out in that we wanted to help people through targeted increases in incomes and we made sure that those targeted increases in incomes were concentrated towards the lower end of the scale. The point I made then and would repeat now is that this gives people a measure of control and choice in their lives so that they can choose, faced with rising prices, to adapt their behaviour, to make different choices in the future. They may choose, with more money, to buy an electric bicycle or they may choose to put the money aside for some other purpose. That is a very important principle, which I hope, as a Government, we can stick to and give some clarity and consistency as we go forward. The other points that have been made about why it is a very blunt tool, apart from the fact that it does not target the people who most need it, or at least it does so in a very incomplete way, it does not get passed on, as other people have pointed out, and the amount involved is tiny, £1 to £2 a month has been quoted in the papers that I have seen, for the typical road user. So in terms of doing what it sets out to do, it is not an efficient and good way to achieve that goal. The other thing to do of course is to place it in the longer-term context of what we are trying to achieve. We are trying to achieve a long-term stepped reduction in the use of carbon-based fuels in this Island. Everything we do has to be seen in that context. So you then have to ask does this help achieve that? Would a cut in fuel duty help achieve that aim? I would argue that it does not. In fact one of the things you can say about fuel duty is it is the closest we have to a pure carbon tax. It does tax fuel at the point of use and therefore in a way we could say that is a good incentive to offer. As a Government I hope we can offer clarity on that; that is we do not want to keep cutting fuel duty, we do not want to put an effective ceiling on the price of fossil fuels. The price of fossil fuels reflects market changes and those market changes are a reflection of our vulnerability in depending on those fuels. So we should not be trying to protect people in all circumstances from that. Experience in the U.K. is that if you freeze fuel duty, which they have done for many years, almost a decade I think, it becomes almost impossible to put it back up again, the political cost becomes quite high. I would not want us to go down that route, given our ambitions in our intention to reduce emissions. But that does still leave a reasonable question, which is what about people who do not have choices? What about people who are being impacted by rises in fuel prices? I have partly answered that already by saying that of course we have targeted incomes in the mini-Budget and in the measures in the Government Plan. But we are also planning to bring forward measures that will support Islanders in making a transition away from carbon-based fuels. I can assure you that Deputy Jeune, the Assistant Minister with responsibility for climate and energy policy, or as I call her the Minister for Climate and Energy, we are looking forward very much to bringing forward those measures. It is a complicated business and I apologise to Members that we have not been able to do so yet. We are working on it as fast as we can. There are complex issues involved in judging where thresholds for support should lie, what the right balance is between supporting people on lower incomes in one way and people on higher incomes in another way. These are complex issues which we are working through. But please be assured that we have complete determination to do that and in that way help address those people who are not able to avoid spending money on fuel and are on low incomes and therefore are suffering disproportionately from those increases. So I regret, for the reasons I have outlined, that I do not think a cut in fuel duty is appropriate. We have to keep in mind the long-term goals we are trying to achieve while always bearing in mind that those goals need widespread support in the community, as I mentioned in an



answer earlier. Therefore we need to be continually explaining and addressing what we are doing and why so that people can see that bigger picture and hopefully we can take them with us on a journey, of which in the end everyone in Jersey I hope will end up being rightfully proud.

**9.1.10 Deputy M. Tadier:**

It is more so a question on what the Minister said, and I welcome his points that he has made. In Jersey I have already alluded to marine fuel, but it seems that aviation fuel is also exempt from duty. I wonder how the 5,000 petitioners might feel when they are driven by a genuine desire, albeit one which we have seen the report that has been circulated today suggests if we were to acquiesce to their suggestion it might only save a couple of pounds a month. But when they see jets being flown in and out of the Island, which contribute vastly more amounts of carbon than somebody maybe occasionally just using a car to come to St. Helier or to even get out of St. Helier, what does that say about the equality in our system? We know of course that it is the super wealthy globally who are contributing vastly more per capita to carbon emissions, and therefore climate change, than your average ordinary resident who does not own a jet. What does the Minister or the Assistant Minister think in those terms and how do we sell this decision today, which is effectively, even though we are not voting on it, says there is not going to be any change, trust us, we have a better way to get you all out of your cars, when we are not perhaps getting people out of their jets, or at least not asking people who are in their jets to cough up a little bit more.

**9.1.11 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

If I may just speak in the same vein as the previous speaker in terms of boats and planes. I cannot really speak for jets; I do not know much about them. But I am aware that in the aviation industry there is no compulsion for local aircraft owners to purchase their fuel here. They are very transient. They can purchase fuel of course wherever they happen to be going. There is a risk of losing that market. That is a consideration that has to be made. Likewise, there is considerable competition with our neighbouring island of Guernsey with regard to the supply of marine fuel. The local fishing fleets are heavy users of marine fuel. We would not wish to prejudice their operations in any way unless we take the whole fishing fleet back to sail, which I have to say is done in Falmouth to fish for oysters. But I do not think it would be well-received over here. There are a lot of ordinary boating people who use small amounts of fuel. Do we want to prejudice their hobbies? I think not. So all I would say in response to the Deputy's comments, we need to proceed carefully in making any decisions in that vein.

[15:45]

**9.1.12 The Connétable of Grouville:**

I would like to add one more way to go in respect to the future of fuel. My wife makes Jersey Wonders. I am sticking with the debate. That oil, the sunflower oil that she purchases to cook these Jersey Wonders goes for recycling. That oil goes to the mainland and is recycled into part of what we call RD100, which is available here in Jersey. Currently that fuel, my brother uses it, has an environmental tax on it, which he finds quite odd because it is not a fossil fuel, it is gained from products that are grown aboveground and not dug up to create global warming as we know it. So I have a question part put into this debate, why are people who buy RD100, which is quite expensive, paying environmental duty on that fuel?

**The Bailiff:**

Does any other Member wish to speak in the debate? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon the Minister to respond.

**9.1.13 Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

Although the debate has been short in duration, pertinent points have been made by Members and really points that the Council of Ministers considered and discussed when we were bringing forward both our mini-Budget and the Government Plan. I hope that the petitioners will see that, even in light of all of the points made by Members, which are appropriate, and lay out some of the challenges that not only we face here in Jersey but elsewhere across the globe, around reducing our carbon footprint, whether that be through travelling to and from Jersey, be that in British Airways or in private jets, be that use of cars driven by the internal combustion engine, whether that is used on a day-to-day commute or used for pleasure, be that fishing community in their vessels or, as the Constable of St. Brelade discussed, those who tootle around in their boats for pleasure. This is a challenge that we face together with the global community. Against that challenge of course we know that Islanders really are facing a cost-of-living crisis. I believe, and I take the vote in the Assembly a few weeks ago that Members believe this as well, that the £57 million that we put into supporting Islanders through this crisis will have a very real positive impact. Because at that point a reducing price of fuel at the pump was not appropriate to reduce impôts on fuel. Going forward in 2023, the freezing of the duty, so that is foregoing the 7.9 per cent, is of greater benefit than the petitioners were in effect asking for. The money from duty, other than the 9 pence that goes into the Climate Emergency Fund, is not hypothecated. Treasury, or Treasuries around the globe, do not like hypothecation because what it ends up meaning is that you have potentially unused monies where you are facing pressures elsewhere and you cannot allocate them or cross-use them, so it is not a sensible thing to do. What I do think is sensible though, and some other countries do it, they certainly do it in Australia, is that they explain to citizens how their money is spent. So they receive a breakdown of their tax bill, not just the overall amount, but allocated to the headline expenditure of Government. That is something that I would like to see us introduce. I am not sure it is going to be possible in 4 years but I do think it is a sensible thing because it goes to show and reinforces the cost of services that Government provides to Islanders. So it is not hypothecated in that way. There is an ongoing piece of work required, which will be around the replacement of fuel duties, when there is a decline in the purchase and use of carbon fuels. That again will be a decision that this Assembly probably needs to take within its term about a replacement taxation model or usage model in order to fund the very road repairs that we will continue to need whatever form of transport we take, whether that is by public transport or whether it is via cycling or uprating footpaths or continued use of E.V.s (electric vehicles). So there are challenges that we will need to grasp as we deliver on the carbon neutral roadmap. The leader of the Reform Party tweeted after my earlier speech that I talked about a review of a review of a review, as though reviews are bad things. Of course, if all one does is review, then that is not what we are here for. We are here to improve Islanders' lives and, in the words of the Chief Minister, to make sure that our community thrives. Ministers are absolutely committed to that. That is why in 21 days, rather than doing a review of what we might put in a mini-Budget, we brought forward proposals to this Assembly and Islanders right now are feeling, and will feel, the benefit in their pockets of the decisions that this Assembly made of the mini-Budget. But it is right that we keep those measures under review and it is right that we continue to review the impacts of inflation and increasing interest rates on Islanders' lives and the effects that they are having on our community. So I make no apology for saying that we will keep these things under review. I believe that the leader of the Reform Party would be better and I would have more sympathy with him if he was challenging us for not keeping these matters under review and the effects that they might have on Islanders. So it is right that when the fuel market review tells us that there are unanswered questions in that market around competition and around the discrepancy in fuel prices and how that industry is managing itself, that then we should look deeper and have a more-targeted investigation into what is happening. Because in that market, as well as other markets, competition can help us. Yes, Government can take action, individuals can take action in the use of their own budgets, but also competition and markets without competition, we need to make sure that there is appropriate competition because they can help Islanders with the cost-of-living crisis as well. So, coming back to the petition, as I said, I am grateful for what Members have contributed. Ministers have taken action, not quite what the

petitioners wanted, but I believe that in 2023 they will feel the benefit of the action that Ministers have taken. I make no apology for saying that we will keep this element of the market under review.

## **ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

### **The Bailiff:**

Thank you very much indeed, Minister. Very well, that concludes the business of the Assembly and I call upon Deputy Le Hegarat as vice-chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) to propose the arrangements for future business.

### **10. Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North (Vice-Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):**

There are only 2 items on the coming Assembly but Members need to be reminded that there could be further, because it is still 4 weeks away, so to keep those extra days just in case. But at the moment there are only 2 items, so it is unlikely that we will go into those days.

### **The Bailiff:**

The adjournment is proposed. Before the Assembly stands adjourned, could I remind Members that there is a meeting of the Jersey branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The earliest we can hold it is at 5.00 p.m. It is an important meeting because it means the committee has to be elected and that is obviously an important thing to do. It is followed by a reception, drinks and something to eat immediately afterwards and there will be the usual presentation. So that was to have been at 5.30 p.m., we can bring it forward to 5.00 p.m. in the circumstances.

### **Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin:**

I was going to ask if there is an appetite here for bringing it forward if that is possible.

### **The Bailiff:**

I am not sure there are other Members expected but people are lining up catering and so if we bring it forward then we will either wait between the meeting for catering. At the time when there is going to be catering there is going to be presentations and things of that nature. But if you want to make a proposition that we deal with the meeting part of it shortly after we rise then, it is not business of the Assembly, but I am sure we will be open to sitting earlier.

### **Deputy C.F. Labey:**

Are you suggesting 5.00 p.m.?

### **The Bailiff:**

I was suggesting 5.00 p.m. simply because that incorporates what I think the catering arrangements are but it brings it forward a little so we are not there so late into the evening. That was my thinking. The adjournment is proposed. The Assembly stands adjourned therefore until 1st November.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

[15:56]