

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 17th OCTOBER 2023

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[9:30]

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

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Tribute to Former Deputy Robin Rumboll

Members may have seen in last week's news, that former Deputy Robin Rumboll has passed away. Mr. Rumboll joined the States in December of 1981 when he was elected as Deputy of St. Helier No. 2; a position he held for some 15 years until he retired from politics in 1996. During his political career he served on a large variety of bodies, most notably as president of the Education, Telecoms and Legislation Committees. He brought a number of significant propositions to this Assembly, including the recording of States meetings for posterity, which was adopted in 1983. In 1994, he was a member of the Special Committee on Freedom of Information to examine the issues involved in establishing, by law, a general right of access to official information by members of the public. Following his retirement from politics, he remained very active in serving the Island as chair of the Shadow Jersey Police Authority, the chairman of Help a Jersey Child, and chairman of Great Ormond Street Hospital Jersey Appeal and chairman of the Channel Islands Horseracing Authority. He was a chairman and an honorary fellow of the Durrell Trust, having established in 2001 the Rumboll Travel Award, an annual financial award granted to deserving junior members of Durrell's conservation staff. Our thoughts are with his widow, Cynthia, his 4 children, and his grandchildren. I would ask Members to stand and join me in a minute's silence in his honour. **[Silence]** May he rest in peace.

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

Sir, if I may, could I raise the default on Deputy Alves?

The Bailiff:

Yes, the default is raised on Deputy Alves.

Male Speaker:

May I raise the default on Deputy Bailhache?

The Bailiff:

Yes, the default is raised on Deputy Bailhache.

QUESTIONS

2. Written Questions

2.1 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding guidelines and training materials for public employees regarding interpretation of the Codes of Practice. (WQ.367/2023)

Question

Further to the responses provided to both [Written Questions 23/2023](#) and [63/2023](#), will the Chair provide detail on any guidelines and training materials for public employees regarding interpretation of the Codes of Practice, including the definition of bullying, harassment, conflict of interest and public interest, negligence, breach of confidentiality, engaging in political activities and what constitutes gross misconduct, and advise –

- (a) how many employees across the public sector (both as a percentage and in real terms) have received any training in the interpretation of the Codes of Practice;

- (b) what work is being undertaken to better align the Codes of Practice with best ethical standards and practice in professional organisations outside the States and Government of Jersey, and if none, why not;
- (c) what consideration, if any, is being given to the establishment of a support framework for public employees to provide recourse to an independent third party to offer informal rulings and advice on conduct issues including the definitions on the previous areas; and
- (d) what consideration, if any, is being given to making training in ethical conduct compulsory and training repeated during an employee's service within the government organisation?

Answer

(a) We do not currently have a full record as there are not specific courses. We regularly communicate and include Codes within management development and induction.

(b) As part of developing our career structures, we will be working with heads of professions to map within Connect People professional standards, training requirements and CPD (continuous professional development) activities. These will be incorporated into the performance management for each professional group. This will include any professional standards and training related to ethical practice for individual professions.

(c) There is no consideration for this work. Employees are encouraged to join a trade union. The employment relationship is a private one and it is not appropriate to outsource our obligations under the laws to ensure employees and investigations are undertaken in line with Codes of Practice issued by JACS and our own policies.

(d) The requirements will differ between professions and professional standards. A blanket approach is not being considered.

2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding further detail on the changes that will be needed to pay for health costs as referred to on Page 88 of the Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027. (WQ.368/2023)

Question

With reference to Page 88 of the [Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027](#), will the Minister provide further detail on the changes that will be needed to pay for health costs in a sustainable way; and will she advise what options for funding, if any, will be considered in 2024 to reform Health Care services for the Island?

Answer

The work to prepare options for the future funding of health and care services is continuing. Ministers have not considered any options at this stage as it has been essential to build the evidence base in the first instance, including whole system health accounts and expenditure forecasts. As the Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 sets out, Ministers intend to bring options for reform to the Assembly in 2024. These options will be shared with Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel in the first instance.

2.3 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding grants and subsidies offered by the Government. (WQ.369/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide details of all grants and subsidies offered by the Government, either directly or through any Arm's Length Organisations, charities, or related organisations, to any sporting club, individual, event or activity in the last 15 years, including –

- (a) the beneficiary of the funding;
- (b) the sport they represented;
- (c) what the financial support was intended to fund;
- (d) the amount received by each beneficiary and whether it was a grant or subsidy;
- (e) the grant or subsidy application and selection process;
- (f) where applicable, a list of unsuccessful applications, the reason for rejection and the sport they represented; and

Will he further provide a list of the total number of sporting clubs, both professional and amateur, that currently make use of States of Jersey owned venues, including the sport they represent, and how much rent each pay per month to the States?

Answer

It has not been possible to collate expenditure across all Government departments for the years requested due to the limited time available and changes in Departmental and ALO structures over the last 15 years. The table in Appendix 1 therefore identifies expenditure provided by the Department for the Economy, the former Government Sport Development Department where available and relevant ALOs since 2012. Funding is granted in line with Government priorities.

Jersey Sport was established in 2017 as an Arms Length Organisation to support the delivery of Government's priorities for sport and physical activity. As part of this work, Jersey Sport provides grants and subsidies for sport including grants for schools, travel and volunteer workforce development ([Grants • Jersey Sport](#)) Government funding to Jersey Sport is detailed on the table in Appendix 1. Government does not hold information on the individual grants and subsidies provided by Jersey Sport.

Lottery proceeds for sport are distributed by the Jersey Community Foundation with the amount available dependant on ticket sales. The sums available for sport are below and details of grants made are available at [Grant Funding Awards | Jersey Community Foundation](#):

2021 - £247,661

2022 – £274,987

2023 - £175,987

The Government's "[Connect Me: Connecting our Communities](#)" scheme, managed through the Customer and Local Services Department, has provided support to many sports including football, basketball, freshwater angling, touch rugby, padel and skateboarding.

There are circa 260+ sporting clubs and associations who use Government of Jersey run facilities. Some are in residence and have a lease/license and some hire the facilities on an hourly basis. The rents of those that are in situ is deemed commercially sensitive and this information sits with Jersey Property Holdings. There are 70 wide ranging sports that are undertaken within these facilities which covers the vast majority of what is played and required on the island.

Its noteworthy that within the CYPES Estate, many of the Island's schools hire out their sports facilities as well outside of curriculum time to sports clubs and associations.

If the Deputy would like a briefing on how the GoJ Sporting facilities are used then the Head of Operations for Infrastructure & Environment would be more than happy to arrange this. The Department for the Economy's Sport Sector Officer is also available to meet the Deputy and explain funding for sport in more detail.

Further information regarding the purpose and size of Government grants can be found within the published [Annual Report and Accounts](#)

Further information on the support to sport prior to the establishment of Jersey Sport can be found in the following reports:

[Fit for the Future Sport Strategy Progress Report January 2015](#)

[Fit for the Future Sport Strategy Progress Report January 2016](#)

[Fit For The Future Sport Strategy Progress Report February 2017](#)

To view the accompanying table please [click here for the pdf](#).

**In addition to the above sports, funding for sport-specific development officers was provided for table tennis and squash, but it has not been possible to source further information in the time available. In addition, payments made by Government to the 2015 Jersey Island Games Organising Committee was approximately £1.2 million. There may be additional sports that have received grants or subsidies from GOJ that we have not been able to identify. Best efforts have been undertaken to identify as many grants/subsidies as possible but no centralised account of such payments to sports exists. Payments to individuals cannot be included.*

2.4 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the process within the Jersey Customs and Immigration Service when a work permit holder's date of departure from the Island is either changed or overturned. (WQ.370/2023)

Question

Will the Minister explain the process within the Jersey Customs and Immigration Service when a work permit holder's date of departure from the Island is either changed or overturned, particularly in terms of altering or removing the physical evidence of the original date from the individual's passport?

Answer

When a person's immigration permission is cancelled, extended or varied, an endorsement to reflect the changed immigration permission and date stamp are placed in their passport. Previous endorsements are not altered or removed from a passport – this aligns with recognised immigration practices across the Common Travel Area (CTA).

An endorsement will only be amended where the issuing of the endorsement has been done in error - there is a prescribed way of doing this to signal to CTA jurisdictions that the error should not prejudice the holder.

2.5 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding growth bids in the proposed Government Plan 2024-2027. (WQ.371/2023)

Question

Will the Minister, in respect of the Heads of Expenditure items in the proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 –

- (a) outline the process followed by departments to determine which revenue expenditure growth bids to submit to the Council of Ministers for consideration, including decision points involving accountable officers and budget holders;
- (b) detail the process followed by the Council of Ministers to determine which revenue expenditure growth bids would be included within the proposed Government Plan, including any decision points involving Ministers;
- (c) list all growth bids, budget increases and budget reductions considered by accountable officers and state the outcome of their considerations;
- (d) list all growth bids, budget increases and budget reductions considered by Ministers and state the outcome of their considerations; and
- (e) list all growth bids, budget increases and budget reductions considered by the Council of Ministers and state the outcome of its considerations?

Answer

The Council of Ministers agreed the high-level Government Plan process for revenue expenditure growth bids, with three different stages to the process outlined below;

1. Business case commissioning
2. Business case developed
3. Business case approval

The process was designed to produce a deliverable, affordable plan via an iterative process, with items changing, falling away, or being added at various stages as the plan evolved.

Business case commissioning

Initially, departments were asked to complete a business case commissioning form. Accountable Officers, working with their budget holders and departments were asked to identify investment requests, with consideration to addressing key risks or other essential priorities, and ensuring alignment to the direction of Ministers' plans.

Accountable Officers were responsible for compiling investment requests for their respective departments and submitting the completed commissioning form which included details of the following.

- a summary of the investment request
- statement of the case for change,
- estimated costs
- number of people/FTE to recruit
- risks to delivery
- assessment of the investment complexity and deliverability

Throughout the process, the Council of Ministers and Accountable Officers received an update on the forecast financial envelope, with the initial set of economic assumptions published by the Fiscal Policy Panel on the 20th March. The spring economic assumptions were used to by the Income

Forecasting Group to produce their spring forecast report, which in turn informed the early decision-making process for the Government Plan.

In light of the initial forecast financial envelope developed at the end of April, Ministers and Accountable Officers were asked to review their funding priorities to put forward requests that;

- meet critical risks that cannot be addressed through reprioritisation within existing expenditure limits.
- address unavoidable needs that will have a high impact on Islanders
- support existing commitments
- ensure the timeframes proposed for investment requests were realistic and deliverable
- ensure growth in headcount/FTE was justified.

Accountable Officers submitted their initial business case commissioning forms by the 3rd May, with individual departments responsible for running their own processes.

Business case developed

Following the initial business case commissioning process, the Council of Ministers reviewed the total of growth bids received during a Government Plan workshop considering the overall scale of investment and impact on the financial envelope, as well as public sector headcount. The scale of growth bids submitted through the initial commissioning process, was determined to be both unaffordable and undeliverable with available resources. The Council of Ministers therefore agreed to hold Ministerial working groups to review the growth bids initially requested, with each session seeking to prioritise investment requests considering;

- impact that could be achieved for Islanders
- need for additional funding
- deliverability
- willingness to raise taxes/charges to fund the initiative

The Ministerial working group workshops were focussed on reducing the number of business cases being commissioned. Each Ministerial working group reported back at a further Council of Ministers' Government Plan workshop, where the overall list of revenue expenditure growth bids was reviewed. The Council of Ministers considered the investment requests and agreed which bids progressed through to business case development for further consideration and review. The Council of Ministers agreed that the business cases should provide alternative and lower-cost delivery options with business cases due to be completed by 23 June.

Accountable officers, working with their departments and Ministers were then responsible for the drafting of business cases commissioned.

Business case approval

Following the submission of business cases commissioned, further Government Plan workshops were held with the Council of Ministers in July. Ministers then prioritised the business cases submitted considering all of the points mentioned above, including consideration of decisions required to fund revenue expenditure growth requests (affordability) and competing pressures with the cost of living, recruitment and retention and housing. Ministers and Accountable Officers, were required to justify their revenue expenditure growth requests to the Council of Ministers, to ensure due process and challenge.

The Council of Ministers agreed the funding for some revenue growth requests based on the lowest cost option, or at a reduced level of funding than requested, based on considerations around affordability and deliverability. Accountable officers working with their departments were then responsible for finalising business cases where a lower cost option had been agreed.

Non-Ministerial States bodies

Under Article 10 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019, the government plan must set out proposed appropriations in relation to non-Ministerial States bodies. These appropriations were submitted through a separate process to the above and included within the government plan.

Other increase and decreases to budgets

Separate processes ran alongside the revenue expenditure growth process, including budgets increases and decreases for service transfers, pay awards, inflation, formula driven growth, and value for money. Value for money allocations, were considered by Council of Ministers through Government Plan workshops, the final allocation of value for money savings was based on a pro-rata allocation of controllable net revenue expenditure by department.

Lists of revenue expenditure growth bids considered

The full list of approved revenue expenditure growth bids is included within appendix 3 to the Government Plan. The list of growth bids submitted by Accountable Officers and reviewed at Ministerial working groups is provided below – indicating whether Business Cases were commissioned or not. The Council of Ministers considered the Business Cases in making their final decisions for the Government.

The central exercise to consolidated revenue expenditure growth requests, includes only those bids initially put forward by Accountable Officers. Each department, accountable officer, will have their own process for prioritising growth requests and not all of these will have been submitted to the business case commissioning stage.

Minister	Revenue Growth Request	BC Commissioned	Included in GP24	GP24 Reference
Minister for International Development	Island Identity Programme	Y	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Education Reform Inclusion phase 2	Y	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Social Care Reform Programme Phase 2 - Additional homes for children in the care of the Minister	Y	Y	I-CYPES-GP24-1
Minister for Children and Education	Demographics	Y	N	I-CYPES-GP24-2 ¹
Minister for Children and Education	Social Worker Recruitment and Retention	N	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Early Years (nursery, literacy, and therapies)	Y	N	I-CYPES-GP24-2
Minister for Children and Education	Project CLARE	Y	N	I-CYPES-GP24-2

¹ Growth requests related to I-CYPES-GP24-2 investment across CYPES frontline services, received a consolidated amount to include parts of various requests.

Minister for Children and Education	Developing Contextual Safeguarding hub by effectively responding to criminal and sexual exploitation of children	Y	N	I-CYPES-GP24-2
Minister for Children and Education	Apprenticeships	Y	N	I-CYPES-GP24-2
Minister for Children and Education	Arts Education, Music and Personal Development	Y	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Community Schools - Scoping and pilot	N	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Jersey Youth Service - Workforce sufficiency / sustainability / professional training	Y	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Jersey Children's Day	N	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Inclusion – fee paying Government provided schools	N	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Digital Education Requirement	N	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Children's Rights and Engagement Officers	N	N	
Minister for Children and Education	Combined provision for young people not in employment education or training	Y	Y	I-CYPES-GP24-3
Minister for Children and Education	Extraordinary Inflation	N	N	
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Performance Sport and strategic investment in Sport	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-1
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Jersey Heritage Trust Pre-87 Pension Deficit	N	N	
Chief Minister	Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-5
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Future Economy Programme - Staff Costs	Y	N	

Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Events Development Action Plan	N	N	
Minister for External Relations	Intellectual Property Framework	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-4
Chief Minister	Securing prosperity of financial and professional services (JFL)	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-6
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Visitor Economy Infrastructure Fund	N	N	
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Digital Economy Strategy Implementation	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-1
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Tourism Marketing	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-1
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Rural and Marine Economy	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-2
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Jersey Competition and Regulatory Authority	N	N	
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Jersey Business – Core Grant Growth funding bid	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-3
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture	Development of Jersey as a Regional Economic Hub	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Continuation of the VAWG taskforce – implementation phase	Y	N	
Minister for External Relations	Overseas Offices	Y	Y	I-ER-GP24-1
Minister for Home Affairs	Outcome of Demand and Capacity Review	Y	Y	I-JHA-GP24-2

Minister for Home Affairs	SJFRS OpEx pressures	Y	Y	I-JHA-GP24-4
Minister for Home Affairs	Operating budget	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Building Safety framework review	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	JHA Data Manager and Analyst	Y	Y	I-JHA-GP24-3
Minister for Home Affairs	Defence funding shortfall	Y	Y	I-JHA-GP24-5
Minister for Home Affairs	Transportation of deceased persons on behalf of the coroner	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Fire and Rescue Service Pay, Terms and Conditions Review	Y	Y	I-JHA-GP24-001
Minister for Infrastructure	Ambulance Station HQ Maintenance	Y	Y	I-I&E-GP24-001
Minister for Home Affairs	Digital Forensics	Y	Y	I-POL-GP24-1
Minister for Home Affairs	Non-staff Cost Budget Pressures	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Staff funding cost pressure	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Learning & Development (Police Training incl Officer Safety Training)	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Police Constable Training	N	N	
Minister for Home Affairs	Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)	Y	Y	I-DFE-GP24-5
Minister for Health and Social Services	COVID-19 Vaccine Assistance Scheme	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-7
Minister for Health and Social Services	Continuation of Strategic Health Policy and Governance	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-3
Minister for Health and Social Services	Maintaining current vaccination services	Y	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Maintaining the current health protection function	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-4
Minister for Health and Social Services	Maintaining current public health function	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-4

Minister for Health and Social Services	Major Incident Health and Wellbeing Recovery Programme	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-5
Minister for Housing and Communities	Vacant Homes – reprofiled investment	N	N	
Minister for Housing and Communities	Housing data	N	N	
Minister for Housing and Communities	Strategic Housing and Regeneration Team	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-6
Minister for Housing and Communities	Chief Ministers relentless focus - Housing	Y	Y	I-CLS-GP24-2
Minister for Social Security	Community Compass	Y	Y	I-CLS-GP24-1
Minister for Social Security	Jersey Pension Saver (Financial Wellbeing in Old Age)	Y	Y	I-CLS-GP24-3
Minister for Health and Social Services	Pathology staffing to maintain accreditation & COVID19 PCR Testing	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Technician 8 Job Evaluation outcome funding	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Patient Level Information and Costing System	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Hugo Mascie-Taylor Response (Be Our Best)	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Community Framework	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Quality and Safety Team	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Implementation of Ministerial Priority Strategies - Mental Health, Dementia, Autism and Neurodiversity	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Intelligent Client - Digital Strategy	N	N	

Minister for Health and Social Services	Patient Travel Policy	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Samares Ward - Rehabilitation Services	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Non-Resident Charging Policy	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Oxygen and Respiratory Service	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	ED Overnight	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Stroke Service	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Patient Experience (PALS)	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Pharmacy Vaccine Administrator	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Endoscopy Staffing	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Cancer care: Multi-Disciplinary Team	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	23 Hour Stay	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Cross-Sectional Imaging	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Second Emergency Surgeon	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	

Minister for Health and Social Services	Pre-Assessment Service	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Therapies Admin Support	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Speech and Language Therapy	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Consultant General Physician for Trauma & Orthopaedics and Surgical Liaison	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Jersey Heart Services	N		
Minister for Health and Social Services	Mental Health & Adult Social Care: Access to Professional Qualification	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Increasing Safeguarding Capacity	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Sandybrook Staffing (Jersey Care Commission Advice)	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Resuscitation Service	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Acute Assessment Unit (AAU)	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Hosiery and Dressings	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Breast Cancer Screening	N	N	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Vulnerable Complex Needs Service	Y	HCS funding based on FRP	
Minister for Health and Social Services	Overnight Community Care (GP Out of Hours)	N	N	
Chief Minister	Application Maintenance and Support	Y	N	
Chief Minister	Internal Professional Services Capability	N	N	

Chief Minister	GoJ Change Portfolio Reporting Tool	N	N	
Chief Minister	New Recruitment Model	Y	N	
Minister for Housing and Communities	Teachers Pension Scheme	N	N	
Chief Minister	Redress Scheme for Failure to Remove	Y	N	
Chief Minister	Statistics Jersey – Administrative data linkage team	Y	Y	I-SPPP-GP24-1
Chief Minister	Statistics Jersey – Living Cost and Household Income Survey	Y	N	
Chief Minister	Statistics Jersey - Statistics and Census Law Update	Y	N	
Minister for Environment	Development levies	Y	N	
Minister for Environment	Securing the benefits of offshore wind for islanders	N	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	Process Chemicals	N	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	Active Membership Income	N	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	Fort Regent	Y	Y	I-I&E-GP24-2
Minister for Infrastructure	Renewable Diesel Funding Uplift – Decarbonising Government	N	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	Tree Surveys	N	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	Technology Roadmap for Connect Assets	N	N	
Minister for Environment	Funding for countryside, water and air quality	N	N	
Minister for Environment	Develop one or more strategies for the conservation of biodiversity	N	N	
Minister for Environment	Water Strategy	N	N	

Minister for Environment	Jersey Met - Weather monitoring, warnings and active travel forecast	N	N	
Minister for Environment	Biosecurity Team - Operational delivery of biosecurity. Invasive and regulated organisms	Y	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	Environmental Performance Certificates (estates)	N	N	
Minister for Infrastructure	JPH Revenue	N	N	
Minister for Environment	Growth in demand for functions - Natural Environment	Y	Y	I-I&E-GP24-3
Minister for Treasury and Resources	Insurance Premiums	Y	Y	I-T&E-GP24-1
Minister for Treasury and Resources	Additional Bank Charges and Card Fees	N	N	
Minister for Treasury and Resources	Consolidation and further development of Revenue Jersey	Y	Y	I-T&E-GP24-2
Minister for Treasury and Resources	Revenue & Exchange Systems Update, Development & Maintenance	N	N	

2.6 The Connétable of St. Lawrence of the Minister for the Environment regarding the processes and decision-making of the Planning and Building Compliance team in relation to two situations in St. Lawrence. (WQ.372/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide information on the processes and decision-making of the Planning and Building Compliance team in relation to two situations in St Lawrence, and explain –

- (a) following the refusal of a retrospective application, after a developer had failed to follow approved buildings plans for 17 dwellings, whether there is any way to appeal the Planning and Building Compliance team’s decision to take no enforcement action nor to require a new retrospective planning application, and if no such appeal is possible, why; and
- (b) despite complaints being made two months ago about a developer proceeding with building houses using plans without details of site levels or means of surface water drainage, which has led to flooding on neighbouring properties, and seemingly contravening the requirements of the building permit in terms of using spoil to raise the land around completed floor slabs, why no action has yet been taken by the Planning and Building Compliance team?

Answer

Without knowing the exact situations in St Lawrence to which the Connétable refers, I am unable to provide a detailed response. However, in more general terms:

(a) Unlike the right of appeal afforded against decisions relating to applications for planning permissions pursuant to Article 108 of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, there is no right of appeal against a decision not to take enforcement action. There is no mechanism in law that may be used to force a developer to submit a planning application if they choose not to. In the absence of a planning application, the Regulation Directorate will assess each breach on merit, taking into consideration any relevant policies in the Bridging Island Plan, material planning considerations and harm caused by unauthorised development. Whether development has already taken place is not usually a material planning consideration. The use of enforcement powers is discretionary, and in instances of continued non-compliance the team will consider further action in a fair and proportionate manner.

(b) Where breaches of planning or building control are identified, the Regulation Directorate will in most instances seek to secure voluntary compliance before considering formal enforcement action. In instances where required details have not been submitted (as may be required by a planning condition), the officers will inspect works being carried out in order to identify any problems and suggest ways to remedy the breach. Neighbours and affected parties may report any specific instances of flooding so this may be witnessed and taken into consideration as part of the investigation and decision-making process regarding possible formal action.

2.7 The Connétable of St. Martin of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding ‘Further Listed Infrastructure Projects’ identified in the draft Government Plan 2024-2027. (WQ.373/2023)

Question

With reference to the ‘Further Listed Infrastructure Projects’ identified in the draft Government Plan 2024-2027, will the Minister outline the projected spend on the following projects –

- (a) Road Safety;
- (b) Countryside Access and Signage;
- (c) Planning Obligation Agreements; and

will the Minister also provide a breakdown of the projected under-spend, if any, on countryside projects, the income from car park trading urns, and the income from third-party planning applications for developments, and identify how these areas of funding will be used to fund the projects in (a), (b) and (c) above?

Answer

a) The projected capital spend on Road Safety and Active Travel infrastructure projects (such as safer routes to school) is approximately £460,000 for 2023. This includes funding from associated Planning Obligation Agreements. In addition, funding of £375,000 per annum is being made available from the Car Park Trading Fund (as a result of the parking charges increase in 2023) to fund the development of a new Strategic Road Safety Unit which will be operational from January 2024.

b) Countryside access and signage is a matter for the Minister for the Environment.

c) Planning Obligation Agreements are between a developer and the Minister for the Environment.

A figure for underspends in respect of item (a) is not available. Funding is only drawn down from the Car Park Trading Fund as required and the balance is carried over. For items (b) and (c) please refer to the Minister for the Environment.

2.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Jersey Development Company's current debt liability. (WQ.374/2023)

Question

Will the Minister advise Jersey Development Company's current debt liability, if any?

Answer

The States of Jersey Development Company (“SoJDC”) publishes its Annual Report and Accounts on its website. The 2022 Annual Report and Accounts can be found following this link jerseydevelopment.je/media/udnlyq3t/jdc-annual-report-and-consolidated-financial-statements-2022.pdf.

Note 13 within the Annual Report sets out SoJDC’s debt profile as at 31 December 2022.

SoJDC’s current debt liability totals £41.35 million and is and will be fully serviced from current and future rental income.

2.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St Helier North of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding budget allocated to maintain the Government of Jersey's estate. (WQ.375/2023)

Question

Will the Minister advise the budget allocated to maintain the Government of Jersey's estate for the last five years, per annum?

Answer

	Cumulative 12 Total Budget 2019 £000	Cumulative 12 Total Budget 2020 £000	Cumulative 12 Total Budget 2021 £000	Cumulative 12 Total Budget 2022 £000	Cumulative 12 Total Budget 2023 £000
JERSEY PROPERTY HOLDINGS ANNUAL MAINTENANCE BUDGET	8,340	8,694	8,707	7,863	8,017

The above table shows the five-year allocated budget for maintaining the Property Portfolio which is allocated to Jersey Property Holdings.

This includes planned preventative maintenance, reactive maintenance, cyclical maintenance and revenue projects for building enhancements and ensuring compliance through statutory requirements.

2.10 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding the Back to Work team and the unemployed. (WQ.376/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide information on the number of –

- (a) officers employed in the Back to Work team; and
- (b) individuals registered as unemployed who are seeking work?

Answer

(a) There are 24 officers employed in the Back to Work team plus a further 4 working on the Foundations Programme. The Foundations Programme officers supervise a cohort of jobseekers whilst developing their skills through working on environmental, decorating and scanning projects.

(b) 700 as at 30/9/2023 see Actively Seeking Work statistics 3rd quarter 2023. Whilst this is the current level of those ASW, over the last 12 months there have been approximately 1800 unique individual job seekers registered at as actively seeking work.

2.11 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding the cost of attending the ‘Women Deliver’ conference in Rwanda. (WQ.377/2023)

Question

Will the Chief Minister provide a breakdown of the full costs of attendance at the ‘Women Deliver’ conference in Rwanda this year, for herself and the Government of Jersey’s delegation, including the costs of –

- (a) flights;
- (b) accommodation; and
- (c) travel in Rwanda?

Answer

The total cost of flights for the Chief Minister and two officials was £11,679.58.

The total cost of accommodation for the Chief Minister and two officials was £2,097.46.

Much of the travel in Rwanda was pre-arranged for delegates as part of their attendance at the conference. Accordingly, the costs for travel in Rwanda came to £37.86

2.12 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding a register of all units of dwelling accommodation. (WQ.378/2023)

Question

Will the Chief Minister confirm –

- (a) whether or not she maintains a register of all units of dwelling accommodation, in accordance with article 16(1) of the Control of Housing and Work Law;
- (b) how a member of the public may inspect this register, in accordance with article 16(2) of that Law; and
- (c) if she is not complying with this Law, why not, and when she will be addressing this?

Answer

- (a) As part of administering the Control of Housing and Work Law, systems are maintained which register the categories of properties as Qualified or Registered, and any conditions or concessions, to satisfy the requirements of Article 16(1).
- (b) The Customer and Local Services Department respond to any request seeking clarification on the categorisation of any residential unit, and whether there are any conditions or concessions to which that categorisation is subject, on request.
- (c) Article 16(2) provides that any person may inspect the register during normal business hours. Currently, it is not possible for a person to inspect the full register, and I have asked that future technology development include access in this way, and for any data quality issues to be resolved as part of this. In the meantime, the process as outlined in part (b) applies whereby members of the public may ask for details on any specific property.

2.13 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the cost benefit analysis and economic impact assessments of certain organisations funded by the Department for the Economy. (WQ.379/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide the date and details of every cost benefit analysis and economic impact assessment commissioned or conducted over the last ten years, including a copy of each report or assessment, in respect of the following organisations funded by the Department for the Economy –

- (a) Jersey Business;
- (b) Visit Jersey;
- (c) Digital Jersey;
- (d) Jersey National Park;
- (e) Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority;
- (f) CERT.je;
- (g) Jersey Sport;
- (h) Jersey Reds; and

in the case of Visit Jersey, provide a table illustrating how the funding of Visit Jersey has increased or decreased over the years since its establishment in comparison to the number of hotel beds in the Island over the same time period?

Answer

In all instances, payments made by Government will have been accompanied by either a business case (for growth revenue expenditure) or a grant agreement with associated appraisal (in the case of grants made under existing partnership agreements).

Amongst the requirements for a business case or grant agreement are an appraisal of the costs and benefits of the available options and their and anticipated impact along with a review of delivery against stated priorities.

Further grant appraisals are undertaken as a matter of course for ALOs twice per year to evaluate the performance of each ALO against their business plan and KPIs.

A breakdown of payments to the Arm's Length organisations requested is below, as noted above, each of these payments would have been accompanied by either a business case or grant agreement:

	Jersey Business	Visit Jersey	Digital Jersey	Jersey National Park	Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority	Jersey Sport
	£ 000's	£ 000's	£ 000's	£ 000's	£ 000's	£ 000's
2013	615	-	635	-	335	-
2014	625	-	1,329	-	399	-
2015	715	2,585	838	-	354	-
2016	821	5,100	727	-	300	-
2017	739	5,100	1,030	-	809	684
2018	734	5,000	1,327	-	209	1,310
2019	738	4,900	1,250	61	503	1,333
2020	860	4,628	1,725	100	340	1,444
2021	860	5,650	2,025	150	691	1,956
2022	860	5,750	2,225	200	897	1,962
2023	1,560	5,682	2,325	250	747	2,143
*additional funding has been provided via Economic Recovery Fund and not included in departmental spend.						
All Information provided has been collated by totalling all Grant payments made to the specific supplier's name i.e.. Digital Jersey Ltd.						

Similarly, grants made to the Jersey Reds would have in each instance required a business case and a breakdown of these payments can be found here:

It should be noted that, pre-2016 Reds (professional rugby) and JRFC (amateur rugby) were one and the same legal entity and it is difficult to separate payments or differentiate as to whether payments were made to support amateur / community participation or the business of professional rugby.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
-	-	-	-	-	75,000	125,000	250,000	150,000	50,000	370,000

As the Deputy will be aware, CERT.je is not currently an Arm's Length Organisation but functions as part of the Government of Jersey. Its budget is therefore within the Department for the Economy.

As set out in my letters to the EIA Panel of 17th March and 6th April 2023 it would not be appropriate to publish Business Cases or grant agreements in a public setting. These internal documents are prepared to inform the decision-making process and therefore necessarily contain commercially sensitive information such as staff salaries and commercial agreements.

The total number of hotel beds for each of the last ten years is as follows, also provided are the total numbers of visitors:

Year	Visit Jersey core grant ²	Hotel beds ³	Overnight holiday visits
2012		8881	333,000
2013	-	8893	326,000
2014	-	8576	338,000
2015	2,585	8390	347,000
2016	5,100	7685	363,000
2017	5,100	7589	418,000
2018	5,000	7822	415,000
2019	4,900	7705	439,000
2020	4,628	7626	Data collection disrupted due to COVID
2021	4,900	7398	Data collection disrupted due to COVID
2022	4,900	6711	Data collection disrupted due to COVID

2.14 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the cost benefit analysis commissioned of certain organisations. (WQ.380/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide the date and details of every cost benefit analysis commissioned or conducted over the last ten years, including a copy of each report or assessment, in respect of each of the following organisations –

- (a) States of Jersey Development Company;
- (b) Jersey Finance;
- (c) Jersey Business;
- (d) Visit Jersey;
- (e) Digital Jersey;
- (f) Jersey National Park;
- (g) Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority;
- (h) CERT.je;
- (i) Jersey Sport; and
- (j) Jersey Reds?

Answer

I have nothing further to add to the answer to identical written question 379/2023, provided by the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture which I believe provides the information the Deputy is seeking.

² Excludes route marketing funding provided from 2021 onwards.

³ These figures include hotel beds only and exclude camping, guest houses, holiday camps, youth hostels and self-catering accommodation

2.15 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding solutions to counter the spread of Asian hornet populations. (WQ.381/2023)

Question

Will the Minister advise whether he, or his department, are aware of any solution, including biological solutions such as genetic engineering, that has been effective or could be considered as feasible in effectiveness, to counter the spread of Asian hornet populations; and will he further advise what research has been undertaken in this area?

Answer

The Natural Environment directorate at I&E has cultivated significant links to personnel involved in Asian hornet control across Europe and is secretariat and chair of a European Asian Hornet Discussion Group focussing on any and all possible angles and elements of practical control of this highly successful invasive species. The group includes researchers, beekeepers, entomologists, pest controllers and government officers. Through this group, additional research and other contacts, we are not aware of any “silver bullet” solutions, including biological solutions such as genetic engineering, that have been effective or could be considered as feasible in effectiveness, to counter the spread of Asian hornet populations.

However, across Europe there are a number of initiatives underway that may, in time, offer some hope. These include work on a fungal control, pheromones, poisoned baits and trojan-horse poisons. We also hear of some genetic engineering work in New Zealand to control *Vespula* species. Some of these proposals have huge political and regulatory hurdles to cross, aside from the scientific ones.

Since the introduction of Asian hornets into Europe in 2004 their spread has been relentless, with countries such as Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary and the mainland UK now experiencing significant rises in nest numbers in 2023. Jersey and the Bailiwick of Guernsey have experienced the same upward trend. In many countries there is no formal, coordinated management policy beyond perhaps the subsidised destruction of nests that are reported, which is largely ineffective. Jersey has led the way in developing methods of tracking Asian hornet nests and shared this information with other jurisdictions.

Those jurisdictions that intensely and actively manage their Asian hornet populations, including Jersey, rely upon receiving public reports, and tracking Asian hornets back to their nests, followed by their destruction. This method both removes Asian hornets from our environment, limiting their impacts and if achieved early enough in the season prevents the nests from reproducing.

2.16 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the rehabilitation programs and wellbeing support that is currently available for inmates of H.M. Prison La Moye. (WQ.383/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide an outline of the rehabilitation programs and wellbeing support that is currently available for inmates of H.M. Prison La Moye; and will she provide details on how the success of these programs and support is measured?

Answer

The prison is currently following the existing model of sentence planning at the beginning of sentence with a civilian member of staff coordinating this with prisoners and probation, and a unformed member of staff.

However, there are plans in place for the reallocation of a full time Senior Officer resource to coordinate resettlement work through prison officers in the ‘personal officer scheme’ starting in December.

As part of this, we have reallocated existing resource to provide two full time prison officers to lead on this and recruited two trainee intervention facilitators- all of whom are booked to undertake accredited intervention training programs in the United Kingdom and will be in a position to deliver group work interventions in conjunction with the Probation Service. All accredited programs have a robust assurance framework which the Forensic Psychologist is responsible for as program lead.

In the meantime, we have a Chartered Forensic Psychologist doing 1-2-1 interventions to address forensic risk, and this is coordinated with probation managers. There are two probation officers based in the prison for part of the week providing risk-based work and interventions.

The prison follows the 7 pathways model (Drugs and Alcohol, Attitudes thinking and behaviour, Finance benefit and Debt, Accommodation, Employment training and education, Children and Family, Mental and Physical health) and has been working very closely with probation services and other Government departments to align interventions in this model, each pathway has prisoners employed in developing and continuously improving practice and outcomes in this area.

The prison has been working to explore an ‘outcomes based accountability’ approach, to ensure the measures are effective in driving continuous improvement. The prison is anticipating a full external inspection in Autumn 2024 to check against the HMIP framework of 100 expectations of outcomes for prisoners, and will be conducting a full self-audit later this month, in preparation for this.

2.17 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding turnaround times for homes on the Housing Gateway when they are vacated. (WQ.384/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide annual statistics on the turnaround times over the last 3 years for homes provided by Andium and other housing trusts to become available on the Housing Gateway when they are vacated by tenants and not in need of complete refurbishment, broken down by mean, mode, and median average, and the maximum and minimum times?

Answer

The Minister for Housing and Communities does not directly hold this information, but has received the following from two social housing providers – Andium Homes and Jersey Homes Trust.

Andium Homes

Andium Homes has a Key Performance Indicator for all standard relets, to include refurbishment works and statutory inspections and the time taken to allocate. These are published in their annual reports.

Andium Homes operate a ‘choice based’ lettings system, so advertise vacant homes prior to the refurbishment works being completed, in order to expedite the allocation.

Statistics for 2020 do not reflect a ‘business as usual’ performance, given the ‘Stay at Home’ Covid-19 restrictions. The data below, therefore, reflects years 2021 and 2022.

The following represents turnaround times to relet vacant properties during those periods. This does not include properties requiring major repairs, or the allocation of new supply as defined by UK benchmarking housing standards Housemark. The data does not, therefore, include 220 new/refurbished homes in 2021 and 305 new/refurbished homes in 2022.

Year	Total No Voids	Mean Days	Mode Days	Median Days	Max*	Min*
2021	212	25	20	23	71	1
2022	201	28	21	25	74	7

* The maximum and minimum times relates to a small number of relets, so does not reflect the situation accurately. Homes become vacant for a whole host of reasons, with some offering swifter opportunities to relet, and others providing additional challenges.

<u>THE JERSEY HOMES TRUST</u>					
<u>Annual Benchmarking of Performance Indicators (2019 – 2021)</u>					
<u>against Performance Indicators of UK Housing Associations (2020 -2021)</u>					
	UK Associations		Jersey Homes Trust		
	2020	2021	2021	2020	2019
Average stock per provider	12,367	12,845	842	842	842
Rent loss from void properties	1.50%	1.90%	0.07%	0.20%	0.00%
Average re-let time (days)*	not reported	not reported	4.47	17.68	0.32
Rent arrears at year end	4.90%	4.90%%	0.37%	0.69%	0.14%
Unrecoverable Debts	1.00%	0.70%%	0.05%	0.32%	0.16%
Maintenance & Repairs per unit:					
Weekly	£39.78	£40.12	£46.17	£34.63	£42.40
Annual	£2,068	£2,086	£2,401	£1,801	£2,205
As percentage of Turnover	37.41%	36.84%	18.55%	14.32%	17.84%
Management cost per unit:					
Weekly	£23.14	£23.63	£22.96	£21.78	£21.44
Annual	£1,203	£1,229	£1,194	£1,132	£1,115
As percentage of Turnover	21.77%	21.71%	9.22%	9.01%	9.02%
Overall costs per unit:					
Weekly	£64.37	£64.46	£69.25	£57.21	£64.25
Annual	£3,347	£3,352	£3,601	£2,975	£3,341
As percentage of Turnover	60.54%	59.21%	27.82%	23.66%	27.03%
NOTES:					
Management Cost ” includes all administration costs, management fees, accountancy and audit fees, property insurances, P.I. Insurance and legal and professional fees.					
To achieve like-for-like and meaningful comparisons:					
All costs are nett of depreciation and impairment costs.					
JHT costs are nett of Foncier Rates (for which there is no UK equivalent).					
*Re-let time:					
Average re-let time calculated by number of void days divided by number of re-lets in year.					
Sources:					
The “2021 Global Accounts of private registered providers” published by the Regulator of Social Housing					
The independently audited Financial Statements of The Jersey Homes Trust and reports to Trustees by Managing Agents.					
Unreported data in the UK statistics:					
Re-let times: last reported in 2010 as 33.2 days.					

2.18 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the number of personnel employed Pre-COVID and currently. (WQ.385/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide the number of personnel employed Pre-COVID and currently under the Medical Officer of Health and/or Director of Public Health, together with a breakdown of staffing costs, all other costs, and organisational charts for each period?

Answer

The question has been understood as relating to the vaccination service and that the periods referred to are pre and post the COVID-19 pandemic. The question can be readdressed if these assumptions are not correct. The question has been answered as fully as possible within the timescales allowed and further work can be undertaken if required.

In January 2023, immunisation services moved from Health and Community Services to Public Health as specified in Government Plan 2023 decided by the States Assembly in December 2022.

To support this vaccination programme, there are currently 1.5 full time equivalent clinical staff and 2.4 full time equivalent non-clinical staff in post. Staff complement has not changed since the transfer from HCS. This service supports scheduling of baby and pre-school immunisations, co-ordinates and administers the neonatal Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination offered to babies and children under 5 years of age who are deemed most at risk of exposure to tuberculosis (TB). Additionally, the service co-ordinate and deliver school aged routine immunisations, including the Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) to approximately 1,000 children in school year 8 to prevent cervical and penile cancer and the teenage booster and Meningitis ACWY vaccine to approximately 1,000 children in school year 9. Nasal flu vaccines are offered to all school aged children. Pre-school flu is administered via General Practice (GPs) who visit nurseries. Furthermore, the service conducts annual cold chain audits of GP accommodation and leads an annual stock check paper of vaccines in Primary Care which is required by the Treasury.

The service also works with Customer Local Services (CLS) to identify those Islanders who turn 70 years old each year (approximately 1,000 Islanders per year) and therefore become eligible for a shingles vaccine. The team sends a letter to inform the eligible Islanders, advising them to contact their GP for an appointment. Adult vaccines (shingles, pneumococcal) are administered by GPs.

As COVID-19 becomes endemic, vaccination remains the primary way of preventing severe illness (and hospitalisations) arising from COVID-19. The virus continues to circulate in our community and so there is an ongoing need to provide vaccination for those at greatest risk of serious disease. The COVID-19 vaccination workforce has, however, reduced as advice from the national Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has changed over time, from mass vaccination of the whole population in 2021, to a more targeted approach focussing on the groups at most risk, such as those aged 65+.

There are currently 11.2 full time equivalent clinical staff who administer COVID-19 vaccines and provide a home visit service to residential care homes and Islanders who are housebound. There are 16.4 full time equivalent non-clinical staff who support the running of the operational service, plan for future campaigns, collate and analyse operational data, and prepare the home visit service. Additionally, one zero hours GP is available for clinical advice and guidance as required.

Comparative vaccination service running costs pre and post COVID-19 pandemic are provided in the table below.

Health and Community Services – responsible for the immunisation services budget until 31December 2022					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Pay (£)	185,120	174,845	125,841	226,490	
Non-pay (£)	759,502	705,888	656,001	833,380	
Total (£)	944,621	880,733	781,843	1,059,870	

Public Health – responsible for the immunisation services budget from 01 January 2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	YTD Sept 2023
Pay (£)					150,945
Non-pay (£)					626,688
Total (£)					777,633
COVID - The first COVID vaccine was administered on 13 December 2020					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Forecast
Pay (£)		103,903	3,814,420	2,281,625	645,456
Non-pay (£)		88,401	1,188,690	689,743	1,443,027
Total (£)		192,304	5,003,110	2,971,368	2,088,483

2.19 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Island’s vaccination programme prior to the Covid-19 epidemic. (WQ.386/2023)

Question

Will the Minister explain how the Island’s vaccination programme was funded prior to the Covid-19 epidemic, including which budget funds were allocated from and a breakdown of the costs of the programme in 2019; and will the Minister further advise out of which budget(s) the vaccination programme was delivered during Covid 19, and provide a breakdown of the costs involved for each of 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023?

Answer

There are a wide number of different vaccination programmes including shingles, HPV, flu, Covid-19, pneumococcal and childhood immunisation. The funding mechanisms for these vaccination programmes is spread across departments and has varied overtime. Against this backdrop the question has been answered as fully as possible within the timescales allowed and further work can be undertaken if required.

Operational and ministerial responsibility differ depending on which vaccine programme is being considered. For example, vaccination for flu has been funded by the

- Health Insurance Fund (HIF) under the responsibility of CLS and the Minister for Social Security,
- HCS, who offered vaccinations to school children and HCS staff,
- JHA who arranged for flu vaccinations in the prison and
- COO who has commissioned a vaccination service for Government employees.

Prior to 2017, the HIF has supported the Flu vaccination programme in respect of priority groups (older people, those with clinical risk factors) through via pharmaceutical benefit and medical benefit

until a contract with General Practice and Pharmacy was introduced. (HCS, JHA and COO maintain responsibilities for some cohorts).

Pharmaceutical benefit and medical benefit are still used to subsidise the cost of other vaccinations including shingles and pneumococcal if the vaccination is delivered in General Practice. Investment by HIF in these programmes is not recorded as the Government do not collect information from GP practices regarding the nature of the consultations they undertake when claiming medical benefit.

Since 2020 operational responsibility for the COVID-19 vaccination programme is managed through Public Health under the responsibilities of the Minister for Health and Social Services.

There is an immunisation services budget for childhood and adult routine immunisations, which was managed by Health and Community Services until 31 December 2022. From 01 January 2023, the service and budget transferred to Public Health as specified in Government Plan 2023 and decided by the States Assembly in December 2022. Under this programme:

- Baby and Pre-school immunisations are administered within General Practice.
- School aged immunisations are administered by Public Health Nurses
- Adult immunisations are administered within General Practice.

Since 2020, the COVID-19 vaccination service has been funded from COVID reserves.

The table below provides financial information from 2019 to 2023 for these two vaccine programmes.

<i>Health and Community Services – responsible for the immunisation services budget until 31 December 2022</i>					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Pay (£)	185,120	174,845	125,841	226,490	
Non-pay (£)	759,502	705,888	656,001	833,380	
Total (£)	944,621	880,733	781,843	1,059,870	
<i>Public Health – responsible for the immunisation services budget from 01 January 2023</i>					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	YTD Sept 2023
Pay (£)					150,945
Non-pay (£)					626,688
Total (£)					777,633
<i>COVID - The first COVID vaccine was administered on 13 December 2020</i>					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Forecast
Pay (£)		103,903	3,814,420	2,281,625	645,456
Non-pay (£)		88,401	1,188,690	689,743	1,443,027
Total (£)		192,304	5,003,110	2,971,368	2,088,483

2.20 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the proposed completion date for awarding the contract to run Jersey's public bus service. (WQ.387/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide information on the proposed completion date for awarding the contract to run Jersey's public bus service?

Answer

It is anticipated that the bus operator contract will be awarded towards the end of Q3 2024. The exact timing will be dependent upon the complexity of commercial negotiation. Following from this there will be a mobilisation period prior to the commencement of operations under the new contract.

2.21 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Social Security regarding the amount of underspend from the Social Security Department that has been returned to Central Government. (WQ.388/2023)

Question

Will the Minister advise the amount of underspend from the Social Security Department that has been returned to Central Government funds since 2020, if any, broken down by year; and will she advise what the estimated underspend is expected to be this year?

Answer

Departmental underspends are reported in the annual Report and Accounts published each year.

These reports show:

2020 £1,648,000

2021 £1,851,000

2022 £2,889,000

The latest forecast (as at the end of September) for the year end 2023 is an estimated overspend of £1,520,000. The department is working with Treasury to resolve the position prior to year end.

2.22 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Chief Minister regarding roles based in the Government Broad Street office. (WQ.389/2023)

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) the process for employing staff for roles based in the Government Broad Street office; and
- (b) whether all roles have been advertised and due consideration given to all candidates, and if not, why not?

Answer

The government's [recruitment and selection policy](#) provides details of the principles and processes involved for recruiting staff for all roles, not just those based in the Broad Street office. There is associated guidance on the process stages that include:

[Step 1: Adverts](#)

[Step 2: Shortlisting](#)

[Step 3: Interview](#)

[Step 4: Offer](#)

[Step 5: Clearance](#)

[Step 6: Confirmation of employment](#)

All roles are advertised as standard procedure, this includes roles based in Broad Street. These roles may be advertised internally or externally dependent on the skills and experience required; and to ensure that the best quality appointments are made.

In certain circumstances exceptions to open recruitment are permitted, in order to provide flexibility where it is genuinely needed. These may be:

- Posts subject to succession planning and talent development
- Restructuring and redeployment
- Short term appointments (up to a maximum of 6 months)
- Extensions to short term appointments (up to a maximum of 6 months)
- Posts requiring specialist skills
- Secondments
- Social obligations (people on work schemes or with a barrier to employment)
- Acting up

2.23 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding the inquiries into the explosion at Haut du Mont and the Collision of L'Ecume II (WQ.390/2023)

Question

Will the Chief Minister state when she anticipates that the inquiries into the explosion at Haut du Mont and the Collision of L'Ecume II will be concluded; and will she advise whether the full reports and findings will be published, and if so, when?

Answer

The joint States of Jersey Police and Health & Safety Inspectorate inquiry into the explosion at Haut du Mont, named Operation Spire, is one of the largest and most complex criminal investigations in the Island's history. The investigation relies on specialist technical and scientific off-island examinations and reporting by experts. These examinations and reports will provide the investigation team with the necessary evidence to progress the investigations to a conclusion.

The States of Jersey Police have also been simultaneously investigating the tragic incident off the coast of St Ouen – Operation Nectar. This is a similarly large and complex investigation.

It is important that both investigations are thorough and rigorous in order to reassure the bereaved families and indeed all islanders that every effort has been made to establish the facts.

A file of evidence has been submitted to the Law Officers' Department ("LOD") relating to Operation Nectar. Given the size and complexity of the file it will take some time to consider the evidence submitted by the States of Jersey Police.

It is anticipated that a similar file of evidence will be submitted to the LOD with regard to Operation Spire when the experts' reports have been received, fully considered and the investigation concluded.

2.24 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the closure of the 'in person' Visitor Information Centre at Liberation Station. (WQ.391/2023)

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) what assessment has been, or will be, conducted to measure the impact of the closure of the 'in person' Visitor Information Centre at Liberation Station;
- (b) what feedback, if any, has he received on the closure of this facility and to what extent such feedback is supportive or critical of the closure; and
- (c) whether he is aware of any other tourist destinations that have closed their own tourist office to follow Jersey's lead, and if so, which ones?

Answer

- a) Since the start of peak season, Visit Jersey has been conducting ongoing independent research with visitors whilst they are on-island to gather feedback regarding their preferred methods of accessing information. The interviews are conducted in-person by an independent third party at popular visitor locations and include the option to express a preference for printed materials, digital resources, and physical in-person contact.
- b) The research being conducted will inform Visit Jersey's strategy and approach to Visitor Information Services in 2024. The strategy will incorporate feedback from stakeholders and the visitor survey, but must ultimately be evidence-based and demonstrate a cost-effective use of funding. Visit Jersey will be factoring in the preferences of all visitor demographics, aiming to deliver services that will satisfy visitor needs both in the near- and long-term.
- c) Globally there has been a shift away from physical tourist information centres over the past 10-15 years. In 2011 [The Guardian](#) reported that tourism information centres around Britain were 'facing extinction' due to significant declines in footfall. Since 2018, Visit Scotland has reduced the number of visitor information centres they operated from 126 to 24. Visit Jersey appreciates that visitor centres remain popular in France and therefore a hybrid solution may be required to suit the varied needs of the island's primary source markets.

2.25 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding current tax allowances and reliefs available to individuals and businesses. (WQ.392/2023)

Question

Will the Minister provide a list of all current tax allowances and reliefs available to individuals and businesses, including the following details –

- (a) a description of each allowance/relief;

- (b) the purpose of the allowance/relief;
- (c) the number of individuals/ businesses claiming the allowance/relief;
- (d) the total cost of each allowance/ relief per year over the past ten years;
- (e) how the outcomes related to the allowance/relief are measured;
- (f) whether the allowance/ relief has been assessed as meeting its intended purpose, if so, when, how, and by whom; and

will he further confirm if the Treasury Department or any other Department maintain any records or data to measure the benefits of the allowance/ relief against its purpose?

Answer

Data relating to some of the main personal tax allowances and reliefs is available in the [Tax statistical digests](#), which are published and available on the Government website.

The Government does not routinely undertake policy evaluations of long-standing tax allowances and reliefs. Such policy evaluation would only be undertaken at the time of any fundamental review of any area of tax policy.

The range of allowances and reliefs across Jersey's tax statutes is wide and information will not necessarily be available about all of them because of the different ways in which they might operate. We will continue to undertake appropriate levels of policy evaluation of the effectiveness of allowances and reliefs when they are subjected to fundamental review.

I am not minded to embark on an extensive and inevitably labour-intensive exercise to catalogue and evaluate all of the existing (personal and business) allowances and reliefs which would inevitably divert resources from delivering existing key tax policy projects.

2.26 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding homes and businesses across the Island being left without gas. (WQ.393/2023)

Question

Further to the situation this weekend where homes and businesses across the Island were left without gas, will the Minister advise –

- (a) how many homes were estimated to have been affected;
- (b) how many businesses were estimated to have been impacted;
- (c) what was the estimated economic impact on businesses;
- (d) whether any compensation be available to residents;
- (e) whether businesses be compensated by Jersey Gas or her department for loss of earnings, including any perishable food that had to be disposed of due to the closure of some businesses, and if not, what recourse to compensation would the Minister suggest;
- (f) whether she has discussed the situation with other Ministerial colleagues, and if so, when and what was the outcome of such discussions; and
- (g) whether Government have a mechanism to impose fines on Jersey Gas, or otherwise hold them to account where necessary, when such a high-level disruption to supply occurs, and if not, why not?

Answer

- a) It is understood from Island Energy (IEG) that around 4300 households were affected

- b) It is understood from IEG that around 300 commercial customers have been affected
- c) The advice from the Economy Department is that it would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to calculate an accurate estimate within the time available. In order to produce an accurate estimate it would be necessary to understand, in quite significant detail, the loss that all businesses faced as well as how much of that loss is or is not recoverable in the coming week.
- d) This would not be a matter for government, but for IEG. However, we are aware that IEG are considering arrangements to provide compensation, and we would expect them to do further consideration once the immediate event is resolved.
- e) Likewise, this is a matter for IEG to consider. Equally, some businesses may be able to seek compensation for any losses by way of their insurance.
- f) The Council of Ministers met on Sunday 8 October to discuss this situation, it has since been discussed at a scheduled meeting of the Council of Ministers on Tuesday 10 October and a meeting of the Emergencies Council was convened on Thursday 12 October to discuss this. Additionally, the Council of Ministers have received daily briefings throughout the incident.
- g) Consideration is ongoing as to how this incident has occurred, and whether any provisions of the 1989 Gas Law apply.

2.27 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the issues around the taxability of old-age-pension income. (WQ.394/2023)

Question

Further to his response to [Written Question 154/2022](#), wherein he states that he will review the issues around the taxability of old-age-pension income, will the Minister advise whether any work has been undertaken to investigate these issues, and if it has, what are the outcomes, and if not, when he intends to instigate a review into this matter?

Answer

As stated in my response to Deputy B. Ward's Written Question 154/2022, I intend to review the issues around the taxability of the old age pension during my term of office. Although no work has been undertaken to-date, I will soon be finalising the tax policy priorities for 2024 and I can confirm that the issue raised by the Deputy will be taken into consideration.

The Bailiff:

A number of answers have been tabled to written questions, and I have been notified there are a number of issues potentially arising.

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

You are correct that it is a number of them. I would like to ask to invoke Standing Order, 12(4) to ask that Written Question 378 be considered by yourself for failing to directly address the question. In this question, I ask in part (a) of it whether a register of all units of dwelling accommodation is provided for, in accordance with Article 16(1) of the Control of Housing and Work Law. The answer to part (a) of that question does not appear to address that and merely refers to: "Systems are

maintained which register the categories of properties.” It strikes me that the law refers to a register as a tangible thing, and the answer refers to something significantly less tangible than that when a simple yes or no would have done to that question, and it is unclear. If you would not mind, I would be grateful if you could consider that, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Any others?

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

Yes, I would also like to invoke Standing Order 12(4) in relation to Written Question 392. I emailed you yesterday evening with the reasoning for that, but I do not believe that the Minister has answered the question or made any attempt to do so.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Yes, I did circulate the notice that it is for Written Question 390. It is the same Standing Order. The answer was tabled by the Chief Minister, and I do not think it has addressed in any meaningful way the fundamentals of my question; 2 of which were to do with the 2 inquiries into the recent tragedies that are being reviewed at the moment.

The Bailiff:

Any others? Although the 3 Members, who have just raised these points, were kind enough to give me written notice of them yesterday, I am afraid I have not had the opportunity to consider them. The usual process will be that I will consider them over the luncheon adjournment. If I am in a position to give a ruling after lunch, I will do that. Failing which, Standing Orders provide that a ruling can be given the following day. So one of 2, I will make a ruling in that respect. Did you wish to say something, Chief Minister?

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

Yes. With regard 390, I do think that - and I am sure you will consider this - whether it would be appropriate for any political member to be directing an investigation that is being conducted by the police. I think the answer has been given in the best and most appropriate way possible for an elected person but that, of course, will be a matter for you to consider, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Yes. The way that I will consider these, Chief Minister, is not, in a sense, the effect of the answer. It is whether an answer meets Standing Orders. The answer meets Standing Orders if it is directly relevant to the question raised. So I will consider it against that. It is perfectly legitimate if a course of action is not going to be taken or done for the answer to say: “No, it is not.” That is directly relevant to the question raised but I have to consider it against that particular test, which is what I will do over the luncheon or whenever I am able to do so. We now come on, to oral questions, and the first oral question Deputy Tadier will ask of the Minister for Treasury and Resources. Oh, sorry. That is not what is next on the Order Paper, so give me a moment. Yes, I am sorry. I jumped the gun by talking about written questions straight away. It was my fault entirely. Therefore, fortunately, no fines apply to those kinds of mistakes in Standing Orders. But the next is under F, which is Appointment of Ministers, Committees and Panels.

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

3. Nomination of Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour as an elected member of the Public Accounts Committee

The Bailiff:

There is a nomination of an elected member to the Public Accounts Committee and I invite the chair, Deputy Feltham, to make that nomination.

3.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham (Chair, Public Accounts Committee):

I would like to nominate Deputy Raluca Kovacs as a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Bailiff:

Is that nomination seconded? [**Seconded**]

[9:45]

Are there any other nominations? Very well, if there are no other nominations, I confirm that Deputy Kovacs has been duly appointed as an elected member of the Public Accounts Committee. [**Approbation**]

QUESTIONS - resumption

4. Oral Questions

The Bailiff:

I have already dealt with written questions. So we now come to oral questions, and the first Deputy Tadier will ask of the Minister for Treasury and Resources. Who is answering for the Minister for Treasury and Resources?

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

I will answer the question.

4.1 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding corporate income tax rates in Crown Dependencies (OQ.201/2023)

I thank the Assistant Minister for stepping in. Will the Minister advise whether any invitation has been received and accepted to participate in discussions regarding an increase in the rate of corporate income tax in the Crown Dependencies; if so, has he - or in this case she - participated and what themes were discussed; and if not, has the invitation been accepted and why not?

Deputy E. Millar (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

I thank the Deputy for his question. We regularly meet with Ministers from the Crown Dependencies to discuss tax policy. This is a standard part of our longstanding policy of co-operation and dialogue. The effectiveness of this dialogue depends upon it remaining confidential, and so the Deputy will understand why I will not comment on the content of any intergovernmental discussions. However, the Ministers of the 3 Crown Dependencies released a joint statement on our position on Pillar Two, which is about minimum effective rates of corporate taxation earlier this year. That is the latest information that I can share at this stage. Any further updates we will certainly inform States Members in the usual fashion. Sorry, I will just say that the announcement in the joint statement, we declared an intention among the Crown Dependencies to reach a co-ordinated approach to Pillar Two implementation.

4.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Assistant Minister for the answer. This question really arises from the recent trip that some Members went on, to work and talk with matters in the Isle of Man and with Guernsey. It has become apparent that I think all islands are aware that tax needs to be raised and that Members in other Parliaments, certainly, and other Assemblies are aware that tax needs to be raised in a progressive and acceptable way to their populations. Does the Minister accept that when it comes to progressive taxation, there is a piece of work that can be done here around increasing the headline rate of corporation tax from 10 per cent towards that 15 per cent, given the fact that Pillar Two is coming in at some point anyway, and it could be an opportune moment for all islands to look to redress that tax rate and also increase their tax base?

The Bailiff:

I might make the observation, before you answer, that Standing Orders require questions to be succinct. That was, I think, pushing against the limits of succinctness, Deputy, if you do not mind me saying so.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It would be a first time, but I accept the ruling. [Laughter]

The Bailiff:

If you would like to address the question.

Deputy E. Millar:

I will endeavour to be succinct in my response. The Pillar Two rules will affect businesses who have annual revenues ... sorry, Pillar Two will affect businesses with annual revenues of more than 758 million euros. The vast majority of Jersey businesses will not be affected by Pillar Two, and they will remain in the current Zero/Ten framework, and there is no expected impact on them as a result of Pillar Two. Pillar Two will increase the tax rate charged on only the largest groups doing business in our Island, which may include retailers and businesses in the hospitality sector, as well as parts of the finance industry. However, I believe that there is no intention at present to make changes to our current income tax system for businesses which will not be in scope of the Pillar Two framework. I am afraid I cannot comment on whether the Minister has had discussions on tax arrangements more widely with the Crown Dependencies. I am sure he has, but I only have a briefing on Pillar Two, I am afraid.

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

In her answer to the original question, the Deputy had said that the Crown Dependencies had agreed a co-ordinated approach. Can I ask if the Crown Dependencies are now agreed in what that co-ordinated approach should be and are all supportive of the same direction of travel?

Deputy E. Millar:

Revenue Jersey policy officers continue to engage with all stakeholders regarding the potential policy design elements of options regarding Pillar Two, and are keeping the Minister advised of progress in developing regulations. Although the Crown Dependencies had agreed we would adopt a co-ordinated approach, and I think that is entirely sensible, there may be some variations in details, as you might expect, where there are 3 different jurisdictions. But we are all working towards similar outcomes. I think the position is still somewhat fluid, as there are still technical discussions on the implementation of Pillar Two and, indeed, Pillar One, and the way in which Pillar Two will be implemented ongoing at the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), and that may impact the choices that Jersey and the other Crown Dependencies ultimately make. We are also closely monitoring implementation decisions taken by other jurisdictions globally. Of

course, we will advise States Members, in the usual way, as soon as we are in a position to do that. But, yes, I think all Crown Dependencies are agreed that we should try to adopt a common approach.

4.1.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am aware of a resolution that was passed by our friends in the States of Guernsey asking that consideration be given to engaging with the other Crown Dependencies about the general corporation tax rate. So that is not exclusively Pillar Two but, more generally, can the Assistant Minister confirm whether or not an approach has been received from our colleagues in our sister Island on this?

Deputy E. Millar:

I cannot answer that question because I just do not know. An approach may have been made, but it may be made to the Minister and I am not aware of it. I cannot say yes or no either way, I am sorry.

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

Deputy Tadier's question asked about an increase in the rate of corporate income tax. I just wondered whether the Assistant Minister knows what percentage of businesses in the Island do pay corporate tax.

Deputy E. Millar:

I am sorry, I do not have that information available.

4.1.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

It is just to ask, without revealing any confidences, I think it is obvious to say that in both of the other Crown Dependencies there are Assembly Members who are very much open to progressive taxation measures and not beholden to any kind of figures that are currently in place. Can I ask whether the Treasury Department is also open minded when it comes to increasing, if necessary, the 10 per cent rate of Zero/Ten but also the headline of 20 per cent tax for income, which we know, of course, is not 20 per cent anymore? But in principle, is the department open to that?

Deputy E. Millar:

As I previously mentioned, I believe there is no intention at present to make changes to our current income tax system for businesses. The Zero/Ten will continue, but I am afraid I cannot just ... I am not aware whether the Minister has had discussions with Revenue Jersey about changes beyond that, either to corporate or income tax.

4.2 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding management positions in the General Hospital (OQ.197/2023)

Will the Minister state the number of management positions in the General Hospital in 2016 and the associated costs of this management team?

Deputy K. Wilson of St. Clement (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I thank the Deputy for her question. Using the same methodology that the chief officer for Health and Community Services used in their recent report on leadership and management capacity in H.C.S. (Health and Community Services), this is now available on the Assembly website under R.148/2023. I can confirm that in 2016, there were 49 management roles at an approximate cost of £4.5 million. I would note that obviously since 2016 there have been various changes in the structure of departments, for example, following the target operating models. So this may not be a like-for-like comparison.

4.2.1 Deputy A. Howell:

I was just wondering how the Minister could justify the expansion of management from the lean efficient structure in 2016 to the present day, now with an annual bill for management in Health of

over £10 million, especially when we are short of front line staff, and we are not the N.H.S. (National Health Service).

Deputy K. Wilson:

Obviously, wages increase and we have had an increasing amount of expenditure on locums, as the Deputy will know, to cover some of those vacancies that are hard to recruit. This will include some clinical managerial roles as well. But, at the moment, we have 45 management staff, which takes up 1.7 per cent of the total substantive staff working in the department. I am not here to make any judgments at this moment in time on whether or not that is justified, in terms of the amount of managers we have. We may have not enough managers, which I have mentioned before, but the current position is that there has been, in terms of headcount, only a slight increase in the number of managers that we have in the service.

4.3 Deputy L.J. Farnham of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding requested funding for the new healthcare facilities (OQ.198/2023)

Will the Assistant Minister - on this occasion, I believe - provide a breakdown of the £52 million funding requested for the new healthcare facilities, as detailed in the proposed Government Plan 2024 - 2027?

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

First, I would like to apologise to the Deputy for the absence of the Minister, and thank him for the opportunity to respond to his question. The £52 million set out in the proposed Government Plan 2024 is to carry out further work ahead of a separate report and proposition, which is to be brought to the Assembly in the summer of 2024. It will enable the programme team to carry out further work, including the design and plans of the acute hospital at Overdale to get to R.I.B.A. (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage 4, including a planning application; work at Kensington Place, which will include some temporary use ahead of a permanent facility on the site; demolition and works to prepare for development of Overdale; costs of the central government project team; and a contingency to risk-proof the programme. The new healthcare facility programme team continues to follow strict governances, processes and monitor expenditure very carefully to minimise costs while delivering the necessary work to provide a robust proposition for debate by the States Assembly. The work carried out as part of the £52 million will follow Government of Jersey procurement processes. At this stage it is important that the breakdown of the £52 million remains confidential to ensure commercial sensitivity, value for money and quality outcomes.

4.3.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure I accept the argument on confidentiality in a project that expends this amount of public money at such a high level, but I wanted to ask the Assistant Minister if he thought it was appropriate for the Treasury to be supporting an additional £52 million without knowing the total cost or the final cost of the whole project.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, I think it is very appropriate at this juncture. This is money that has obviously been incorporated within the Government Plan for the period of the first 6 months of next year. When the project is finally developed and brought to the States in a proposition, the full amount for the project should be determined and the Deputy will be able to review it at his leisure at that time.

4.3.2 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

In his answer the Minister referred to quality outcomes, so while he might not be able to provide a breakdown of what the £52 million is going to be spent on and how, could he provide a breakdown of the quality outcomes that will be delivered as a result of the £52 million expenditure?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Unfortunately, as the Deputy presumes, I do not have that information on hand at present but I will certainly try to find it out and forward it to her.

4.3.3 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As the Assistant Minister does not have the information to hand, and does not appear to be aware of that particular information, how can he assure the Assembly that what is going to be delivered under the £52 million expenditure will indeed be value for money?

[10:00]

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you for the question. That is because I have total confidence in the team. We have all been working very closely, and I believe that they are progressing the plan very diligently and I have great confidence in what they are doing.

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

The Assistant Minister mentioned production of a robust proposition. Can I ask the Assistant Minister to confirm whether that will produce a proposition that gives a clear picture of the complete project of all parts of the future hospital or will that just be sections of the project with some parts of it still in development?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, I believe that the project will cover the whole of the Overdale project and other projects moving forward, although the total cost of the Kensington Place facility and the Health Village at St. Saviour will obviously be in the preliminary stages at that time, so the full funding aspect for those projects may not be available in that proposition.

4.3.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just confirm then that the robust proposition that will be brought will not include full funding for all of the hospital project?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I cannot say for certain that the whole project will be costed within that proposition at this current time.

4.3.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Assistant Minister promised to circulate the figures to the Deputy. Could he circulate the figures to the whole of the Assembly, please, so we all know what is going on and not just one Member?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, of course; I thank the Deputy for his question. Yes, the question concerning the quality outcomes, I would be happy to circulate to all Members if I find that information out.

4.3.7 Deputy A. Howell:

Would the Deputy have not found it better perhaps to address her questions to the Minister for Infrastructure because I do believe the figures are in the Government Plan?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, was that a question to the Minister?

Deputy A. Howell:

It is whether the question would have been better directed at the ...

The Bailiff:

You are asking the Minister to say should the question have been directed elsewhere?

Deputy A. Howell:

Yes.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, I thank the Deputy for her question. Yes, the question was directed to Treasury but then it was redirected to the Minister for Infrastructure, as the Deputy presumes would have been the appropriate place, but then at the request of Deputy Farnham it was redirected back to Treasury.

The Bailiff:

I presume there will be no supplemental on that, Deputy Howell.

4.3.8 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I felt it was only right that, as Treasury are the custodians of our taxpayers' money, the question was appropriately directed to that department. I just wanted to ask the Assistant Minister, as the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources as he represents that department, does he believe it is appropriate and quite right for this Assembly to know the full costs of this project? The Government has presented a project of a multisite hospital with 4, possibly 5 sites, and I am alluding to his comments in the previous debate, we did not want to sign anything, sign a blank cheque without knowing the final cost of the outcome. Does he not believe on behalf of Treasury that it is only right for this Assembly, before embarking on spending many more tens of millions of pounds, to as soon as possible know and understand the full cost and timescale of what we are proposing? It is the biggest - possibly the biggest ever - piece of expenditure we will make.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, I understand the concerns of the Deputy concerning the full cost of the project but of course the full cost of the Overdale project has been incorporated within the Government Plan. I understand that the Deputy has obviously been very keen over the years to ensure that the hospital project goes ahead at Overdale. I have as well, of course, and I think we are singing from the same song sheet. I think we both have to accept that this is the project that the Council of Ministers determined, and I am sure that we will get the hospital that we hoped that we would do at Overdale.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Just to clarify, I did ask the Deputy if he agreed with the principle that this Assembly should know the full cost of the project before proceeding any further.

The Bailiff:

That was the thrust of the question, Deputy.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Indeed, I apologise for missing out for the full cost. Yes, well I am sure that the full cost of the Overdale project will be incorporated, as it has been incorporated within the Government Plan. I believe that the full costing for the additional sites, obviously the Health Village at St. Saviour and the Kensington Place site, should be incorporated within the proposition which is brought in the summer of next year. I concur.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I thank the Assistant Minister for his straight answers.

4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Health and Community Services Net Revenue Expenditure (OQ.210/2023)

Will the Minister provide a split of the figures detailed in the Health and Community Services Net Revenue Expenditure within the draft Government Plan 2024 - 2027 between hospital services and community services, and will she commit to providing a further breakdown of the information to Members before 31st October, detailing all major medical specialisms?

Deputy K. Wilson (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Thank you to the Deputy for his question. Unfortunately at this moment, I cannot provide nor commit to providing the detailed breakdown for next year's budget before 31st October. At the moment finance business partners for Health and Community Services are working on the detailed allocations with each service and care group directors as part of the normal yearly budget-setting process. It is expected that the H.C.S. executive team will review the allocations in late November and for them to be finalised and circulated in January 2024. I would note that this will be dependent on what changes, if any, result from the debate on the Government Plan. I can confirm that a Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure is included in the annex in the Government Plan.

4.4.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am going to be very specific. The Minister says that the figures are in the annex to the budget plan; could she point to the page number on which they are because I cannot find them?

The Bailiff:

Are you able to assist, Minister?

Deputy K. Wilson:

If I could just confirm, the detail that the Deputy is looking for is not in the annex but the overall summary; the net expenditure is there. As I have said, I will provide that detail once H.C.S. have been able to do their budget-setting exercise.

4.4.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I confirm with the Minister that that split in terms of the amount spent on community services and the detail of what those community services are exists and is there to begin with? That is the first part of the question.

Deputy K. Wilson:

In terms of resetting the whole budget exercise, we are going through each service line by line to understand what the expenditure requirement is for each of those service lines. What you will see going forward is greater transparency around where those expenditure lines are targeted, whether they be in primary, secondary or acute care services.

4.4.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given that that is in development, at what stage has that been fed into the development of the new hospital or will it be fed into the development of the new hospital, because if we do not know what is going to be in our community, how on earth are we building a hospital that is going to deliver the services that we need?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Well one of the things that will need to be factored into the outline business case that is due to come to the Assembly next year will be the detail of the revenue consequences of the model of care that will be reflected in the new outline business case.

4.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

A final supplementary is a bit awkward because I have got lots of supplementaries. My father said to me at one stage, when I wanted to investigate something and have a look and question about something, I should follow the money. If I cannot follow the money, I do not know what sort of package is being sold to me. That is the reality, and what we have got here is exactly that. I am going to be asked, we are all going to be asked, to vote for a Government Plan by the end of the year and then we will see what sort of health services we are going to get out of it because the money will then be exposed in January. Now as far as I am concerned, that is useless to me and to every Member of the States because that means we cannot do anything, we do not know what we are voting for. Does the Minister not agree that it is rather awkward not to know what you are voting for when you vote for a Government Plan, and will she not agree to bring this breakdown to the States well before 31st October?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I think I have already mentioned that I am not in a position to be able to do that but what I can assure the Assembly about is that there will be real transparency around where we are spending that money in a much more detailed way.

4.5 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding tax assessment notices (OQ.202/2023)

Will the Minister explain why, when Islanders overpay their tax, it is shown as nil on their tax assessment notices instead of the amount that has been overpaid?

Deputy S.M. Ahier (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

I thank the Deputy for her question and apologise once again for the absence of the Minister. The annual notice of assessment specifies the tax due for the relevant year of assessment calculated by reference to the income declared in that year's tax return. The notice will state nil when there is no payment outstanding. Statements of account are available on request, which would detail any outstanding underpayments or overpayments for specific years. The notice of assessment and statements of account are currently under review to make them easier for customers to understand. Once an assessment has been finalised, any overpayment is automatically carried forward. I.T.I.S. (Income Tax Instalment Scheme) taxpayers will receive a new effective rate taking into account the overpayment. In some cases, the new effective rate will be lower.

4.5.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Does the Assistant Minister in this case think that it is acceptable that this is something that the public have to request to know and the fact that it is automatically carried forward, but members of the public are not necessarily aware of how much is carried forward, and how this affects the percentage? Does he think that is acceptable?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, how much is carried forward, some of the sums are very small and they are automatically carried forward. The necessity to inform the person that it is of a certain amount is not necessary in most cases. A lot of people overpay their tax deliberately - you may laugh - but some people do because they know they have had a change of circumstances. If they have had a change of circumstances and

they know that their tax is going to increase, then they will overpay during one year to ensure that their balance is in order and they do not have a higher rate in the year following that. I am sorry, I have forgotten the first part of the Deputy's question.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Whether the Assistant Minister thinks it is acceptable that members of the public have to request this information instead of automatically being given it.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I thank her for that clarification. Yes, the automatic request, that is the reason why we will be running the review because some people have said that they do not really want to go through the process of requesting the forms and it can be quite complicated. When the information is presented to them from the statement of accounts, they are quite difficult to understand as well but, yes, I think the Deputy is correct.

4.5.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I just wanted to ask the Assistant Minister if he knows the turnaround time for requesting one of the statements he mentioned.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

For the requesting of the statements of accounts, the actual statements of accounts come as a ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, sorry, it was badly put. Once requested, how long it takes to get the statement of the accounts.

[10:15]

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I believe that the statement of accounts will be sent out within about 2 months.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am a little bit thrown by 2 months, if I am honest. No, I do not have a supplementary.

4.5.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

We are often being told that Jersey is a centre of digital excellence or at least aspiring to be that. Does the Minister think that it would be possible at some point for an ordinary member of the public to be able to log in and check their tax account, see what they owe or see what they are owed by the department and, if not, why not?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I agree with the Deputy that that would be wonderful if that was possible, and I am sure it is technically possible at this current time. There are changes being made to the system that is being run currently, but to log in and find exactly how much any particular person owes in tax at any particular time during the year would be incredibly difficult and would be incredibly expensive.

4.5.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think we have some of the best I.T. (information technology) experts in the Island working all over; I know some in the public sector who are teachers, I know others who work for banks. Does the Minister think that if this Government spent less money on recruiting Comms for his department to churn out what is bordering on propaganda and employed some of those very skilled I.T. people, that Government could be leading by example when it comes to I.T., not just talking about it?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I am not too sure of the connection between the Communications Department and the I.T. Department but there you go. Yes, obviously we do have a great deal of I.T. expertise but that does not detract from the issue of how much it costs to reprogramme and change the systems. In this instance of finding specific detail on specific days for every individual taxpayer it would be incredibly complex and incredibly expensive.

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

The Assistant Minister mentioned that he believes it is not necessary in some cases to give these figures. Why does he believe so and does he not consider that people having the option to continue with their figure in the tax or take it upfront need to know that amount and not wait 2 months to know the result?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you for the question. The reason why they do not really need to know the amount because the amounts are mostly very small, is that the amounts change all the time and they also change for the person's circumstances. So, if they are continually in a flow of changing throughout the year, then it seems pointless that if somebody had the information in January, by March that figure may be completely different.

4.5.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

I am aware that even when the figure is higher that it is still not included, and I do believe it is necessary. Does the Assistant Minister commit to take consideration to speak with the Minister and his department to have that line included on the figure?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

When you say the "line included", that presumably is removing the nil amount and incorporating the actual figure, is that what the Deputy is saying?

Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Yes.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you, Deputy, for clarification. I personally do not think that it is necessary but I am perfectly willing to ask the Minister and ask the Comptroller if they will reconsider in the review that is coming up to see if it could be included, yes.

4.5.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Just out of interest, could the Assistant Minister tell us who the source was for his statement that lots of people overpay their tax?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

That was my statement, Deputy. There are a number of people who do pay, I say "a number", some who overpay their tax because they know their circumstances are changing and they do not want to be burdened with a large bill for the year after.

The Bailiff:

Do you have a supplemental question to that, Deputy?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I believe we mix in different circles then.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I am sure we do. [Laughter]

The Bailiff:

Well I do not think that question nor that answer was specifically relevant to the question but, Deputy Alves's, a final supplementary.

4.5.8 Deputy C.S. Alves:

The Assistant Minister said that he felt it was not necessary to include this line; however, his Government stands for openness and transparency, so I would argue that that is not being open and transparent. I would like to ask the Assistant Minister, what does he think constitutes a small amount because he mentioned that small amounts are carried forward. I have seen cases where the total gross, their total annual gross income is £50,000 and they are owed over £2,500. That is 5 per cent of their gross income. So what constitutes a small amount being carried forward?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

In my opinion, in the Tax Department any small amount would be under £1,000. So obviously the case that the Deputy is talking about of £2,500, that is exceptional. I am quite surprised that that has happened but obviously if that person requests a statement of accounts, they will receive it and then they can apply to get that funding returned if they wish.

The Bailiff:

You have a point to make ...

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

Yes, I believe it is a point of order. I have just been listening obviously to the questions and Standing Order 10(6)(b) clearly says that: "A question shall not seek an expression of opinion." Just when listening to many of these questions it appears to me that they have been seeking opinions rather than facts.

The Bailiff:

I accept, of course, the thrust of the Standing Order and that they should not seek ... the purpose of questions are to do 2 things: seek specific information or ask for Ministerial action. Those are the 2 purposes of questions. Of course, there is an element of laxity and liberal application which has always been traditional in the Assembly as to how question time has worked in that way, but it is correct to the extent that if there is a request for expression of a personal opinion as opposed to Ministerial information, then that would not be in accordance with Standing Orders.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just ask, and I appreciate the nuanced way in which you are interpreting the Standing Orders, does it also apply that there is a difference between a political opinion and a personal opinion? So if I were to ask the Minister: "What do you think about the façade of this new building that is going up?" that might be different to what the underlying policies are that form political opinions about her own or his own portfolio and that, of course, as long as the question is political in nature, that is what we are trying to establish rather than vexatious.

The Bailiff:

Well, it is not lost on the Presiding Officer that our question time is used for making generalised political statements both in the forms of the questions as well as the forms of the answers. I think if, provided what is being sought is information and it is legitimate information to provide, so it is not simply an expression of a personal opinion, then it seems to me to be a legitimate use of a question.

4.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding tax policy principles (OQ.200/2023)

Will the Minister explain why the word “fair” is omitted in his foreword to the 2022 States of Jersey Annual Report and Accounts, when referring to how the Government must remain consistent with its approach to taxes, when “fair and sustainable” remains a tax policy principle included in the draft Government Plan 2024 - 2027?

Deputy S.M. Ahier (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

Once again, I will apologise to the Deputy for the absence of the Minister. Fair and sustainable remains a tax policy principle included in the draft Government Plan 2024 - 2027 as it has done in previous plans. In the 2022 Annual Report and Accounts foreword, the Minister said that we must remain consistent in supporting low, simple and competitive taxes. This, to my mind, seems fair. There are many words and sentiments not included in the foreword to that accounting document. The Government stands by its actions, which speak far louder than words. The proposed increase to personal tax allowances will see every individual in Jersey able to earn up to £20,000 without paying a penny in income tax. That to me seems fair.

4.6.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As the Assistant Minister stated, where we would usually see the word “fair” we are seeing the word “competitive” in that particular paragraph. So could the Assistant Minister explain whether it is the position of the Minister and his team to prioritise competitiveness over fairness and, if so, who are we trying to be competitive with and for?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I am afraid I cannot answer for the Minister in this instance. I do not know what the Minister was thinking, what was in his mind when he wrote the foreword, so I am afraid I am unable to respond to that question.

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

Does the Assistant Minister believe Jersey’s economic policies proposed within the Government Plan to be fair when a super tax deduction of 150 per cent on investment is being proposed?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, I do believe that the government policy in the Government Plan is fair. I believe it remains low, broad, simple and fair. As for the ... I am sorry, I cannot remember what the other part of the question was.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

The question was in relation to the super tax deduction of 150 per cent on investment that financial service companies who pay 10 per cent tax are making when they invest in technology.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, and obviously this is one thing that we must encourage and that is the reason for it. We have to encourage investment and we have to encourage ... that is why we have so many 2(1)(e)s coming to Jersey as well to encourage investment into business and to encourage investment into our finance centre, and that is one way of supporting that industry.

4.6.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Does the Minister believe creating a tax loophole for financial service companies who are only paying 10 per cent tax already is a very imprudent move?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

No, I do not.

4.6.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The Assistant Minister referred to the low, simple, broad and fair tax policies that have been enshrined for some years now. In his capacity as Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources, has he ever taken part in any discussions with the Ministerial team about the obvious contradictory nature of those principles being tied together in that arbitrary way?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

No, I have not attended a C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) meeting where that has been brought up and, no, I have not engaged in any conversations around it, no.

4.6.5 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Therefore, would he endeavour to raise this issue with his Minister given that it is, in some respects, absurd to say that a tax that is low, broad and simple is always fair when in fact some taxes may inevitably need to deviate from those principles to be fair?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I will be happy to engage with a conversation with my Minister, as I often do, and have that debate with him, yes.

4.6.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

In what I got of an answer to Written Question 392, the Minister for Treasury and Resources appeared to confirm that the impact of tax allowances and reliefs are not assessed. So, given that, how can the Assistant Minister give the Assembly assurances that our tax system remains both fair and, as he wishes it to be, competitive?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Unfortunately, I have not seen Written Question 392, so I cannot directly respond to what was ... if the Deputy would remind me, what was in the response to question ...

The Bailiff:

Well I am not sure we can have an exchange. The question could either be put as a simple question or it cannot, so I think we will have to move on. If you are not able to answer it, you are not able to answer it.

4.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding transitioning away from gas (OQ.207/2023)

Given the Carbon Neutral Roadmap aim to transition customers away from gas, will the Minister state what consideration, if any, the Government is giving to the future provision of gas for homes and businesses by a private company?

Deputy H. Miles of St. Brelade (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

In developing and consulting upon the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, suppliers and distributors were invited to outline their plans for net zero, recognising that the energy market will need to move away from the provision of fossil fuels. An example is the current provision by some distributors of second generation renewable diesel as an alternative low carbon product that replaces fossil fuel diesel. Since the publication of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, the Assistant Minister for the Environment has established an Energy Suppliers Group. The group has particular focus on policies related to

Jersey's current and future energy supply and includes many private companies that form part of the Island's energy market.

[10:30]

I am informed by the Assistant Minister for the Environment that Island Energy are an active group member. Island Energy have recently published their sustainability strategy which outlines the potential for adding a proportion of renewable gas to their existing L.P.G. (liquid petroleum gas) mix, and that which can be carried by the existing gas network. While this product is not yet available at the same price point as the current fossil fuel product, I understand that Island Energy have been invited to submit more details, including the challenges and opportunities for the adoption of this product locally.

4.7.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Given that the Government is providing financial support for households to move away from gas heating altogether and move to electric heating, and therefore Island Energy is facing a government policy which seems to want it to lose more and more customers as time goes by, does the Minister have any consideration on the long-term viability of that particular company? I ask that question of course in the context of having seen the great difficulties that it can cause for many people in the Island when things go wrong.

Deputy H. Miles:

As I said in my previous answer, Island Energy are part of the active group that are looking at the sustainability of the energy supply. Island Energy have not yet submitted further details on their green gas product but the Government remains open-minded, recognising that the carbon neutral transition ideally will see diversity in the market and the best use of existing infrastructure.

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

Being as we are now 10 days into this gas outage and apparently it has been reported there are still 800 people waiting to be reconnected, does the Minister think this is a satisfactory state of affairs?

Deputy H. Miles:

The original question was about the future provision of gas for homes and businesses by a private company. I am happy to go into further detail but I wonder if the question is relevant in this particular context.

The Bailiff:

I have to say, I think the question does ... I was musing on that myself and I think it does go outside the ambit of the original question by too wide a margin to be answerable in the context of this question, so I rule it out of order.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

A supplementary, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Well you cannot have a supplementary to the question I have ruled out of order. **[Laughter]**

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

A nice try though.

The Bailiff:

But if you want to light your light up for another question after Deputy Ward having spoken, there might be time for that.

4.7.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given that transition away from gas will probably inevitably include the transition to green hydrogen as a fuel, does the Minister feel that in terms of the long-term safety of supply of energy, maintaining the infrastructure that exists for gas is essential and that the best way to do that is to put that into national ownership?

Deputy H. Miles:

Detailed questions on the energy market transition and the Carbon Neutral Roadmap should really be addressed to the Minister or the Assistant Minister for the Environment, so I am not going to comment on the question of hydrogen. However, the issue of nationalisation has been raised. Our local energy market is dominated by private companies, most of whom do a very good job of providing energy, security and diversity in what is a small marketplace with logistical challenges. Nationalising the gas company is a considerable step that would need careful thought and a full understanding of the objectives of doing so. I do not believe we are in a position currently to form an evidence position on nationalising the gas company. The nationalisation of any company requires the full understanding of the pros and cons in the context of the costs of doing so. Council of Ministers would need detailed evidence that addresses whether such action is in the overall best interests and value for the people of the Island and we do not have that yet. We are currently still dealing with the outcomes of the gas outage. The C.E.O. (chief executive officer) is providing me with a full root cause analysis and we will be seeking to review the lessons learned during this incident.

4.7.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is interesting that we do not have evidence. The evidence I think that most people can see, and I would ask the Minister about, is that they have had a gas outage for a long time, prices are extraordinarily high, the money that is being spent on the gas is going off-Island to investors elsewhere and the priority is the return for those investors rather than providing a service for our Islanders. Therefore, I would ask the Minister again as the competent authority for the supply of this energy, and that is why I ask this question of this Minister, the most pertinent approach would be to take the infrastructure in particular into national ownership so it is not lost, as we look for a long-term solution and address the Carbon Neutral Roadmap?

Deputy H. Miles:

I refer to my previous answer, the nationalisation of any company requires a full understanding of the pros and cons in the context of the costs of doing so. At this present time, we do not have that information.

4.7.5 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The gas outage I think demonstrated an extreme vulnerability of part of our community and part of our economy. My question is in relation to the provision, the future provision of gas supply to homes and businesses. Is the Minister or the Government going to give serious and urgent consideration to the gas infrastructure insofar as if the gas company had not been able to fix the fault, we would have been left in a real challenging position given the time taken by another energy provider or other energy providers could be months, if not 2 to 3 years, to reconnect all of that supply? Will the Minister state whether they have given that consideration or undertake to put some urgent structures in place to perhaps deal with that situation should it arise?

Deputy H. Miles:

Once again, I question the validity of this question which was if any consideration of the Government was given to the future provision of gas for homes by a private company.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

May I just bring ...

The Bailiff:

I do rule that as being in order, I think, Minister. This is to do with the future provision of gas and this question touches upon that and it seems to me that that is not unreasonable. I allowed the one on nationalisation, it seems to me that the future provision is not unreasonable.

Deputy H. Miles:

Okay, thank you for that indication. I share the Islanders' disappointment that they lost gas supply for over a week, in some cases, and I am acutely aware that some customers have still not been reconnected. Yesterday I met with the C.E.O. of Island Energy and asked for an explanation and an update. I wrote to the C.E.O. of Island Energy yesterday to ask for them to share the arrangements that they have in place across the business to assess the risk of an emergency occurring and to prepare and maintain a risk register. I am hopeful that that information will be forthcoming, which will allow the Government to plan for any future outage. Both the Council of Ministers and the Emergencies Council have met to consider this issue and we are taking the issue extremely seriously and waiting for further evidence to establish what we may or may not do in the future.

4.7.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The Minister referred to the pros and cons on the question of nationalisation and also spoke of not having the evidence on that at this point, and I completely agreed with her on that. Could I therefore ask the Minister then whether or not the Government will be seeking to gather that evidence and examine it to work out what the appropriate answer to this is, given that it is the Government's position to provide financial incentives for customers of Island Energy to abandon the company, which may raise serious questions in the near future about their financial viability and their ability therefore to provide gas to homes and businesses in the Island, having seen how difficult that can be when it is shut off at short notice?

Deputy H. Miles:

I think the question is: what are Government doing to gather the information? As I said, I met with the C.E.O. of Island Energy yesterday. I wrote to Island Energy to ask for some very specific information. If that information is not forthcoming, as the competent authority I have the ability to apply an Article 7 order which can compel Island Energy to provide the necessary information to the Government of Jersey. We have also sought some legal advice in what we may do to change the gas law, which is within the remit of the Minister for Infrastructure, but to make an amendment to the gas law in order to compel Island Energy to provide the information that the Government require to provide contingency planning to ensure the safety of the supply of gas in future.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does that include information on the ownership model because that was where the original question was coming from?

Deputy H. Miles:

I think the ownership model of the gas company is in the public domain. They are a private company and my focus as competent authority is focusing on the continuation of supply.

The Bailiff:

I think, Minister, the question was directed to whether information enabling the Government to consider the future ownership model was being gathered in the exercise that you are talking about and I think that is correct, Deputy, is what you were asking.

Deputy H. Miles:

I am so sorry, I misunderstood the question. Yes, of course.

4.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding selling properties owned by the States of Jersey (OQ.195/2023)

Will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, has recently been given to selling properties or land, owned by the States of Jersey?

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

Quite recently I had an email enquiry from Deputy Andrews about property, so I arranged to meet him and discuss the current situation in some detail; that was about a week-and-a-half ago. I explained that in reality selling public property is relatively rare because the vast majority of it is used to provide public services, and this includes schools and offices and such like. However, we are starting a process at Property Holdings to assess whether certain properties are surplus to requirements and if they are or can be made surplus by way of consolidating services elsewhere in the estate, they can then be sold off. For example, the property Aviemore at St. Martin is due to go on the market very shortly. If the Deputy has any specific properties in mind that are troubling him, I would be more than happy to answer any questions he may have.

4.9 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding disruption to the gas supply (OQ.209/2023)

Will the Minister advise what assurances, if any, she has received from Island Energy that the recent disruption to the gas supply will not happen again during the winter months?

Deputy H. Miles (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

As I said in previous answers, I met the chief executive officer of Island Energy group yesterday in person to seek assurances from the company. I was assured by her that the company have identified the issue which caused the recent outage and the company have identified specific steps they can take to prevent this incident recurring. They are undertaking a full root cause analysis and will be seeking to review the lessons learned during this incident. The company have committed to providing Government with a formal report further to this being completed.

4.9.1 Deputy T.A Coles:

Will the Minister then outline what support packages she will have in place and prepared should this fault occur again during these colder winter months?

Deputy H. Miles:

As I have said previously, Island Energy are a private company and it is down to them to provide the necessary support to their customers. In all cases the Government will do what we can to support Islanders but Island Energy is a private company, they are responsible for managing the situation and for communicating with customers and Islanders.

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Could I raise the défaut, please, on the Connétable of St. Mary?

The Bailiff:

Yes, the défaut is raised on the Connétable of St. Mary.

4.9.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does the Government have a contingency plan in place that it would seek to invoke and apply in the event that a similar outage, as has happened recently, occurs in the winter months where for many, particularly elderly people, in our community waiting over a week for their heating to come back on could have severe detrimental impacts on their health?

Deputy H. Miles:

Consideration is being given to how the current incident of the gas outage needs to be factored into future strategies. We have a crisis resilience improvement plan and I have also asked that the Jersey Resilience Forum Executive and Delivery Group work together to ensure that our critical national infrastructure partners, including the utility companies, have reviewed their business continuity plans with a particular focus on the safety and the welfare of Islanders.

[10:45]

4.9.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can we take it from those answers, therefore, that the Minister has absolute confidence that in an event where a similar outage happened in the colder months that there would be some contingency able to be provided quickly to safeguard those vulnerable in our community so they would not have to suffer from the cold if it were going to take days to put the heating back on?

Deputy H. Miles:

One of the reasons that I have written formally to Island Energy is to understand the arrangements that they have in place to assess the risk of a further occurrence, to prepare and maintain an emergency plan, and to prepare and maintain communication arrangements to all and inform the public. At this current time, Island Energy assured the Government that they have those measures in place. I will reassess that situation when I receive further information from Island Energy on the questions that we have asked.

4.9.4 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Following the recent outage and following the Minister's conversations with the C.E.O. of Island Energy, can she confirm if she has given any instruction that the corporate risk register should be updated?

Deputy H. Miles:

I have given no such instruction at this time.

4.9.5 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Can then the Minister confirm whether she has had an update or a briefing on the corporate risk register, what risks refer to prospective outages such as this, and what mitigations the Government has in place to allay such risks?

Deputy H. Miles:

This is a fast-moving incident and I would expect that the corporate risk register would be updated and Ministers would be briefed accordingly. This is an incident that has only happened within the last 10 days and Government have been trying to ensure that Island Energy fulfil their responsibilities.

4.9.6 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Given what has been said, is the Minister's department satisfied with the communication provided by Island Energy to their users?

Deputy H. Miles:

I think Island Energy themselves will be the first to admit that the communication with Islanders could have been better and I share that view.

4.10 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding the teaching staff dispute (OQ.204/2023)

Will the Chair advise what additional pay offers, if any, have been considered to end the dispute with Jersey's teaching staff; and what negotiations, if any, have taken place to discuss either such an additional offer or the lack of one?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (Vice-Chair, States Employment Board - rapporteur):

Talks started some 12 months ago for the 2023 pay and most recently representatives met with the N.A.S.U.W.T. (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers) and N.E.U. (National Education Union) just under 2 weeks ago. We maintain the line, in line with other public services pay groups, that the offer of a fully consolidated 7.9 per cent is a fair, reasonable and equitable offer.

4.10.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I can assume that no additional offer has been made since that one was rejected. Is the chair, assistant chair; I am not entirely sure what titles are anymore, I am losing track of them in Government. Is the chair willing to address the issue which has clearly been rejected by all unions, despite what was published last night by Government in order to end this dispute?

The Connétable of St. John:

Since June we have offered binding arbitrations where both parties would put their cases forward. It is an independent body and we continue to offer that to the unions. We remain confident that the offer that we have made is a fair and reasonable offer. It has been accepted by all of the other pay groups on the Island, including many people who work in the education sector.

4.10.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The assistant chair referred to binding arbitration as part of this. Can he confirm whether or not a process of binding arbitration would have the ability to overrule the Government setting of the financial envelope from which pay would be offered from, and would they have the ability to force the Government against its wishes to increase that envelope?

The Connétable of St. John:

My understanding is that binding arbitration will be binding on both parties and therefore if the arbitration identified that the Government had to pay more money, then I believe we would be bound to live by that decision.

4.10.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That did not refer specifically to the financial envelope, which is something that the Government sets. Binding arbitration could say they should have a 2 million per cent pay increase but obviously that could not happen, there is not enough money on the planet for that, it would be set within an envelope. Do the arbitrators have the ability to say to the Government: "The financial envelope which you have set can be overturned by us and a substantially more generous pay offer be provided"?

The Connétable of St. John:

My understanding is that binding arbitration listens to both cases, both the employer and the employee, and would make a decision based on that, one of what is reasonable, what is affordable, so it is unlikely that the Deputy's 2 million per cent increase would take place, but a reasonable

increase may be judged by the arbiter to be paid. The binding arbitration is done by an independent third party neither connected to the employer or the employee.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

My question is about the financial envelope which is a specific thing set by Government, and he is avoiding using those words in his answer. I think it could be a yes or no answer to the question I have asked.

The Connétable of St. John:

The Government would put their case forward as to the affordability of the existing pay offer. It would be for the arbiter to decide.

The Bailiff:

Well I think the question is directed in this way: it is if the award of necessity causes an increase to the envelope - or envelope, depending upon your pronunciation choice - is this something that will simply have to happen by dint of the arbitrator's award?

The Connétable of St. John:

My understanding is that we would enter into binding arbitration in good faith and therefore if the arbiter gave a higher increase, then we would have to acknowledge that and find a way of funding that.

The Bailiff:

I think that must be the answer to the question then.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I think the responder has just answered my question.

4.10.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can the chair confirm that no unconsolidated extra offers were made during negotiation?

The Connétable of St. John:

We have been in negotiation, as I said, for some 12 months and we have not been party to those detailed discussions. We have been very clear with the agenda that we have set and the pay claim has not changed and the offer has not changed in recent months.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, it is really difficult today to get a straight answer. So has no unconsolidated offer been made in addition to the 7.9 per cent, was my question. Again, it is a simple yes or no.

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, I thought an answer that said there has been no change must mean no. I cannot see that it can mean anything other than that.

4.11 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding Government response to the recent gas outage (OQ.196/2023)

Given the public criticism of the Government response to the recent gas outage, will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, was given to the Government developing a plan to inform and support affected households and businesses; and if this was not considered, why not?

Deputy H. Miles (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

Government worked alongside Island Energy during the course of the gas outage. There was regular contact between the Strategic Co-ordination Group in government and the chief executive of Island Energy throughout. Government sought to ensure that it was kept informed at all times and that Island Energy was communicating directly with affected households and businesses. Island Energy are the data holders for their customer base and led the reconnection response in accordance with their technical advice and safety procedures. In the circumstances, it would have been inappropriate and unhelpful for government to insert itself over the top of that plan and attempt to contact customers directly, and may have interfered with the response from Island Energy.

4.11.1 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

The Minister stated in the media recently that she was very concerned about vulnerable parishioners without hot water or cooking facilities, so could she detail what she did to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable parishioners during day one of the gas outage, day 2 and any other day?

Deputy H. Miles:

As I said previously, Island Energy is a private company and they are responsible for their customers; we therefore encourage them to identify and react very quickly to vulnerable customers. At the same time, in the media I asked neighbours and friends to look out for each other in the way that Jersey does best. But we focused our support in 2 ways: we cascaded the information we received from Island Energy via social media, liaising with other services, including Jersey Electricity, who offered assistance to Island Energy and its vulnerable customers. Secondly, in ensuring the welfare provision that the Government itself put in place, as well as all the others of the Parishes, was made widely known, and this included the States of Jersey Police offering to support engineers in their house-to-house visits. The States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service provided safety messages for the public and accompanied Island Energy on visits to key gas supply points around the Island, and we were ready to stand up a government helpline to offer further support for Islanders. We did not do that because it was reported that there was a very low level of calls going into Island Energy, and we also phoned round a number of charities to see whether they needed any support and they said that they did not. We put contingency plans in place to provide additional support for heating and hot water should it have been required, and we also opened up Les Quennevais Sports Centre to the public and non-members who needed access to hot water and showers.

4.11.2 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I do not necessarily go along with the premise “it is a private company”; it is part of our essential infrastructure, so, Island Energy, when the first outage happened, there was a lot of confusion. Does the Minister not believe that we should have an emergency number run by the States for any kind of emergency, including gas, so that public can ring and get assurance from a bank of people who will answer the phone?

Deputy H. Miles:

In times of a major incident we set up a helpline. We had done the same for COVID, and we have done other things for other major incidents. Again, I have some sympathy with the view that although Island Energy is a private company, the States are required to step in and do more, but as I have articulated in the previous questions this morning, it is extremely difficult to do so, given the legal framework that currently exists. Ministers are giving consideration to how utility companies and other critical national infrastructure partners can assure us that they have appropriate communications in place. As I previously mentioned, it is likely that we will be bringing forward legislation to ensure that happens before the introduction of the resilience law, which will not come into place until the middle of next year.

4.11.3 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

On the Saturday that the incident took place or loss of gas, should I say, that I did ring on behalf of our constituents the gas company, the number that was provided was their standard number and you had to press 1 for this, 2 for accounts, 3 to listen to some dodgy music and nobody answered any of them. I had to ring the emergency, if you smell gas ring this number because none of the other numbers were being answered; I had to ring the actual emergency number before I got somebody. Does the Minister think that we should assist Jersey Gas in any way we can with an answerphone centre that could take over in such an event?

Deputy H. Miles:

I completely understand that this is a concern for Islanders and now that the immediate situation has been resolved, we will review the lessons learned. Most certainly one of those lessons is going to be around the way that the gas company have communicated. We did have some discussions about stepping up a helpline, and that was initially at the C.O.M. meeting that we had on the Sunday. One of the issues that it is not for Government to offer safety advice and what we would have been doing is acting as a signpost into Island Energy. Island Energy assured us that they had a phone service that was operating, that they had 14 operators and that what they had was sufficient and that they would not welcome the use of a States helpline in that way.

[11:00]

4.11.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Given that there already exists a Jersey Resilience Forum, a States of Jersey Emergencies Council, an emergency planning officer, could the Minister explain why the only offer of hot water was in the form of Les Quennevais Sports Centre and no helpline was brought into place in the actual circumstances and what difference the resilience law that she mentions is expected to make in terms of overcoming such difficulties?

Deputy H. Miles:

I think I have answered some of the Deputy's questions in previous answers. As the Deputy will know, other private organisations offer the provision of hot water and shower facilities. At the beginning of the incident we certainly were not expecting it to go on for as long as it did because we were receiving assurances from Island Energy that, hopefully, the supply would be up and running and back to consumers by Tuesday; that clearly did not happen. In discussing what is going to be moving forward with the resilience law, as with the resilience law in Guernsey and the Isle of Man, there is provision for the Government to compel public utilities to provide them with information that enables them to plan for incidents such as this. As I said earlier on, we have written to the gas company to ask them voluntarily to share that information.

4.11.5 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Could the Minister please advise: what is the difference between the civil contingencies law of which we have heard report and the resilience law that she has mentioned?

Deputy H. Miles:

It is important that I make the qualification. At the moment we have an Emergency Planning and Procedures Law; we are going to bring forward a law that will provide for resilience around civil contingencies. There is no agreement at this point what the law is going to be called. When I refer to civil contingencies and I refer to resilience, I am referring to one and the same.

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

Given that we have a well-staffed Communications Unit, why was it that many Islanders only discovered what was going on through social media? Does the Minister not think more should have been done by Government to take control of this in terms of communications?

Deputy H. Miles:

I reiterate that Island Energy are a private company and the role that we took was to forward their communications and disseminate the communications. At the beginning their initial communications were not good enough, they did improve and were supported by Government. I have no doubt that there are significant lessons to be learned. I think we understood at one point that Island Energy only have 40 per cent of their customers' email addresses. They only had 20 per cent of their customers' mobile phones; that is a lesson that they need to be learning. As you know, they engaged the services of Jersey Post to write to each of their customers with specific instructions and offers of support.

4.11.7 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Has the Minister discussed the impact of the outage with the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture because clearly there was an enormous impact, not only on householders but also on local hospitality businesses who found themselves unable to cater for their guests and restaurants of course having to turn away hundreds of bookings?

Deputy H. Miles:

Yes, I have spoken to the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture and I think if you look at the very helpful written question provided by Deputy Tadier, we are unable to quantify the economic impact to businesses. Island Energy have said that they will be operating a compensation scheme, that they will be doing that commercially on a one-to-one basis, so I am hopeful that businesses will be able to be compensated in at least the majority of their losses.

4.11.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Given the effect that such an outage of gas supplies or any other power supplies would have on both households and also essential services provided by the Government, what plans were in place within Government prior to this outage happening in order to deal with such an occurrence?

Deputy H. Miles:

As I have previously mentioned, the powers to Government have been limited. Public utility companies, such as gas in the U.K. (United Kingdom), are regulated by Ofgem. In Jersey that regulation comes through our Health and Safety at Work Law. While we have been doing the work around the crisis civil contingencies law and the resilience law, it has become apparent that we need to take greater steps so that we have greater power, greater control and greater enforcement and that work is ongoing.

4.11.9 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I just want really a yes or no answer from the Minister to this. Is the Minister saying that the Government has no plans in place to deal with such an outage of such an essential service for our Island?

Deputy H. Miles:

The Minister is absolutely not saying that. We do have plans in place, as I articulated earlier today. I have written to Island Energy to ask them to provide me with information that will permit us to plan for contingency. In the absence of a satisfactory reply, I am able to exercise my Article 7 powers under the Emergency Planning Law. Also, we have sought legal advice and are preparing drafting

instructions to make a change to the gas law in order that Government can have a better handle on these situations should they occur in the future.

4.11.10 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I thank the Minister for her answers, nevertheless, it seems the public did not consider the communications and support from Government to be adequate. The Minister stated that she has been gathering information from Island Energy about the supply of gas and any risks which should help too in a plan of support and communications in the future. Why were not the risks associated with utility supplies examined previously, for instance, when drafting the Crisis Resilience Improvement Plan?

Deputy H. Miles:

I just need to make it clear that we have requested that information from Island Energy. We do not currently have that. In response to the Crisis Resilience Improvement Plan, it was published at the end of July and it has an action in there on improving crisis communications and creating and implementing both a crisis strategy and a recovery communication strategy. This work is still underway and it is including the involvement of experts in that field.

4.12 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding legislation relating to homelessness (OQ.208/2023)

Will the Minister bring forward legislation to define homelessness and will this legislation include a requirement for the Government to provide housing to those who meet that definition and, if not, why not?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question. I do plan to bring forward legislation to define homelessness. But, as the Deputy is aware, there is already a formal definition that I published last year, just a quick reminder of what that was: “Rooflessness without a shelter of any kind; houselessness with a place to sleep but temporarily in institutions or shelters; living in insecure housing, threatened with exclusion and living in inadequate housing in caravans or illegal campsites, in unfit housing or in extreme overcrowding.” My immediate priorities set out in my Ministerial Plan are strengthening data collection on the scale and nature of homelessness and ensuring that Islanders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are able to access support through the Housing Advice Service, accommodation providers and other agencies. The Government already provides housing to those who report their needs to the Housing Advice Service but I am aware that there are Islanders who are homeless and have not yet asked for help. This includes Islanders who are sofa-surfing or living in inadequate accommodation. I would like to take this opportunity to ask those people to get in touch with the Housing Advice Service. I believe that focusing on these actions lays the groundwork for legislation and will put in a much stronger position to formalise arrangements for homelessness.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sir, he did not answer the second part of the question that was provided with notice, which was whether, along with the statutory definition of homelessness, it would have a requirement for Government to provide housing for those who meet that definition.

The Bailiff:

It is true he did not answer whether there would be a requirement within the legislation. The Minister said that the Government does already provide housing for those that fit within the definition that he has given. Are you able to say if the new law will provide a requirement for it, Minister?

Deputy D. Warr:

Sir, we are already doing, as you correctly said there. What I would say is we have published a definition of homelessness. We have established a Housing Advice Service. We are delivering new support in housing and we are expanding Gateway criteria. I am trying to understand what we are not doing or what the Deputy in addition ...

The Bailiff:

I think answering the questions that have not been asked in those terms it can lead easily to confusion. All that was being asked is that if there is to be a new definition, is there going to be a requirement for Government to provide housing for those who fall within it? I had taken you to say that that is something Government already does in accordance with the definition that you presently have, and the only additional point to that seems to me to be whether or not there is to be a requirement in any new legislative provision.

Deputy D. Warr:

We are going to be publishing the new up-to-date Residential Tenancy Law next year, developing that and within there we will certainly be looking at that particular aspect.

4.12.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

He referred to the Residential Tenancy Law, is that where the statutory definition of homelessness will be found?

Deputy D. Warr:

It is certainly my intention to be the case.

4.13 Deputy L.J. Farnham of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the operating agreement with Condor Ferries (OQ.199/2023)

Will the Minister confirm if the operating agreement with Condor Ferries is still scheduled to expire in 2025 and, if it is, will the Minister update Members on what arrangements are in place to maintain our sea links moving forward?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

I thank the Deputy for his question. The current operating agreement with Condor Ferries was established in 2014. The operating agreement has entered its wind-down phase and is due to expire in March 2025. The future of ferry services remains under evaluation and, due to commercial sensitivity, it would be inappropriate to comment further. Jersey depends upon our sea links and we are working towards an outcome which meets Jersey's expectations under any new arrangement.

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

I have been reading the very recently published *Delivery Framework for Sustainable Economic Development* and I note that the Minister under aviation and maritime says: "As an island, sea connectivity is vital, fundamental to our economy and directly supports our businesses across the economy, including transport, logistics, construction, retail and the visitor economy." Under the heading "Export" he says: "Encouraging and supporting exports are a key pillar towards achieving our economic vision." But of course we also know that 98 per cent of all our goods come into the Island on boats. Ferry links, to my mind, are not important, they are absolutely vital. My question to this Minister is: can he assure the Assembly that the resilience of ferry links is an absolute top priority for him?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

In short, yes, I can assure the Assembly the resilience of our ferry services for all the reasons the Deputy has outlined is a top priority.

4.13.2 The Connétable of Saviour:

Can the Minister confirm if there is an agreement in place with our sister island of Guernsey that both Governments will negotiate with the preferred tenderer and that both Bailiwicks will sign simultaneously for the benefit of both Bailiwicks?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I cannot confirm that. I can confirm that we have been working closely with Guernsey on an operating agreement but the level of commitment and detail that the Connétable has outlined, we have not gone to that level.

4.13.3 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Has the Minister looked into whether the passenger ferry service side of the operating agreement might be regarded as a lost leader and any other way of approaching this, rather than requiring it to be taken on by the operator of the overall ferry service?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Could I ask for a clarification of an understanding of that question, as I did not understand the question?

The Bailiff:

Yes. Do you want to ask it in slightly different terms?

[11:15]

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I shall do, thank you. Given that the current operating agreement requires Condor to provide a service for foot passengers and non-car passengers, as well as to some extent freight and is required to provide this service, has the Minister looked into where the actual profit lies and whether there is any merit in approaching these services differently from the current operating agreement?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do believe I know where the profit lies in the ferry services and I am always open to looking at new ways to deliver all services.

4.13.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Then does the Minister accept that to some extent the free market is not operating fully in this area, and is that acceptable to the Minister?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have my concerns about this. Islanders contact me on a regular basis to explain their concerns about the regularity of passenger services. I am always looking at new ways to structure or deliver services in the Island.

4.13.5 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Given the major strategic importance of our ferry links, not least the freight for which Members will know is well in excess of 90 per cent of what we consume is imported by ferry, does the Minister remain confident that either a new agreement will be in place with the existing or new operation and that we will not be left vulnerable come the expiry of the current agreement in March 2025?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, I absolutely am working to make sure that we have no disruption in the ferry services, however that takes place.

4.14 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Health Services spending and policies in the draft Government Plan (OQ.211/2023)

As the delivery of health services in 2024 will be shaped by the options outlined on page 96 of the draft Government Plan 2024 - 2027, will the Minister assure Members that she will release additional information in time for lodging of amendments to allow for examination of the spending and policies involved in these options and, if not, why not?

Deputy K. Wilson (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

There are no options outlined on page 96 of the Government Plan. The section that the Deputy refers to addresses the sustainability of health funding review, which refers to funding, financing and contracting, which are the matters in scope. Options for a reformed system continue to be in development and have yet to be considered by myself or other Ministers, therefore, I am unable to provide the information requested.

4.14.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The query must be: unable to provide today but will, can, could, may provide in time for the debate on the Government Plan, which is of vital importance to next year and the years afterwards in the short and the long term.

Deputy K. Wilson:

I am working towards a proposition regarding health funding for the Assembly, which will come forward in 2024. I can assure the Deputy that before the lodging of that proposition it would be necessary to engage and to consult with all of those affected and involved, and of course the Assembly will be provided with information in good time to enable a well-informed debate. My task over 2023 has been to conduct the work required, which is continuing to get us to that place. The Health and Social Security Panel has been kept up to date with the work and we are expected to brief them shortly again. I will consider how to share the work and engage on potential options in the early part of next year.

4.15 Deputy C.S. Alves of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding number of non-emergency visits to the Accident and Emergency department (OQ/203/2023)

Will the Minister state the weekly number of non-emergency visits to the Accident and Emergency Department by persons aged under 18 during normal working hours from 1st August to 1st October this year and how these compare to the same time last year?

Deputy K. Wilson (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

During August and September 2023 there was a weekly average of 39 patients under the age of 18 attending A. and E. (Accident and Emergency) during normal working hours who were triaged as non-emergency. This compares to an average of 40 across the same period in 2022 for the same cohorts. Data for that has been taken from 2 different systems, so it may be subject to some differences in recording, and the time period requested includes summer holidays and, therefore, may include figures that involve more visitors to the Island.

4.15.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

There was not much difference between those numbers, does the Minister believe that enough has been done to communicate to members of the public that G.P. (general practitioner) visits are currently free of charge for children under 18?

Deputy K. Wilson:

We continue obviously to encourage people to access these services but we will have a look at that again and I will talk with my colleague, the Minister for Social Security, who has obviously been instrumental in making this happen, and we will see what we can do to improve things if it is still a problem.

4.16 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Children and Education regarding teacher pay within the draft Government Plan (OQ.205/2023)

Would the Minister advise how much is put aside for teacher pay rises within the draft Government Plan 2024 - 2027 and how this relates to the £2.4 million value-for-money savings listed for her department on page 57 of the plan?

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

I thank the Deputy for his question so I can get clarification. The amount put aside for pay rises is for all pay groups. There is not a specific amount allocated to teachers; it is held centrally. We must also respect that any pay awards are negotiated and a confidential process, so I would not want to produce this negotiation. What is important to emphasise, there is no relation to the £2.4 million value-for-money savings from my department, as I have no intention of seeking or making any savings from the staff salaries.

4.16.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given that one union has only taken shorter strike action because they are going to negotiate for the next few years, does the Minister have any concerns that the money may not be available and we may be in the position that we are in now, which is one group accepts, that is all any group is going to get and, consequently, there is no negotiation into the future?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It is really important to emphasise there are 2 parts within the unions' demands, one is it is a specific number percentage added to the pay and the second one is around the workload of the teachers, the professional development and so on. We do have within our department extra funding for professional development. We have started Masters on Island. We are recruiting more staff, supporting teachers, if it is teaching assistants, if it is management staff and if it is teachers. We do have gross to support and this is why a working group sitting together and working around conditions but the pay percentage is very specific.

4.16.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

What representations did the Minister make when forming the Government Plan to ensure that as much as possible was put aside to enable a reasonable and decent pay offer for teachers so that they could have their concerns alleviated and not feel the need to take the industrial action that they are, which of course has an impact on society?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Again, it is important to emphasise that I have gross within the department budget to work with unions, which I am going to meet, to address their conditions which will address some of the concerns. I will leave negotiation and allocations to the States Employment

Board, who must balance competing claims for trade unions during negotiations, and that is the best place to understand the balance needed between awards to different groups. I would like to see that whole workforce within education receive a fair settlement.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sir, with respect, that was not an answer to my question. I asked what representation she had made in the forming of the Government Plan to ensure as much as possible was put aside for pay offers.

The Bailiff:

That was the question, Minister, yes.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

We have a discussion around the Council of Ministers around the pays and it has been very clear that we need to make sure that our workforce are paid fairly. There are several groups and there are 4 unions of the staff within the school, that different unions have a different approach. This is why it is important not just to give one number and everything suits everyone because there are separate negotiations with 4 different unions.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sir, we are still not any closer, that my question is about her representations, not what the unions are doing; it is about what she was involved in in these discussions. Was she an advocate for providing more funding to enable teachers to get a better pay offer or did she take the same line as the States Employment Board and not advocate for that? It is a very specific question about her actions.

The Bailiff:

I have permitted this question to be asked on more than one occasion simply because that is the thrust of the original question, Minister, and it is ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay, fair, I accept, Sir. I have made representations that the offers for all paid groups within education and Children's Services should be offered. We did not discuss specifically each group separately but we have discussed that I need to make sure that I have enough funds and I have enough gross within my department to make various arrangements to support teachers, teaching assistants, head teachers, with their terms and conditions.

4.16.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister whether she would accept the concept of gain-share in order to fund a greater pay award and, if so, how would she ensure that that does not affect the level of service provided, given that the department has been asked to make £2.4 million worth of savings at the same time?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I think the gain-share was offered previously and this is something that we would need to discuss. What I do want to emphasise is that I do not have any savings to any of the front line. I know that the target of £2.4 million is a challenging target but our department has a budget in excess of £200 million; we are talking about 1 per cent. We need to look into our procurement, we need to look into our placement. There is no way, and I would like to commit to the Assembly, that it will be any reduction or from my perspective we will have to see a gross within that front line because this is what we need to do.

The Bailiff:

That ends questions with notice.

5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

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

Can the Minister advise, in light of the concerning rate of road traffic collisions in the Island, what measures are necessary to reduce these incidents and improve road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users? What specific policies, funding allocations and initiatives that are planned to achieve this aim?

Deputy H. Miles (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

I thank the Deputy for her questions. Speed limits are of course a matter for the Minister for Infrastructure and I am aware that Infrastructure and Environment have recently appointed a road safety co-ordinator, who will continue the work already started around an Island-wide speed limit review. I know the Minister for Infrastructure meets regularly with the chief of police and head of roads policing to discuss matters in relation to roads policing. But from a policing perspective, it is important that any speed limit review is based upon safety and speed data, traffic flow and volume, road type and overall design, pedestrian and bicycle demand and public feedback.

[11:30]

We need to be viewing and assessing all of those before any changes are made. In terms of operational policing, the States of Jersey Police, and indeed the Honorary Police, regularly stop vehicles and report them for process offences and when necessary report persons for driving offences when involved with a road traffic collision. All of this work stems from the States of Jersey Police Road Safety Strategy, focusing on the key areas which cause the most harm to all road users. In 2024 we are going to see the implementation of a Stats 19 project across operational policing which will allow officers to collect much more rich data from all accidents. This will allow for 2 key changes to occur. The police will have far greater data to analyse to determine where we should focus our efforts, and this data will also be shared with the Infrastructure and Environment Department and allow them to make infrastructural changes to road networks and layouts to decrease the probability of an accident occurring in the future.

5.1.1 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

The Minister talked about the investigation in relation to incidents. What steps or strategies are planned to ensure that prosecution rates ensure that those responsible for driving offences are held accountable and are more effective? Are there any changes to existing legislation or new laws that the Minister might believe will be necessary to support these efforts?

Deputy H. Miles:

The matter of prosecution lies with either the Centeniers or the Law Officers' Department, so I cannot comment on that. But as I have said, following the Stats 19 process we will have far greater data to analyse where any changes to laws which will promote road safety will be applicable.

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

Given the very positive consequences for the tourism industry of the Minister's decision to allow French day-trippers to travel to Jersey on an identity card, is she considering extending that dispensation so that French nationals wanting to spend, say, a week in Jersey can do so?

Deputy H. Miles:

Thank you for the question. I think all Members will share in my delight at hearing so much of the French language in town this year and with the extension of the *carte d'identité* project has been very successful. The first priority that we have is obviously to maintain the integrity of the border and maintain the integrity of the Common Travel Area. But it is my stated aim, and I have asked officers to look into, extending that scheme for a period of 72 hours to French nationals only. This is

obviously subject to discussion with the U.K. Home Office but given the success of our *carte d'identité* project pilot, I am optimistic that a way can be found to extend this to our nearest neighbours.

5.2.1 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

Is the Minister prepared to be a little more ambitious and go to a week?

Deputy H. Miles:

Officers tell me that I was very over-ambitious when I said, could we please go to 90 days? They have broken me down to 72 hours. I think it is fair to say that we need to look at exactly what is required to be able to control people who come to Jersey for more than 24 hours. In an ideal world would it not be lovely to revert to the pre-Brexit position when people could come to visit Jersey on their *carte d'identité* for as long as they wanted?

5.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

The previous Assembly voted in principle to introduce or to allow for law changes to be made for fixed speed cameras in Jersey. Would the Minister clarify whether that now forms part of her workload, if not, why not and, if so, when can we expect to see the legislation brought back to enable that?

Deputy H. Miles:

I do not want to slope-shoulder this answer but speed enforcement is in the purview of the Minister for Infrastructure. It is not for the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to bring legislation to permit speed cameras.

The Bailiff:

Supplemental question?

Deputy M. Tadier:

If it is not in her remit, Sir, it is difficult to have a supplementary.

The Bailiff:

I could not agree more but, yes. Any other questions?

5.4 Deputy S.G. Luce:

This is a question I have asked previous Ministers for Home Affairs. The Island is small and we have a lot of sea around us and we enjoy a huge number of really good maritime assets when it comes to safety and rescue, and an integral part of that is the inshore rescue craft delivered through the fire and rescue service. Can I just have the Minister's ongoing commitment to continue this service, please?

Deputy H. Miles:

Yes, I echo the Deputy's comments. It is a very important part of our emergency response and I continue to support it.

5.5 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:

Could I ask the Minister if there is any provision in the current Government Plan to reduce financial burden of training and the cost of TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio) radios for the Parish Honorary Police and, if so, could she direct me to where I will find that?

Deputy H. Miles:

I thank the Connétable of Trinity for his question and this is something that we have brought up over the last year. There is no provision in this year's Government Plan for the provision of training on TETRA radios for the Honorary Police. Part of that is being rolled up into the civil contingencies work. About a month ago I met with the Comité des Chefs at the Parish Hall in Trinity and expressed my support for them that Justice and Home Affairs should be doing considerably more to provide them with the necessary training and equipment in order to bolster our emergency response.

5.6 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I know the matter is not as high up the priority list of the Minister as the road safety matters that Deputy Le Hegarat began this session by asking, but constituents, particularly in St. Helier but also around the Parishes, are constantly complaining of the noise caused by vehicles which have had their exhausts tinkered with, particularly noisy motorbikes. These people are simply unable to have a good night's sleep. Is this something which the Minister is asking the States of Jersey Police to monitor in order that these vehicles can be put back the way they should be?

Deputy H. Miles:

That is the first that I have heard that that is a problem and clearly those people and those vehicles are committing construction and use offences. I think it is incumbent on not only the States of Jersey Police but perhaps also the Parish Honorary Police to assist in policing this. It is not something that I have previously raised with the Chief of Police but I am more than happy to do so on behalf of the Connétable.

5.7 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I gather that the community police provision in the Island is severely stretched at the moment and we are down to, I think, 2 for the whole Island. Would the Minister confirm that funding will continue to be provided to provide a satisfactory community police service to the Parishes?

Deputy H. Miles:

I thank the Connétable for his question and I share the concern about the provision of community police officers across the Island. What has happened this year, the States of Jersey Police have been under considerable pressure due to the significant operations that have happened over the last 12 months. As a consequence, some of those community officers have been redeployed. I have an undertaking from the chief police officer that as soon as it is possible those community officers will be redeployed. We have seen a tangible benefit for their presence, both in the reduction of antisocial behaviour incidents and in a reduction of youth at a Parish Hall Inquiry and into the court. It is a concern that I share and share frequently with the chief officer of police.

5.7.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister confirm that there is sufficient funding in the future Government Plan to cover this element of policing?

Deputy H. Miles:

The police are allocated their annual budget and it is down to the chief officer to allocate it accordingly. Had we not have had the major incidents, the community policing units would have continued as normal. I am confident that once those operations work their way through, that normal business should be resumed within existing budgets.

5.8 Deputy A. Howell:

Yes, as a follow on to that, I just wonder if the Minister thinks she has enough in this coming budget for her department.

Deputy H. Miles:

The Minister will say she will never have enough. Around the Council of Ministers' table we all have to be very sensible and we have to prioritise the budgets and prioritise the resources. I am confident and content that I have fought as hard as I can to provide the necessary services throughout the emergency services throughout this Government Plan.

5.8.1 Deputy A. Howell:

I just was concerned because the Cabinet Office seems to have double the amount of Justice and Home Affairs and I just wondered what she felt about that.

Deputy H. Miles:

I think it is important that we understand what the Cabinet Office comprises. The Cabinet Office is not just a Cabinet Office, it comprises Modernisation and Digital, it comprises human resources functions and many others. It is entirely understandable to me why on paper it would appear that the Cabinet Office is getting greater resources than Justice and Home Affairs.

5.9 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

If nobody will take the opportunity, what I would like to ask is: does the Minister think that there are sufficient trained resources to effectively investigate and bring forward prosecutions in relation to serious road traffic collisions? That is about the investigative process.

Deputy H. Miles:

The chief police officer has not brought to my attention that there is a lack of investigation expertise there. I am sure if there was he would have brought that to my attention, and it is something that we could address.

The Bailiff:

Probably time for one more question, Deputy Porée.

5.10 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. of St. Helier South:

This question is with regards to the English exam visa requirements. What facilities are available for individuals who wish to undertake the English language examination required for a skilled work permit?

Deputy H. Miles:

I thank the Deputy for the question and a really interesting one at that. Unfortunately, in Jersey we do not have the facilities for people to undertake the British Council examinations which qualify them sufficiently to access the skilled visas. We used to have a private company doing that but we no longer do. I raised this with my colleague, the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, last week. It is very important now that we are extending our work permits to 3 years with a view that people can take on skilled visas, that we have some sort of facility for those examinations to take place locally. At the moment, people have to go to the United Kingdom to take them because they are controlled tests in a controlled environment delivered by the British Council. A very pertinent question, thank you for asking it.

The Bailiff:

I am afraid that brings the time available for questions to this Minister to an end.

6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Housing and Communities

6.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Minister's report on empty homes, R.151/2023, indicates on the map on page 7 that Corbière Lighthouse has been designated as an empty property. Would the Minister confirm that it is his intention to include the lighthouse in the part of his department's property portfolio for someone who does not mind being marooned by the tide and is good on stairs? **[Laughter]**

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

I thank the Constable for his question. Can I take that away to my officers and just establish exactly why there is a dot on the Corbière lighthouse property, and I will refer to you, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Yes. The answer to that is you are not in a position to answer that question at the moment, is that ...

Deputy D. Warr:

I am not in a position to answer that question at the moment.

6.1.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think that given this, on the clear misunderstanding by the Minister of the Rates Law, would the Minister agree that it is difficult to give the report any credibility?

Deputy D. Warr:

I need to understand from my officers exactly the dot; the dots cover quite a significant area of land. We are making an assumption that this particular dot applies to Corbière Lighthouse but I would like just to check with my officer and I will endeavour to do so maybe before this session is over and communicate that with him. But in terms of the Rates Law, our issue, as we have researched the vacant properties and reported on them, has been that the Rates Law is very disparate around the Island.

[11:45]

It is administered differently by different Parishes and it is also very difficult for us trying to establish the scale of vacant homes in the Island from the information that is currently provided and available to the public. I will be coming back to the Constable and the Connétable of the Comité des Connétables to talk about this further and to see how we can better inform, how we can better surface vacant homes on this Island.

6.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, maybe a more serious one. Staying on the theme of the empty properties, can the Minister explain why he thinks that there is such a discrepancy, first of all, between the number of houses identified in the census, the number of homes that he thinks may be unoccupied and the number that he has identified?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question. It is a very, very good question. I can only assume that on census day if somebody was not in or it appeared empty, that the home was considered vacant and that was recorded as vacant. That is the whole point of the efforts that my team have made to surface this issue. It has taken a huge amount of research in terms of trying to find out exactly the reasons for homes being empty. As a result of that, we have come down to a number of 900. We have ended up having to use utility company data to establish if homes are still in use. But in terms of the numbers, I agree it is quite staggering that we have gone from 4,000 down to 900 apparently.

6.2.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I recall that the original proposition that led to this piece of work also looked for mechanisms to be looked at, which also could include taxes or rates being imposed. Does the Minister agree that there are a whole variety of homes that are not just maybe unoccupied but that are maybe under-occupied? We have seen, for example, Airbnb being cracked down on by his fellow Minister and that where there are homes that are not being properly utilised that there may need to be mechanisms to make sure that where this is a scarcity of homes in the Island, that those that are not being used properly are brought back into residential use.

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question and it is a really good point again. We are talking about this challenge that we face between the moral issue and people's own private property. There is that tension always between what we would like to do and what people feel we can do or what the laws allow us to do. At this moment in time I believe that we need to improve our Rates Law. I think we also need to improve our Wills and Succession Law. I think we also need to look at how we hold the data for property ownership, who owns what on this Island? There is an awful lot of work still to be done in this field. Did that answer your question? Yes, thank you.

6.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Does the Minister have any concerns about the implementation of the energy performance certificate and, if so, what are those concerns?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I think I am afraid I am going to have to pass that over to the Minister for the Environment to answer because it is not an area of my expertise and I do not believe it falls under my remit.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Again, I am sure this is not high up the Minister's priority list but ...

The Bailiff:

Sorry, Constable, I do not want to be rude but I did not call upon you. I sort of nodded in your direction to note that you lit your light.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am sorry, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Did you have a supplementary question to that, Deputy?

6.3.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

With the energy performance certificate, this, potentially, could come at a cost to landlords and this could also, potentially, impact the private rental supply. I was wondering whether the Minister for Housing and Communities did have an opinion on this matter.

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question. One can always have opinions, I do not want to step on the toes of the Minister for the Environment. I understand that he has just advised me that these ideas have been delayed for the moment while they can do more research in this area. I am afraid I cannot explicitly answer that particular question.

6.4 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I was talking to the Minister 10 minutes ago regarding this very subject. My question is: when does the Minister think that intervention should be made regarding empty homes; when the home is empty for 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, a year or possibly longer?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Constable for his question. Therein lies the conundrum we have is: what is our legal definition for a vacant home? Because sometimes homes are empty because people are working away from the Island and they are coming back. There are an awful lot of different reasons to why homes are vacant and it is this work, this really valuable work, that my team are currently carrying out that I believe will unearth some of these issues and enable us to move forward and use our built environment in a much more effective and efficient way.

6.5 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Is the Minister aware of criticism of some new housing developments which have relied on artificial grass for their residents? It is probably not the top of his priority list but I have had complaints about the use of artificial grass, the effect on the environment and the fact that for residents of these units, which are often deprived of natural space and play space, putting artificial grass inside them is not a good plan.

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you, Constable, for your question. I absolutely agree; if we can keep things natural and environmentally friendly I am all for that. But once again I think I would have to defer to the Minister for the Environment in that particular area. But I do agree with the sentiment.

6.5.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Would the Minister take this matter up with Andium to see what the extent is of the use of artificial grass, particularly with these big developments coming up in St. Helier where there is a shortage of natural grass?

Deputy D. Warr?

I certainly will do so.

6.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

At the end of the last term, the Minister's immediate predecessor and his Ministerial colleagues at the time told this Assembly that it was absolutely impossible to squeeze any more affordable homes out of the South Hill development and 15 per cent was the absolute maximum we could afford; no alternative was possible. I read in the paper recently that this Minister says that that amount has now gone up to 25 per cent. How has he done so when his predecessors said it was impossible?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Obviously from a previous States Assembly we have got the 15 per cent as a minimum allocation of affordable housing from institutions like Jersey Development Company. What has happened in this particular instance is that upon revaluation of the land it has become apparent that it is possible to build a greater number of affordable homes. As I say, we start off with a minimum base at 15 per cent, we have now gone up towards 25 per cent. If that can be more it will be, or it will be slightly less, but the most important thing - and I have to applaud Jersey Development Company - is that they have not stopped at the 15 per cent, they have endeavoured to increase that number on their own initiative.

6.6.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes, their own initiative this time but the previous initiative was that it was absolutely impossible. Could the Minister give greater detail on what he means by the revaluation of that that led to this being able to be applied and can he give us his assurances that that same process will be applied to their other developments?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. The change in the amount of affordable accommodation that was available on that site was because the land was originally, I understand, valued at around about £13 million or £14 million. It was revalued at around £4 million or £5 million; it is a Jersey Property Holdings site. That is not a final valuation; that will need to be adjusted upon the site being redeveloped but there is a significant correction in the value of the property.

6.7 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I probably should have asked this question before the one about artificial grass. But does the Minister have any view about the inordinate delay that has been taking place over the determination of the Les Sablons development in Broad Street? This has now been awaited for many, many months. We have a developer willing to create many units of accommodation, as well as other assets for the Island and for the construction industry, which desperately needs the work. Is he doing anything to see if he can speed up this process?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you, Constable, for your question. Like you, I am equally frustrated by the length of time. I am aware that the Minister for the Environment brought forward a report, Mackinnon report, about how we can improve the efficiency of the Planning Department and how we can do things faster. But I am on the side of Keir Starmer, and I am sure Deputy Mézec will appreciate me quoting Keir Starmer, I am on the side of the builders, not the blockers. I want to see more housing.

The Bailiff:

Before I call upon the ... no, I will finish this question period first.

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

Can I ask the Minister who values the land on his behalf? If mysteriously the value of the land at South Hill goes down from £14 million to £4 million, does that coincidentally and helpfully devalue the land at the Kensington Place hospital from, I think, £9 million to £16 million, now going back to approximately £6 million?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Constable for his question. The answer to your question is I simply do not know. I would have to ask the Minister for Infrastructure and his department as to how that revaluation took place. But that is the fact and I cannot change the facts.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

It seems the Minister can change the facts.

The Bailiff:

That is simply an observation. Do you have a supplemental question or not, Connétable? There is probably room for one more question for this Minister.

6.9 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Pressing on with this empty homes report, we are trying to understand the work of the Empty Homes Service, which has made use of the Parish rates list in the library, so identified that the administration

of the rates vary somewhat across each Parish. The report says and it suggests there is lack of consistency as to how the data is presented. It is surprising to read of this lack of consistency as to how data is presented, as the Parishes use the same programme to produce the rates list. Would the Minister outline these inconsistencies identified and say why they have not been drawn to the attention of the Parishes, please?

Deputy D. Warr:

I thank the Constable for his question. They will be brought to your attention and that is because we are a work in progress at this moment in time. At this moment in time we have only checked up on 100 properties of the 230-odd that have been reported to us. We are quietly triaging our way through the main issues that are coming up or the consistent issues that are coming up. We will be bringing that information to the Connétable of the Comité des Connétables on our suggestions. One, for instance, around the rates and you asked a particular question around that different Parishes take different attitudes to rates and the amount they charge for vacant homes. It is written in law how vacant homes should be applied and the numbers of quarters. It is not applied consistently across the Island so there is one example which we have discovered in our investigation but, as I said, we will be working with you in the hope that we can develop a better law, a more consistent law, and which will help everybody in the Island.

The Bailiff:

That brings the time of questions to this Minister to an end. Before I move on, Minister, could I just remind you of the requirement to address all remarks through the Chair? The word “you” when answering another Member should almost never be used and it should be “the Constable asked” or “the Deputy asked” but not “you asked” and “you said”. So if I could just make that reminder because that is within Standing Orders. We now come to questions for the Chief Minister and Deputy Farnham.

7. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

7.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The Chief Minister, together with the Minister for Infrastructure and the Government, have presented a vision for a multisite hospital consisting of Les Quennevais, an acute hospital at Overdale, ambulatory services I believe at Kensington Place, a Health Village at St. Saviour and I believe provision for Samarès Ward at St. Ewolds. Can I ask the Chief Minister, please, how much is that all going to cost and how long will it take to complete?

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

So I think the Deputy, having listened to the answers to his previous question from the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources, will know full well that that price is something that is being worked on and it is something that we are totally committed to delivering. What we said we would do is something that is value for money, affordable and deliverable. Those are our maxims. That is the direction that we have given to our dedicated team who are working on that who are based in the Island and are here to serve the public and, at this point, that is our main thrust. We want to achieve what we have promised to the public, that we will, and those are the best value buildings to deliver what is most important; so those are quality services to Islanders in a critical area.

[12:00]

7.1.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Of course those are very good and laudable answers but they were not the answer to my question which was: does the Chief Minister know how much all of those wonderful things and much needed

things - I do not mean to make light of it - and essential things that we need to hurry up and build, to the nearest £100 million even, are going to cost?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Part of the thrust, as I have just said to the Deputy, is driving down the cost so that we can deliver something that is affordable and meets what is currently a very changing economic situation.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I did not get an answer to my question, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I have to say that the question, Chief Minister, was are you able to, within a very broad amount, say how much that is going to cost? If the answer to that is yes, you can, then you can. If you cannot, then you cannot but that is the question.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

The Deputy knows that my answer there will be no.

7.2 Deputy A. Howell:

Of late, I and other non-Government States Members have frequently been alerted to what is going on by listening to ITV Channel News and BBC News or reading the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* or the *Bailiwick Express*. Please, in future, can the Chief Minister undertake to agree to inform all States Members before the release of information to the media? This will mean that we will be able to support our Islanders who have elected us.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I am disappointed to hear that feedback but I am grateful to the Deputy for raising it. Of course, there is a rule whereby all information is shared with States Members ahead of being communicated to the media, and I am not aware of any instances where that rule has not been observed. It is very important and I will ensure that this is recomunicated to the team, but it is certainly my belief and understanding that they always do observe that rule most carefully.

Deputy A. Howell:

I can provide the Chief Minister with quite a lot of information on this subject and I would be very grateful that it does not happen in the future. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

That does have to be a question, I am afraid. It cannot simply be a mopping up statement.

Deputy A. Howell:

I am so sorry, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Not at all. Deputy Tadier.

7.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Last week, the Chief Minister condemned the attacks by Hamas in Israel in a statement that I know will have resonated with many Islanders but, as this terrible war unfolds, a variety of independent sources in the States appear to be saying that war crimes are being committed on both sides. So, in Israel, Hamas militants have slaughtered civilians who we know have unleashed a barrage of indiscriminate rocket fire and have taken at least 200 people hostage. In Gaza, the Israeli military has levelled entire neighbourhoods and killed thousands of people and ordered a full siege of the

territory, including shutting off access to water and power. Will the Chief Minister condemn acts of violence and harm to civilians and the killing of civilians on both sides where they occur?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think I said also last week that we condemn all terrorist attacks and our thoughts are with the victims and particularly civilians on all sides. It is my understanding that the Minister for International Development is in discussions with the United Nations in order to ensure that we provide support in that region and that it is carefully done so that it favours neither one nor the other side.

7.3.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Could I push the Minister because when she said she condemns all terrorist attacks, of course I think we all stand by her in that, but of course we know on the Israeli side it is not a terrorist attack. It is the official Israeli military which has responded to those attacks and as one Commissioner General of the United Nations ...

The Bailiff:

I think, Deputy, if you could just ask the question entirely succinctly.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is difficult not to contextualise it but I will, Sir. Does the Minister agree with that because it is not simply sufficient to condemn terrorist attacks but attack, all potential war crimes, that are being committed against civilians wherever they occur from terrorist groups or from states' armies?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think we all watched with some horror and dismay as the situation unfolds elsewhere. Of course, it is not within my role to really provide further comment upon that but we pray for the victims on all sides as I have previously said.

7.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Following on from that line of questioning and following on from the evil atrocities committed against civilians in the south of Israel by Hamas, the political leadership of the Israeli state has launched a response which has been condemned by many international human rights organisations and some in Israel itself for being war crimes, including shutting off water and electricity to hospitals. Can the Chief Minister therefore give us her assurances that Jersey's support through the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission for medical aid for Palestinians remains resolute so they can continue providing the lifesaving support for innocent people caught in this crossfire on the front line of that terrible conflict?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

We would of course also certainly condemn war crimes but, as I previously said in my earlier answer, the Minister for International Development is engaging with the United Nations in order to ensure that aid that the Island provides is carefully directed so that it supports people on both sides.

7.4.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

My question was specifically about an organisation which we are already supporting called Medical Aid for Palestinians which has been providing absolutely harrowing commentary about what they are finding on the front line of this, and most recently reported that they had encountered 724 children killed in Gaza in recent days. So I am just asking the Chief Minister to confirm that her support for that particular organisation and the work that it is doing is resolute and will continue.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One of my questions has already been asked.

The Bailiff:

That is all right. We can move on. **[Laughter]**.

7.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I feel a bit put on there. However, could I ask the Chief Minister on a very different tack regards the Public Service Ombudsman, what is the timeline for having that position in place and up and working?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

That work is continuing I believe. We said last time that we are aiming to lodge before the Christmas recess and, obviously, there will be some time for Scrutiny, et cetera, and so that will vary upon its passage through this Assembly.

7.6 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

The Chief Minister has rightly expressed sympathy for all those innocent individuals caught up in the appalling violence in the Middle East but would she perhaps consider expressing her solidarity with the Jewish community in Jersey which has been deeply affected by the attacks upon Jewish people because they were Jewish?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

We did express our solidarity with our local Jewish community last week after the terror attack upon that community in another place, and of course that remains so. However, as we watch the situation unfold, of course our wider thoughts now remain with all people who are innocent victims of this situation.

7.7 Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is now 18 months since the Bridging Island Plan debate in this Assembly where the Assembly of the day rezoned a number of housing sites for development. Those sites are not coming forward for development, from what I can see. The Chief Minister's Minister for Housing and Communities says he is a builder and not a blocker so can I ask the Chief Minister where is the blockage?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I thank the Deputy for the question. This is a matter of some immense frustration to myself, to the Minister for Housing and Communities and I think to the Council of Ministers, because we all know that the issue here is supply. It is well-known that some of those sites are experiencing issues in relation to drains. We are finding ourselves presented with a number of thorny issues that have been for many years set aside and not dealt with, and now we are picking up the situation and trying to find solutions so that we can move forward and deliver the homes that Islanders want and Islanders need. There are delays, it transpires, also with supplementary planning guidance not being as quickly forthcoming as we had anticipated. We urge officers to work as hard as they can to deliver that. I know that they are trying to do so and it continues to be a team effort so that we can see that much needed progress in this important area.

7.7.1 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I thank the Chief Minister for her answer. Given the challenges that she has outlined on some of these sites and the fact that the Bridging Island Plan was only a 4-year plan, does she agree with me that it is immensely important that we redebate the Island Plan again in 2026, as we should be doing?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

That is a message that I hear from the Deputy loud and clear, and I am willing to give that further discussion and debate around the Council of Ministers' table. I am aware that there are alternative views on that point but, however, I myself have seen footnotes appear in the Island Plan that negate the democratic decision of the previous Assembly on a matter that I brought as an amendment in that Island Plan. That frustrates me hugely and it is something that I would like to see resolved once and for all so that we can create homes and units of accommodation around the Island so that people can enjoy a better quality of life. That is something that we are committing to in our economic programme and that is something that each and every Member of the Council of Ministers is committed to, and I am sure every Member of the Assembly will be committed to, and looking at housing is exactly one of the key ways that we can do that.

The Bailiff:

That brings the time available for questions to the Chief Minister to an end and it ends the period for questions without notice. There is nothing under J. We come on to K which is Statements on a Matter of Official Responsibility and there is first a statement from the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the Future Economy Programme.

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

8. The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture will make a statement regarding the Future Economy Programme

8.1 Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

I am pleased to be speaking to the Assembly today as we set out 2 key pieces of work within the Future Economy Programme. The Future Economy Programme is a long-term piece of work which is much bigger than any single strategy, any specific project or any particular Government, so I hope that Members will see today's announcement as significant steps in a programme that will last for years beyond this Government. Much of the western world faces the long-term challenges that come from changing demographics and the subsequent greater demand that they put on public services. The Future Economy Programme is Jersey's way of addressing these challenges. The reality is that our population is ageing. Life expectancy has steadily increased and, by 2040, more Islanders will be enjoying their retirement for longer. This is something to celebrate but it also raises questions about how future Governments will meet the higher costs imposed on public services. We also know that, as our population ages, the percentage of those in work paying taxes and supporting our public services will decrease as a percentage of the total population. Today, we have just over 1.9 working people for every single non-working person. By 2040, that will have fallen to 1.4 working people to every non-working person. Those proportionally fewer workers will be providing the private and public services, including education and healthcare, that everyone in the Island needs and enjoys. The Future Economy Programme identifies the sustainable economic growth we will need to deliver in order to meet the increased demand.

[12:15]

To pay for a larger public services bill, we will need a bigger economy. The good news is that Jersey's economy is strong. It is one of the world's strongest. The not so good news is that growing an economy from an already high place is a difficult task. Over the last 20 years, Jersey's economy has grown by an average of just 0.4 per cent a year. The reason why we struggle to grow is because, even as our population has increased, our productivity has declined and is now 30 per cent lower than it was 20 years ago. Meanwhile, over the same period, the European Union has seen an average productivity growth of 2.1 per cent per year. Had Jersey's productivity grown at this same pace, our

economy would now be £200 million larger. We are actively working towards solving this challenge and have been for some time. Building on the work of the Economic Council and its New Perspectives report, my predecessor Deputy Farnham, then Senator Farnham, continued this process with the publication of the Outline Economy Strategy during the last term, and I am pleased to take forward that vision which guides the Future Economy Programme. The vision is that Jersey should become a consistently high-performing environmentally-sustainable and technologically-advanced small island economy by 2040. By doing this work now, we can maximise the options available to future Governments and to future generations and avoid them being left with hard choices in 2040 and beyond. It is also an exciting time to be championing economy growth with fresh opportunities, emerging sectors and whole new industries arising. We have a real opportunity to create new and exciting careers for Islanders. As I have already said, the Future Economy Programme is bigger than any one Government and it will be up to future Ministers to work to realise our full economic potential. They may well do so by seizing opportunities and championing industries which do not yet exist. Members will have seen that yesterday the Chief Minister gave notice of her intention to update my Ministerial title from Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture to Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. The change is symbolic of what the Future Economy Programme is trying to achieve. Future Ministers will need to maintain the focus on securing Economic Development in a sustainable way. That is to say, an economy that is positioned precisely because it grows in step with our Island's ability to support it, to staff and scale it. The 2 documents we have presented today are just the beginning of this process. The strategy for sustainable economic development sets out the first direction any Government has provided for the Island's economy in a long time. It also describes how this programme is about more than just economic growth and how we will measure the success of our efforts across 5 key themes to build an economy that is resilient, innovative, skilled, fair and international. This is a long-term strategy. We need businesses, Islanders and this Assembly to work towards delivery of the growth that our Island needs and it will also be up to future Governments to identify their own priorities as new opportunities emerge in the years ahead but I hope that, whatever their priorities, future Governments will use these themes to measure their progress towards the shared vision. That is the first document. To begin delivering the change that is needed, we have today also published the delivery framework. That sets out some of the practical steps that are being taken in the short to medium term over the next few years to deliver economic growth. We have identified 3 key ways that we can begin to deliver the economic change needed. Firstly, through the provision of growth enablers. These are designed to unlock entrepreneurial talent and create the right conditions for businesses to thrive to facilitate further growth. We can do this by improving the physical infrastructure used by businesses such as via securing our energy needs and international connectivity. The Minister for the Environment will be speaking shortly about one of the key aspects of this, the harnessing of the significant potential for wind power in our territorial waters, and we can help by ensuring our regulatory environment is fit for purpose and allows businesses to be sufficiently agile to make the most of a first mover advantage in the emerging sectors. Secondly, we want to increase productivity in existing sectors, recognising that any future economic success will be very largely driven by our existing industries. We want to help these sectors thrive. Earlier this year, I commissioned Jersey Business to work with companies and individuals in finding out the hurdles and barriers they currently face. This Barriers to Business report will be published later this year and departments will be working with businesses to ensure that government processes enable rather than frustrate innovation and growth. We will also be bringing forward new strategies for our digital economy and, in 2024, a retail strategy to identify the key opportunities and challenges businesses in these industries face. The third pillar to the delivery framework is our work to support effective public services. This means ensuring Government leads by example spending public money effectively and ensuring Islanders have access to the training and skills they need to succeed. It will involve setting public policy to support a healthy and skilled population enhanced by a sustainable approach to inward migration. This is an ambitious programme and it is one which will need to be taken forward by future Councils of Ministers and future

Governments. The documents we publish today are just the beginning and we will continue to evolve and adapt the programme and work with Islanders, businesses and the Assembly to deliver our collective vision. I look forward to Members' questions.

The Bailiff:

There is now a period of 15 minutes for questions for the Minister on matters contained within or arising out of his statement. Deputy Scott, you had your light on initially.

8.1.1 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I am very supportive of the Minister's ambitions to increase productivity for the reasons that I believe the documents will disclose. One kind of expression that we hear bandied about a lot is the need for diversification. Does the Minister accept that there is a limit to diversification on a small Island in light of economies of scale and will the documents be addressing the way in which resources might be focused more effectively to realise his ambition for optimum economic growth?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I accept that the Island, by virtue of being 9 miles by 5 miles, having a population of 100,000 people and having limited natural resources - but wind has certainly been one of them - has limits. Those limits mean that we can only diversify the economy into certain areas. As I said in the statement, many of those areas we do not know yet, so I do not believe that our economic imagination is limited but certainly our resource base is, and that will always steer us in a certain direction.

8.1.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:

The Minister mentioned the Economic Council which identified certain key themes in its report and I believe was suggesting a G.A.A.P.s (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) analysis to go forward with this work but the work of the Economic Council was taken in-house. Could the Minister please explain the reason for this decision and what work will be done in terms of a G.A.A.P. analysis and providing target figures for growth?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The work of the Economic Council was undertaken in 2020, possibly into 2021, and ended up with a report which the Government of the day welcomed, and is certainly one that I welcomed. So when we say this work has been taken in-house, what we have done is use that report to inform the documents that we are presenting here today.

8.1.3 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister confirm whether he will be able to implement this policy within the existing headcount of his department or will this incur an increase in numbers?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not believe that we are increasing headcount for the delivery of this policy. I am just trying to think if there have been any conversations about the need for more people because of this policy. I do not believe so. I believe the Department for the Economy is almost up to full complement and we are, as a department, not seeking any new vacancies particularly at the moment.

8.1.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will the growth gurus, as he intimated earlier on, come from within the department or will they be contracted in?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

We have a fantastic Department for the Economy and the economy team, which includes the analysis as well as the Future Economy Programme team, is a superb team. At the moment, I understand the

work is being done in-house but where it is necessary or preferable to contract people in, we will do that but, again, at this time, I have no particular knowledge that we are seeking to contract anyone in for that piece of work.

8.1.5 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I share the Minister's enthusiasm for new and exciting ideas to develop our economy. I read very quickly both the documents that have been published this morning and I have to say to the Minister, I do not see any direct or very many direct references to either agriculture and fisheries. I hope he will not dismiss them when it comes to becoming sustainable and when it comes to growing further into the future. I refer specifically to the fishing industry where some growth enablers would help us, I am sure, to increase or maybe double the amount of exports we send. We just need facilities to be provided for our fisherman to use and so my question to the Minister is, while he is looking for new and exciting ideas, I hope he is not forgetting the basics of agriculture and fisheries.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely not. Agriculture and fisheries are very much in these programmes. I contest that they are not mentioned in here because I know they are and we have delivered in the past year the Rural Economy Programme Strategy and the Marine Economy Strategy, both of which set out the future of those industries. I am really pleased that we work closely with both sectors and the leaders of both sectors, and both in the rural economy and the marine economy, we have a regular forum with those industry leaders. We will continue to do that and we will continue to evolve those industries, and that is what I find exciting about this but we will do so in a sustainable manner. I think that is something that everyone from those sectors buys into.

8.1.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I very much welcome the words in this document about lifelong learning and increased productivity, and one of the things that will be essential there is to keep the talent that we have on the Island. Two of the issues are being able to afford to go back into education and the cost of housing so can I ask the Minister to begin with - and I will follow up with my supplementary - does the Minister see that rent controls may well be an essential part of lowering the cost of housing in order that people can stay on the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not know if rent controls are an essential part of that, but I do know that housing and accommodation are an essential part of a thriving future economy, and the key thinking behind the Future Economy Programme is that it is cross-governmental and so housing is a key part of that programme. Delivering that housing, along with careers that might make Islanders see their futures in Jersey, is absolutely vital. That idea that we want young Islanders to see Jersey as a viable future for them, as a viable option for them, underpins this entire piece of work, Sir.

8.1.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Carrying on from that, lifelong learning requires the ability to access. It may mean older demographics will have to return to education. Being creative in this document, can I ask the Minister whether they would consider the use of a universal basic income, which does enable people to return to education at any point during their life and still have, as it suggests, a basic income that they can sustain.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not believe universal basic income has been the subject of discussion with regard to lifelong learning. I do know that Deputy Andrews had this proposition about the Skills Fund, and that Skills Fund is being developed. I continue to push forward my opinion as well, because I completely agree with the Deputy, that we do need a mechanism for funding lifelong learning. I still push forward my

opinion that we need individual learning accounts that are tied to every working individual and enable them to choose their courses and their career choices in the future.

8.1.8 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Three and a half sides of fairly tight-packed text without a single mention anywhere in there of the unions as representatives of their workers and yet all sorts of changes that the workers are going to be going through without their unions. Is the Minister prepared to talk and co-operate with the unions on the Island in order to achieve a proper economic future?

[12:30]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The document talks about employees and it talks about Islanders. That is absolutely necessary, because they are the lifeblood of our economy and our society. How they choose to then organise themselves is entirely up to them. If they choose to organise themselves into unions then I am always willing to talk to anybody and I would certainly talk to them. Previously, I have myself been a union representative and I would always be happy to talk to unions on matters regarding the economy.

8.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier:

The question that arises, I suppose, is it is all well and good to try and grow the economy, and it is questionable whether we will be able to do that, given the many challenges that we face, which are shared in common, not least, with the Crown Dependencies. Could I ask the Minister: what is the point in growing the economy if the gap between the poorest and the richest remains the same and if we, as a Government, do not have any way to access that growth in the economy in terms of increased revenues that pay for the basics of a modern and growing society?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I believe that these documents do talk about inequality and they mention it directly. Inequality is something that concerns this Government, concerns the last Government and will concern future Governments as well. However, we do need to talk about economic growth, because the alternative to economic growth is, quite simply, poverty. If we do not have economic growth in this Island we will see over the next 20 years a decline in living standards. That is not something, I believe, that any Islander wishes to see. We need economic growth and we will continue to address inequality. However, I do not believe there is an option with regard to economic growth, because I do believe the alternative is poverty.

8.1.10 Deputy M. Tadier:

There was a famous quote in another Assembly which said zero per cent of zero is zero and zero per cent of a big zero is an even bigger zero. My question is: if we are growing the economy and we see economic growth which is concentrated on an area of the economy which we do not tax, how does Government benefit from that increase in growth? Fundamentally, what can Government do to make sure that if we see ourselves in any kind of economy, whether it is shrinking, stable or growing, that Government has increasing funds to be able to pay for modern services, which seem to be growing in that direction?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I believe it is the case that any Government, any politician always has taxation at the back of their mind. As the economy changes, as society changes and as employees work in different ways, then it may be the case that discussions about taxation are necessary. We know, for instance, we are going to have to - in a slightly different area - but we are going to have to have conversations about how to tax motor vehicles, given that we are planning to phase out petrol and diesel over time. These are going to have to be live discussions, whether it is for this Government or future Governments. If we

find that the economy is developing in such a way that revenues are not flowing to Treasury as you would expect with that growth then I do not have a problem, and I am sure future Ministers will not have a problem in discussing the issue of taxation in that way.

8.1.11 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

On page 6 of the delivery framework under “Outcomes”, it refers to improved living standards and how everyone will enjoy a better standard of living in 2040. On page 5 of the proposed Government Plan under “Economy and skills” it says: “Implementing a new economic strategy which will help ensure Islanders enjoy the same standard of living in 2040 as they do today.” Could the Minister explain which it is?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

We would like an economy which improves the standard of living for all Islanders, but the bottom line is we do not want to see living standards decline. The absolute barest minimum is that we maintain standards of living, but the ambition and the absolute intention is to improve standards of living.

8.1.12 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Does the Minister accept that the way it is termed in the delivery framework and the Government Plan are inconsistent and would he support bringing in an amendment to the Government Plan to align what it says there with the framework that he has published today?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I would have to speak with the Minister for Treasury and Resources about that, as the Government Plan is primarily his document.

The Bailiff:

There may be time for another quick, Connétable of Grouville.

8.1.13 Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

I have been to a few presentations given by Deputy Millar, the Minister for Social Security. A lot of those documents were underpinned by the basic assumption that we were going through a continued period of net immigration. Has the Minister considered that perhaps we are going through a period of net migration? That is borne out by Statistics Jersey as the moment.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I would have to defer to Statistics Jersey to understand the population and where we are at the moment. One of the key elements that this Government has tried to bring in is better data collection in all areas of our society and our economy. There is no question that data has been poor over the years. Most Governments have not really had an understanding of where the population is. We are now, and there is an element in the Government Plan, trying to provide more funding for the collection of administrative data, which will enable us to give better understanding, a closer to real-time understanding, of where the population is.

The Bailiff:

That draws the time available for questions to this Minister following his statement to an end. We are now 10 minutes, approximately, before the usual time for adjournment. There is another statement to be made by the Minister for the Environment. Then that is followed by a 15-minute period. It is a matter for the Assembly whether we adjourn now or whether we push on.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, can I raise a point of order. I do not know if there are any questions to be asked, but we can extend question time. I am not saying we should; I am just saying we can.

The Bailiff:

That is always open. At the end, after a statement, there are 15 minutes of questions provided by Standing Order with the possibility of extending it, but I had no one else listed to ask a question, so I assumed that that was not necessary, other than for Deputy Scott. It is normally if I have a large number would I mention the additional 15 minutes. Of course, anyone can make a proposition now to extend the matter by 15 minutes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Can I propose that the questioning time be extended then, please, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Is that seconded? It is not seconded, therefore it is deemed withdrawn. Very well, it is a question for Members whether we stand adjourned now until 2.15 p.m. or alternatively push ahead with the next statement. It can either be the statement is read and then questions left for after the adjournment or alternatively that we push on into lunch hour to finish the 15 minutes at least of questions.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

That appears to have general assent. The adjournment is proposed. We stand adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:38]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:17]

The Bailiff:

Before the adjournment, I was asked to review the written answers provided to 3 questions to whether or not they conformed with Standing Order 12(2)(a) of Standing Orders, namely were they directly relevant to the questions posed. I have had the opportunity over the luncheon adjournment to consider 2 of those question and I will consider the third overnight and give, in accordance with Standing Orders, the direction as it appears to me to be correct first thing tomorrow morning. The first that I have considered, however, was that of Deputy Mézec, question 378, which was directed to whether or not there was a register of all units of dwelling accommodation in accordance with Article 16(1) of the Control of Housing and Work Law. I have reviewed the answer. Whereas there is a substantive answer to some parts of the question, it does not in terms address whether such a register, as a single item, exists and is, indeed, maintained in accordance with the law. Therefore, it does not answer the question posed to that material extent. If the answer were to be “yes” then (b) would fall to be answered. If answered “no” then (c) would fall to be answered. It seems to me that that question alone should be susceptible of a clear answer. Accordingly, I direct that a further answer should be provided by 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning to that question. The second question that I have considered is that of Deputy Tadier, question 390, in which the Deputy asks when the Chief Minister anticipates inquiries into the explosion at Haut du Mont and the collision of L’Ecume II would be concluded, and whether or not the full reports and findings would be published and if so, when. It seems to me that an answer to that question does not, of itself, interfere with any investigation or

considerations, given that it simply asks for the Chief Minister's view, without putting any time pressure or restraint upon it. It seems to me that it would be a legitimate answer to say that the responder simply could not say because of the scale and complexity of the investigation. It would be an equally a legitimate answer to say that an answer as to the publication of reports and findings cannot be made, but in any event would, for example, not happen before the law officers have concluded their own considerations and any prosecution should any flow have taken place. Those would be legitimate answers. I am not suggesting they are the correct answers, because it is not for me to answer the question. Those answers might be inferred from the answer provided in the written answer, but I do not see any reason why they cannot be expressly addressed. Accordingly, I direct that a further answer be provided by 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning, dealing specifically with the points raised.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, can I thank you for that ruling? Can I ask also if the Chief Minister thinks she does know when they are likely to be concluded, but can or cannot say for whatever reason, that would also be helpful, Sir?

The Bailiff:

It is entirely open to the Chief Minister to say that she cannot say for the reason set out in the answer, but as that has not been expressly said you are entitled, Deputy, to an express answer to that question. I have had reason over the last few weeks to consider the way questions are asked and the way they are answered in the Assembly. I am proposing to issue some brief guidance to assist those responsible over the course of the next week or 2. I will deal with Deputy Feltham's question tomorrow morning. It raises other considerations that I wish to reflect on. Before we continue with Public Business, there is a statement from the Minister for the Environment with regard to the offshore wind power.

9. The Minister for the Environment will make a statement regarding offshore wind power

9.1 Deputy J. Renouf (The Minister for the Environment):

I am today lodging a proposition on behalf of the Council of Ministers which seeks the support of this Assembly to begin a process to consent the development of a wind farm in Jersey's waters. This is not a new idea. It has been talked about for many years and is heavily trailed in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and Bridging Island Plan. What is new, we believe, is the opportunity to work with credible private investors to secure a development without public subsidy. We have heard today from the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, who has rightly set us all a challenge to adapt our economy to preserve Jersey's unique and special character. I welcome the recognition of these changing realities and the call for bold policy responses. In the development of offshore wind and the creation of a new green energy sector to power our future economy, I believe we have such a powerful and exciting response. The Council of Ministers, after considering the matter, believes it is right to promote and support the development of up to one gigawatt of generating capacity in the southwest of Jersey's waters. The proposition we have lodged today sets out a clear process to ask Islanders and States Members if they agree. I want to explain briefly why I and other Ministers believe this to be such a significant opportunity for Jersey. We know that our waters are well-suited to the most viable forms of offshore wind. As our feasibility study confirms, we enjoy relatively shallow sites and energetic wind conditions. We know that both the capital and operational costs of offshore wind have fallen markedly in recent years, driven by the use of larger turbines, supply chain improvements, and greater investor confidence. We know that Jersey has a strong history of attracting global investment based on the stability of our governance and the quality of our legal and regulatory frameworks. With the support of this Assembly, we seek to harness this opportunity and the benefits it can bring to our Island. These benefits can take many forms. They

included access to locally-generated renewable energy and can provide greater price stability for Islanders at a time when energy markets are volatile. A wind farm can create new income streams to fund our net zero transition and support our public services. Reliable access to renewable power can be a platform on which we build our future economy, attracting new green investment to modernise agriculture, decarbonise our tourism and hospitality sectors, and support the development of data intensive digital products and services. Of course, a wind farm would allow us to lock in for the long-term access to the low carbon energy that we currently enjoy, ensuring no backsliding in the commitments we have made under the Paris Agreement. I want to briefly outline the process we are proposing today, as set out in the Council of Ministers' report and proposition. In addition to this statement, we will this week publish some further background information on a new gov.je webpage. A public engagement phase will launch in the week of 6th November and run for 14 weeks. During this period, Islanders will have the chance to see visual mock-ups of the proposed wind farm; understand the proposals in more detail, including at a series of public meetings; and have their say via a formal consultation questionnaire. Because it is important that we listen closely to Islanders' views, Ministers are proposing that the proposition lodged today should be debated in March, after the close of the public consultation and publication of the findings. We recognise that because we are opening this conversation at an early stage, we do not yet have full answers to many of the questions that will be of most interest. Indeed, many of these questions, what size turbines will be used, which electricity grids will the wind farm connect to, will be answered only when a detailed application for consent is submitted. Ahead of the proposed March debate, we intend to work closely with Scrutiny, to hear and respond to the further questions that we know States Members and Islanders will have, and to publish further information where that is helpful. Following this in-principle phase, and as set out in more detail in today's report, we expect that a competitive process to award an option for lease can be undertaken in 2025, in order to identify the right developer for the project. The chosen developer will then prepare a development consent application over several years, setting out in full and rigorous detail, and through consultation with Islanders and neighbouring jurisdictions, their technical and commercial plans and their environment impact assessment and the steps they will take to mitigate any residual harm to our natural environment. Over this period, Ministers will also continue with their joint fact-finding and close ongoing dialogue with counterparts in the Bailiwick of Guernsey to understand and explore any shared opportunities that might arise. We recognise that a development of this size and scale requires a robust regulatory regime, with the necessary powers to minimise and seek regress for any unintended harm that might arise. That is why our proposition also seeks the support of this Assembly to bring forward in 2024 a new law to provide for the consenting, regulation and safety commissioning of a wind farm and its appropriate infrastructure. The proposals we are setting out today seek support for up to around one gigawatt or 1,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the southwest of Jersey's waters. The development area we are looking at is set out in the report and takes account of wind and seabed conditions and of shipping channels and the protections rightly afforded to the special environment of the Minkies, Les Minquiers. For those who have already seen the Saint-Brieuc Wind Farm, from most viewpoints our wind farm would appear as an extension of the French installation. Generating capacity of this scale is expected to produce around 3,800 gigawatt hours of energy when wind intermittency and transmission losses are accounted for. This is around 6 times Jersey's current electricity demand and around twice our requirement if all the energy needs of our current economy, including transport and home heating, were powered entirely by electricity. This scale of development is recommended because it represents a viable and attractive commercial investment opportunity, with what we believe are likely to be acceptable visual and environmental impacts, and because of the export potential it creates. Exporting clean power helps grow Jersey's economy and, by displacing fossil fuel generation elsewhere, helps meet the global responsibility to get to net zero emissions. I wish to be clear though, even if a wind farm of this scale is built, we will not be entirely reliant on wind power. Our energy system will need to continue to make use of imported electricity to ensure a consistent and stable supply at all times. We should instead see the proposed wind farm and

interconnectors as an opportunity to make a substantial enhancement to our existing electricity system, one that in future may be joined by other investments that further expand and diversify a growing energy export sector. Nothing we are proposing today takes any future opportunities off the table. Indeed, the work to develop the legal and regulatory frameworks for offshore renewables and the investments in grid development will be forward thinking and designed to enable future opportunities such as may one day be presented by tidal barrage technologies as they become more commercially available. We are only at the start of understanding how we might unlock the potential of our marine resources and perhaps in future those of our sister Channel Islands, through the development of a sustainable integrated Island energy system. These are issues I, as I know many forward-thinking Islanders, will be keen to explore in the future.

[14:30]

For now though, we are proposing Jersey should take its first substantial but eminently practical step forward. There are around 19 countries already operating in the offshore wind market. Around 30 more are actively seeking to enter it. While we are confident in the Jersey opportunity, we have no guaranteed right to secure this investment or any intention to fund the development ourselves. We are therefore in a beauty parade, a global beauty parade to seek the most experienced, responsible, far-sighted and community-minded development partners. We know what those partners will ask of us: to set clear timetables and clear rules and to stick to them, and to provide consistent and sustained political leadership. This consistency of political leadership is crucial if we are to present an acceptable investment risk for the billion-plus pounds of funding that will need to be raised. This is not a call for everyone to get in line or demand that Members should agree with me and with the Council of Ministers. Instead it is to recognise that only by surfacing our differences, considering them carefully, and, as so often in this Assembly, by finding workable compromises, can we create the firm and stable foundations that a project of this magnitude requires. We now have a period of time to explore this idea, to challenge each other, and debate the merits. Then, if it is the will of this Assembly to proceed, Jersey can live up to its reputation as a stable and credible investment partner, as recognised today by investors the world over. This is the responsibility we are elected to discharge. In the interests of our future economy and future generations of Islanders, we must do this calmly with clear thinking and to the very best of our abilities. I believe that today we have set out a process that can achieve this. I am happy to take Members questions.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Very well, there is now a period of 15 minutes and the first listed is Deputy Tadier.

9.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister may not be happy to take this question. The Minister talks about a 14-week period of consultation to ask the public what they think, but you only have to get to the third sentence to find out what the economic predication is here. It talks about private investors to secure development without public subsidy. Later on he says no public money will be used. That then begs the question, of course: who owns the wind farm? Who owns the energy from the wind farm? When we have an opportunity here, fundamentally once in a lifetime, to create something that could potentially be entirely state-owned, that the public of Jersey could own, and therefore apart from ongoing costs, have access to free energy in perpetuum, because it is renewal energy, those profits will be going to private companies. Is that something which I have interpreted correctly? Is that something which is fixed in this Minister's mind as being the only way forward?

Deputy J. Renouf:

There is quite a lot in that question. The point about a wind farm is that it offers many different points where we could extract value for the Island. The ownership of the wind farm, we own the

seabed and we would be leasing the seabed to an operator. That is one potential revenue stream for us. The wind farm is proposed as a private investment, because this is how it is done the world over, because the investment required is very, very large, it involves a degree of risk, and the private sector is very good at leveraging and understanding those risks. The benefits to us still flow, in terms of the wind farm cannot proceed without what is called the Power Purchase Agreement. The Power Purchase Agreement sets where the electricity goes and at what price. It is usually quite a complex agreement. However, the ability to control or to influence that is still within our remit, as we consent the project. There are many ways in which we can access value within the project. Taxing, of course, the profits of any private operator would be the other major way in which we did that.

9.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

In order to have a free and open consultation, a more meaningful one, would he include the question about ownership, not just of the seabed, which of course we own, but of the apparatus and therefore the energy that is generated in an unbiased and open way in that consultation?

Deputy J. Renouf:

On the premise that the opportunity of that would clearly be ridiculous, I am happy to say we will be looking at all options and listening to all feedback. The presumption we have to take is what is the most likely thing to deliver the best value for people in Jersey. We have taken the view that this is that route. Of course, alternative views need to be explored and need to be examined. As I said at the end of my statement, we need to test each other and test the statements that are made. I am very happy for those questions to be asked.

9.1.3 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I thank the Minister for his statement. I can assure him that Scrutiny will be heavily and properly involved in this work, not least the decision Deputy Tadier has just said to move ahead without the engagement of public funds, which is a very interesting decision. My question is not about that, it is more about process rather than the detail. Can I ask the Minister who authorised the briefing of the press 4 hours before the States Members on this matter?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I do not have the piece of paper, which has the long list of cascades that went into this, but we tried very hard to make sure that everyone was sold in the right order. I cannot remember, without seeing the list of that cascade, what that order was, so I cannot really comment on that. I am happy to look into it but we did try very, very hard to work through a programme whereby all Members were given the information at the point pretty well where we had it. We were working on these documents over the weekend. So Monday was the earliest we could do it. As I say, we did our best.

9.1.4 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am disappointed with that answer. The media were briefed at 10.30 a.m. yesterday morning, States Members were emailed at 2.30 p.m. yesterday afternoon. As a chair of a Scrutiny, I was asked to give an interview for the media and I had to ask the interviewer what I was answering, because I had no idea what the Minister was going to say today. I found it very embarrassing and I would ask the Minister if he would apologise to States Members for this oversight. It is a standard procedure that States Members are informed before the media.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I find that slightly odd. I spoke to the Deputy over the weekend and informed him in advance. He was fully aware because I told him.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

In response ...

The Bailiff:

No, there is not a toing and froing, it was a question you asked whether the Minister would apologise. The Minister has already indicated that he is not going to apologise because he understands the situation to be different.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I have a supplementary?

The Bailiff:

That was your supplementary, you have already had a supplementary.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I get a further supplementary?

The Bailiff:

I am afraid not, Deputy. There is only one supplementary following a main question at the moment.

9.1.5 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I note that fishermen in the west of England, namely Cornwall, are very upset that there is a planned wind farm in one of their primary fishing grounds. Will the Minister undertake to communicate all future plans with local fishermen to ensure that error is not duplicated here?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, I am very happy to give that reassurance. Indeed, we have already been discussing this through the medium of the marine spatial plan work, which is underway, and the fishing community have been involved in that. I can also say that, when we relatively recently visited Saint-Brieuc to learn more about their wind farm, we learned quite a bit about the engagement that they had with their fishing community, which began with some difficulties, but ended up in a very good place, and I think we can do some good learning from the experience of our French neighbours in terms of making sure that is properly engaged. I would also say that, to a significant degree, the area that we are proposing is mostly accessed currently by the French fleet, and therefore we will need to be involved very much with them as well as with our own fleet.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Luce, I may have slightly misled you, of course you are entitled in questions of this nature to put down for a second question. I will call it once I have exhausted those who have not previously asked a question.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

If you could put me down I would be very grateful and maybe States Members will not ask questions and I can get to it.

9.1.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will say I support this and the best time to do this was effectively 20 years ago. Can I ask the Minister, I am very surprised that there is not even a proportion of public investment being considered in the report. Does the Minister not feel that would give a seat around the table with decisions being made, and I link this to what was said regards price stability. Because what we have seen in other jurisdictions such as the U.K. is even with renewable energy, because of the price instability elsewhere and it becomes merged into one, if a large company takes this over, such as E.D.F. (Électricité de France), and let us not beat around the bush with this, we could be losing that ability to have price stability before we even start if we are not there to negotiate at the time. Could I ask the Minister whether he will consider that because it is a very important point?

Deputy J. Renouf:

So 2 points in response to that. I mean first of all in response to the point about whether 20 years ago was the best time, I do not agree with that; this is the best time. This is a once in a generation opportunity because the markets have moved in favour of this form of generation. In other words, the costs of producing these wind turbines has dropped, the cost of electricity produced from them has dropped, the costs of maintaining them have dropped. So I think we are very fortunate to arrive at the perfect moment for this. In terms of the question of how we deliver benefits to the Island, which is the broader point which is being addressed here. It is not the case that we will have no say over the price of electricity. We are in the lucky position that we have our own electricity market and energy market in Jersey; they are not set up in the way that the U.K.'s energy market is set up. The U.K.'s energy market is set up in such a way that in times of high prices, whatever the form of generation, all forms of generation and generated electricity go up in price. We do not have to follow that model. I very much doubt that we would, following the U.K.'s experience, want to follow that model. So we have a great degree of control over the way in which that electricity is priced through the Power Purchase Agreement, which will be something that we will be negotiating and in control of.

9.1.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

From the J.E.C.'s (Jersey Electricity Company) annual report, it says that we use 630 million units. The Minister has said that we will generate 6 times that at 15 pence per unit. That is a half a billion pounds of turnover per year. Are we not missing an opportunity if we have not got a share of that from day one to return a significant amount of capital return on any investment that we put in, into what is the future of energy?

Deputy J. Renouf:

The reality is that a wind farm has to raise a very large sum of upfront money to spend at the time when the wind farm is being built, so the private investors are set up to do that and the process for doing that is something that is well understood through the capital markets. As I have said, I am happy for that to be a consideration within the consultation phase. Of course we should test all these assumptions. But the working assumption is that we go with what has worked elsewhere, what has been proven elsewhere. Given the difficulties and the capital spends that we have elsewhere in the economy over the next few years, this feels like, at the moment, the most prudent way to proceed.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Most of my question has been asked by my colleagues, so I will defer my question and hopefully Deputy Luce gets around to his.

9.1.8 Deputy M.R. Scott:

The Minister said that he still anticipated that the Island would need to still import energy. I wondered if he could give us some idea of the percentage reduction in imported energy from nuclear sources that he anticipates, as well as give an indication of how he would propose to control prices when we compare to how that is done with the J.E.C.

Deputy J. Renouf:

That is a really difficult question to answer because it depends on so many different things. The calculation here is that wind is ultimately an intermittent electricity supply and therefore at some point you are going to need to import electricity to cover for that. So the question is: do you sign a contract with a supplier of base load electricity for a large amount, which probably gives you more leverage in the market and the ability to buy electricity at that cheaper price, or do you buy less? That is a question that I do not feel qualified to answer and it is one that we would involve the J.E.C. in

because they are the main distributor of electricity in the Island. But the best I can do is give that indication of the kind of calculation that would be going on in making that decision.

[14:45]

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I did not quite hear whether there was any rough idea about the percentage reduction.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I did not think it was about percentage reduction; I thought it was about how much we were going to import compared to now. As I say, it is just impossible to say at the moment because it would depend upon things like, when we sell that electricity, do we get a better price for selling it to France than importing it, how much we import compared to importing here, and so on. It is just a really difficult calculation to make.

9.1.9 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Will the Jersey Electricity Company be invited to apply to lead on this project?

Deputy J. Renouf:

The role of Jersey Electricity - we have obviously been talking about this project with them for some time - I think the future role that they could play is still one that is up for discussion.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Will they be invited to apply to lead it?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I do not think I want to go any further than that. There are a lot of discussions going to go on about the nature of the scheme and therefore what role J.E.C. might play. They will certainly be invited to be involved in some aspects, obviously they have to be because they are potentially going to be taking the electricity. They also have huge expertise in laying cables and so on. But the exact nature of what role we want to invite them to play, it is too early to say.

The Bailiff:

That brings the period of 15 minutes to an end. I have 4 Members wishing to ask questions who have not already asked one, and one who wishes to ask a second question.

Male Speaker:

I propose extending by 15 minutes.

The Bailiff:

Seconded? [**Seconded**] All those in favour of extending by 15 minutes kindly show. Those against? Very well, we will extend by a further 15 minutes.

9.1.10 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given the magnitude of this project and the fact that its cost will exceed anything we have dealt with before, whether planned by global investors or ourselves, will the Minister confirm the sort of expertise that will be used to develop the project, given it is unlikely to be present on the Island because we do not have any experience of it?

Deputy J. Renouf:

We are already tapping into expertise beyond the Island and the initial work that we are doing involves talking to people who have done things like this before. Clearly that ability to tap that expertise is going to be vital. I do not have a name or names for you yet. But I will be very much

keeping the Assembly informed of that kind of ongoing work. It is worth saying that no one is more aware than me of the need to bring this Assembly with us on this. It is absolutely essential, this project, because political risk is probably the biggest single risk that sits around these kind of projects in investors' minds. If we are going to go down that route then the ability to demonstrate good governance and support for the project is going to be very, very important. So I will be doing everything I can to ensure that we bring forward the kind of advice with which Members in this Assembly can feel confident.

9.1.11 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

My point really was in terms of the confidence the Minister mentions: how will he protect the project against elections, which will happen every 4 years, and risk disrupting it?

Deputy J. Renouf:

By the method I just explained really. The single biggest thing an investor will want to know is that there is sufficient support within the Island that an electoral cycle is not a moment where you can say that threshold has definitely been passed. You cannot put a figure on it, it is something that people feel and will sense and the quality of the debate and the feedback and the consultations that we have will all feed into that sort of level of confidence that people will have. So it is an ongoing process. I do not think you can ever offer 100 per cent guarantees. That is why there is always a risk premium of some sort on private investment. But we can do the very best we can to try to provide that stable environment.

9.1.12 Deputy A. Howell:

Before the election, a couple of us went to the Jersey Electricity Company and they at that time suggested having this wind farm, and I am just surprised and I wonder if the Minister may explain why it is suddenly now Government and possibly the J.E.C. rather than the other way around, because they intimated that they were hoping to undertake this project and to produce renewable energy and to possibly export to France and then also come back to Jersey and have a loop. I wondered why the balance has changed.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am not sure it has changed that much. I was not obviously privy to those conversations. I know that Jersey Electricity have supported the idea of a wind farm for some time, back to 2015 I believe. It has always been the case that the role of J.E.C. would be something that would be discussed and, as I say, they will be involved. The question is in what way and at what level. That is something that we will need to have ongoing discussions with them and with other potential partners in the project and so on. So I am not sure there has been that much of a change. But the one key thing that I would say that has made this the moment, compared to in the past, is the falling costs of producing electricity from wind turbines. That in turn has been driven by the increased efficiencies of those wind turbines as the industry has scaled up globally.

9.1.13 Deputy A. Howell:

I am just asking should Jersey Electricity be leading this rather than Government? They have the expertise.

Deputy J. Renouf:

The sense in which Government has to lead this is that we provide the consenting framework, and there is no getting away from that. So that is the sense in which unless Government is behind this it is not going to happen. We control the seabed, the licensing of the seabed, and we are also the regulatory authority for any potential wind farm. So that has always been the case and would have been the case at whatever stage Jersey Electricity may have expressed an interest in it. So, in that

sense, we have to lead, if you like, but the investments and the partners who take part in it and so on, those people will lead in their respective areas of expertise.

9.1.14 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Will the Minister ensure that there will be a full environmental impact assessment of any changes to biodiversity in the area?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, absolutely. The environmental impact assessment is a key part of any wind farm application. It typically takes 2 years. There needs to be 2 years of data for things like migratory birds, mammals, sea mammals and so on, to understand what is at risk, what is the potential threat to wildlife and the marine environment generally. It also has to, of course, consider the disturbance to the marine environment during the construction phase and all the way through to decommissioning. So that is all a part of the environmental impact assessment. So the process, if you like the benchmarks that will need to be hit in that time through the environmental impact assessment, will be defined in the law, which we will be debating ... if we all go ahead with this, we will be debating in this Assembly in due course. So everything will be entirely transparent and open. But, yes, I remain entirely committed to a full environmental impact assessment. We will incidentally be helped in a small way by the fact that a wind farm has already been built in our adjacent waters and therefore an environmental impact assessment of that magnitude was conducted in waters very, very similar to our own. So we have some baseline data that will be helpful. But that does not mean we do not have to do the whole thing properly ourselves.

9.1.15 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am sure the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, but did I not see in the papers about a month ago that the latest round of bids for wind farms in the U.K. had met with a resounding zero bids. Are we not joining this race at the wrong time?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I think there is a danger that we see this through too parochial a vision. Yes, one auction in the U.K. failed for reasons which were well-telegraphed in advance. However, if you look south, the wind farm industry is increasing dramatically and France has committed to, I think, 30 gigawatts of wind over the next 40-odd years. Certainly a huge increase. If you look further afield, the global offshore wind farm industry is booming. There are of course going to be supply chain issues, there are going to be hiccoughs along the way. The global context is one in which this is being promoted at a tremendous rate because of decarbonisation on the one hand and global destabilisation of hydrocarbon supply, the Ukraine war, Middle East, and so on, on the other.

9.1.16 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The U.K. might well privatise and rely on the private companies for most of what it does. But I think the French, I think you will find, take more participation in the ownership of these sort of facilities. Is it not the case that they might take a different model to ours?

Deputy J. Renouf:

The French wind farm that is being built is being built by a private construction consortium, Spanish-led consortium. Ultimately their electricity industry is owned by the Government, but then so is ours; partly owned anyway.

9.1.17 The Connétable of Grouville:

My question relates to the backup supply you are intending to bring in or enhance, shall I say. My poor dear Parish has been dug up quite a few times to accommodate the incoming cables, as are

perhaps my neighbour behind me in St. Martin would be, and/or the Parish of St. Clement. Is there any anticipation within this to bring in more cables to give us that extra supply?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, I would say there will be potentially new cables, depending on the routes and options that are chosen for the production of that electricity. Our starting assumption is that the electricity would be exported south to France and to Jersey. But those assumptions will need to be tested. We do not know for sure that they are economically viable. I would note that electricity coming from southwest of the Island will probably not be routed through Grouville when it comes ashore. But of course another aspect of this, and something which is happening anyway entirely independently of the wind farm development, is Jersey Electricity will be looking to upgrade the infrastructure they already have in terms of the interconnectors, so it is entirely possible that, as part of that, it may be that either the replacement or the addition of existing cables, or the addition of cables, do affect the Parish.

9.1.18 The Connétable of Grouville:

The other question I had relates to the Minquiers Reef, which is part of my Parish. I just wanted to know if we have absolute guarantees that any impacts of that particular reef be taken very closely into account.

Deputy J. Renouf:

We have deliberately designed the area to the southwest of the Island to avoid the Minquiers Ramsar site, and it would never be my intention or desire or have any interest in straying into those waters. There is no need. We have identified a site that is big enough to accommodate up to around one gigawatt of electricity without needing to stray into that area and while still protecting the main marine sea channels and navigation channels that head north/south past the west coast of the Island.

9.1.19 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

While fully supportive of the further provision of clean energy, why has the Minister chosen wind power? Wind power has many advantages, many environmental disadvantages as well, for example they create noise, they are unsightly, sea bed vibrations, they are responsible for the death of thousands of seabirds every year. Whereas tidal energy is more powerful than wind energy, more efficient, producing exponentially more energy per turbine diameter. Tidal power is also perhaps more predictable with our tidal movements. Why wind?

Deputy J. Renouf:

The answer to that is quite simple, which is it is to do with economics. The tidal power options that are available at the moment are highly subsidy dependent. In other words, they only generate electricity that can be sold to the public at a decent rate with the benefit of a big subsidy, whereas wind is not. The great thing that has happened with wind over the last 5 to 10 years is the price of electricity generated has become subsidy-free and is competitive. So that is the simple reason. But I would say that we have not ruled out the potential for tidal power.

[15:00]

Nothing in what we are doing rules out the potential for future generation. Indeed, the Future Economy Programme makes very clear that we need to be thinking creatively and ambitiously about the sort of things that we might do in the green energy space. It may not be that we have to end with a one-gigawatt wind farm. There are other potential options there. I would just say, in terms of the environmental impacts of wind turbines, that I think they are sometimes exaggerated and certainly the information that we have from the French wind farm is that the French fishers are pleased with the way it has turned out because it has generated, if anything, additional marine resource each winter by being effectively a mini reef.

9.1.20 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I apologise to States Members again by going back to process and not asking important questions about this important project. But the Minister and his question, the answer to my supplementary question, mentioned speaking to me on Sunday and I can confirm to Members he and I had an email exchange on Sunday, early afternoon, where he emailed me to say that he would be making a statement today. But in response I did highlight to him that the media were after me and that they were expecting a briefing ...

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, this has to be a question.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can the Minister, given that he knew that the media were having a briefing, why the Minister did not act on that first thing on Monday morning?

Deputy J. Renouf:

It seems to me that the media knew in advance of the media briefing anyway, from the description that the Deputy gave. I think I made that point in my response to him. I did not know how the media had got hold of that information. But, nevertheless, they did. I will look again at that and, it is clear to me that it should have gone first to Members, and for that I apologise.

The Bailiff:

That brings the time available for the second section of questions to this Minister to an end and we therefore move on to Public Business.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

10. Reporting of Headcount and Vacancies (P.69/2023) - as amended (P.69/2023 Amd.(2))

The Bailiff:

The first item of Public Business is the Reporting of Headcount and Vacancies, P.69, lodged by Deputy Andrews. The main respondent is the chair of the States Employment Board and the Minister for Treasury and Resources. There are 2 amendments lodged to the proposition, one by the Chief Minister and one by Deputy Andrews himself. Deputy, are you accepting the amendment of the Chief Minister and would you like the proposition read as amended by your own amendment and that amendment?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Please may the proposition be read with the second amendment; that is the Council of Ministers amendment only.

The Bailiff:

The Council of Ministers amendment. Then that is to be read with the Council of Ministers amendment and your own amendment falls away then, very well. Are Members content to take the proposition as amended? I should also say I think you are going to propose only paragraph (a) of the proposition, are you not, Deputy Andrews?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, indeed.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. In which case, with those questions answered, I ask the Greffier to read paragraph (a) of the proposition as amended.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion (a) to request the States Employment Board to develop and publish a release schedule for public sector staffing statistics and to commence publications under the schedule in line with the Code of Practice on Statistics before June 2024, inclusive of (i) the headcount of each government and non-Ministerial department, to include a breakdown of full-time, part-time, fixed-term, zero-hour, and contracted staff; (ii) the number of vacancies in each government department; and (iii) staff turnover in each government department.

10.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I am very pleased to be bringing forward this proposition before the Assembly. As Members will be aware, I have brought forward 2 previous propositions in relation to salary band reporting and the second proposition was in relation to gender pay reporting across every single government department. I look to continue that then with this third proposition that is asking for the publication of additional data in relation to the different types of contracted workers, full-time, part-time, zero-hour workers, fixed-term, and contracted workers. That is in addition to vacancies being reported across different government departments and staff turnover. The reason for this is to ensure that the Government is publishing transparent information, information that I believe will be of value to taxpayers who, after all, are providing tax revenues that are funding the public sector. It is only fair that we are increasing the amount of data that is made available for members of the public. This is going to also be a good opportunity for chief officers within all of those departments to have more data available to them so they can communicate more about some of the problems that all of those chief officers are encountering. Of course we are at the moment dealing with a very tight labour market and there are certain departments, for instance, if we are looking at Infrastructure and Health, who are seeing a high level of vacancy rates. So it is looking at how the Chief Executive Leadership Team that meets once a month can find a solution to try to best address that. This proposition, as amended, is going to provide the public with more intricate detail and the Council of Ministers have been on the right track in terms of the amendment they have brought forward in line with what the Government of the U.K. have been doing in terms of looking at the age, gender profile, and also the lengthy of service of public servants as well. Because this is allowing us to have a better understanding of our public sector and also an understanding of the public sector workforce and their well-being as well. So I look forward to hearing from fellow Members and I propose the proposition.

The Bailiff:

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

10.1.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Simply to say that we welcome the process that has got us to this point where the Assembly can, I hope, support this amended proposition. We respect the intentions behind it.

10.1.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am just looking at the proposition yet again; we had 3 parts we prepared for and 2 of them have gone. I am not entirely sure what it does that has not already been done: "Commence publications under the schedule in line with the Code of Practice of Statistics before 2024." The interesting parts were part (b) because we were talking about arm's-length organisations and we would get more insight into arm's-length organisations. I am very concerned that what we have is a process of highlighting, I will have to be careful how I put this I suppose, I am thinking very carefully so that I am parliamentary effectively.

The Bailiff:

Take your time, Deputy.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you. [Laughter] I just feel like we have been here so many times where we have a proposition, it is amended by Government, and Government amends it to effectively make it do something it is already doing, and then we sit here and we all praise ourselves about what we are doing and nothing has really changed. We get this pretence that the public are getting some sort of insight into something that is going on when it is not. There seems to be an underlying issue here of total constant criticism of our public sector. I am tired of it. I am tired of it because we are reliant upon our public sector and it is about time we stopped demonising people who work in our public services, throughout our public services, and I will certainly have more to say in the next proposition that is going to come to us. Demonising our public services for some sort of strange underlying principle, which I simply do not understand. My question is how long is this going to take? Will we get to the utterly ridiculous situation of employing somebody to do something to look at the headcount and how many people are employed within a department? What is really clever about this, and I always get the phrase “gaslighting” wrong, because I do not know if I really understand it because it is such a wide-ranging thing. It is as if, if you do not support this, then you do not want anyone to know what is going on in Government, who is employed. That is simply not the case. But what are we doing? If I could get my screen back up because it recognises my face. It confuses me sometimes with Brad Pitt, but we will not go into that: “The headcount of each government and non-Ministerial department to include breakdown of full-time, part-time, fixed-term, zero-hour, and contracted staff.” So what are we going to do with the data? I have the same issue with this data on gender employment. We will get some data, that is great, but what are we doing with it? What do you want to do with it? I would ask the Deputy: what do you want to do with this?

The Bailiff:

You would ask the Deputy what does the Deputy want to do with this?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry. I would ask the Deputy what the Deputy would like to do with this data. Because what we seem to have is a theme and the theme is an attack on our public services. Too frequently, it is too easy just to be a Facebook warrior and criticise people who are turning up day in, day out, to provide a service on this Island for people that we are reliant upon. Some of those services are not particularly fashionable. I will talk about them in the next one, which I also diametrically oppose. But I can vote for this, we can vote for this, we discussed it. It was a very difficult discussion in our party vote because we were all trying to find out what on earth it was about and what on earth it is going to do. When you get to a stage where you say: “Well we can support it because it does not do anything”, that is an extremely worrying thing for this Assembly. It is being repeated again and again and again. So I just want to ask the question: what is the underlying principle behind this? How long is it going to take to do it? What is the purpose of that? Is somebody going to be employed to do it? Before we start voting for things. Because now we have dropped the parts on arm’s-length companies, which is an interesting point, because we seem to have very little information on those. I would like to also ask the Deputy why those 2 parts were dropped. If it is just simply because Government would not agree with it, then I would say sometimes we come to this Assembly and we fight for what we believe in and we lose. I have done that a number of times but we still have to carry on with the principle of what we started with. So I just needed to get that off my chest. Whether I support this or not, it does not really matter probably; we will see.

10.1.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I just want to say as well, Deputy Ward, if his computer really is mistaking him for Brad Pitt, then he should take it to see an I.T. technician because I believe it may have a virus. [Laughter]

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is harsh but fair.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have a great deal of sympathy with everything that Deputy Ward just said and there is also a danger, yes, let us not even implicitly be seen to be criticising public service or the public sector as a whole. We can criticise particular lines of work where they are not functioning properly, as we know in some areas they are not. But in many areas, most areas, our people are doing a great job. I also want to warn against the danger we have when talking about things like headcount of just looking at numbers and just believing they tell a story. When the numbers really do not tell much of a story, if any story, a lot of the time. It is not how many people are doing the job; it is, is the job being done, is it being done correctly and in an efficient manner? You cannot tell that, States Members cannot tell that, from a spreadsheet. So Deputy Ward moved quite a long way when I first stood up. It was to respond to his comments in a different way. But then as he went on I realised, no, he is saying most of the things I agree with. So I do agree with Deputy Ward. But I thank Deputy Andrews for the proposition 10.1.4 and I will be supporting it.

10.1.4 Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement:

I am going to follow just because I think the track taken by Deputy Rob Ward and Deputy Morel is where my mind is. Ministers and Assistant Ministers who have been in conversations about forthcoming business will know I have taken frustration with some propositions that seem to ask for things without a purpose or assessing the outcome. I am the first person, having had a career in data and data-driven analysis, to know the value of data. But also know the old phrase, and I apologise for the finance industry, that certain industries, it is to know the price of everything and the value of nothing. I fear with some of this data that is what we are going after. I also echo the fear about the bureaucratic nature. I am committed in my work to ensure that we publish far more data, that we do live up to the principles of transparency and openness that have been discussed today earlier in questions. But I do fear that this ad hoc, piecemeal approach to reporting does not necessarily lend itself to evidence-based decision-making.

[15:15]

To give a small example, the proposition as originally prescribed told us how frequently to publish data and what specific data to publish. That might now be the best data to generate the best outcomes for the public service and ultimately for the Island. The one revisiting us today that is getting me slightly is staff turnover in each government department. Speaking for Modernisation and Digital, hiring I.T. and technical skills is difficult. We have been really lucky, or we are seeing the change in economic climate, that we are seeing a greater number of people applying for roles. The leadership team were telling me that we have recently made some appointments and we have had some fantastic candidates apply for roles. I dare say for the other Ministers in the room that many of those are from people internally who are seeing their skillsets, seeing where they want to develop. That will inherently generate staff turnover in a department and, on the face of it, that statistic could be poor. But if we are going to look at how the public sector invests in staff who wish to enter and wish to leave, the story behind each person within that is very different. We know still that we have had fantastic members of staff in other departments leave without being given exit interviews. That is a far-more valuable piece of information I think we should be collecting than necessarily a raw staff turnover figure. So I struggle with this proposition and I think we need to be very careful in piecemeal asking for information without thinking about how we are going to use it and the value of that. But I do not think it is beyond any Minister to say we want to be sharing data more broadly, more openly, to allow citizens to make better decisions and ultimately to operate the Island better.

The Bailiff:

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

10.1.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

With the Council of Ministers already bringing forward proposals as we see, in line with what the U.K. Government are publishing, the proposition that I have brought forward myself in its original form is providing additional information to what would already be collected. This will allow the Government to be in a better position in terms of the collection of data. Because there are some trends, for instance when we are looking at agency staff and the premiums that they are being paid, we will not know that across every single government department if we do not publish this data. That was one of the reasons why I decided to bring forward this proposition. Because often data will be published and it will be the Government as a whole, we are seeing the breakdown of headcount or vacancies or staff turnover, without looking at the department itself. What we need to be doing moving forward is appraising more intricately every single government department, and that is going to improve the transparency and accountability. Not only of chief executive officers, but also senior civil servants and Ministers too. I know Deputy Ward was predicating almost as if I was in opposition to the public sector and public sector workers, and that is not the case. I do feel, however, there is a duty for non-Executive Members to do what they feel is right. If, say, the Executive have not brought forward any proposals, then if I am of a belief that this proposition is the right thing to do then I should bring it before the Assembly and the Assembly will have the opportunity to debate the proposition. That is exactly what I have done with 2 propositions that I have lodged for this debate, and if the Assembly decides to maybe reject or accept, then that is the prerogative of each and every single Member of this Assembly. With this information, it will of course be published, we would hope, in time before June next year. Of course there may be concerns about where are the resources for this. The resources are within existing budgets. There is the People and Resources Team, who I have had a couple of conversations with, and they are already bringing forward proposals as outlined in the amendment. That will be collated through people who are already employed. So there are no concerns about where are we going to find additional budget to then fund more people to then undertake all of this work. So that is something that Members can be reassured by. But one of the things that I have probably alluded to on a number of occasions is, not just about reporting data, but it is about what can we do potentially with it longer term. When we are looking at the level of inputs in terms of the different types of contracted workers, there will be an opportunity for chief executive officers to reappraise the situation. If, for instance, there is a problem where we are seeing recurring overspends in government departments, maybe because there are agency staff who are being employed, how can we then best address that? It is about having a broad conversation among the Chief Executive Leadership Team because at the moment we have a mentality where departments at times can be fairly siloed. What we need to be doing is we need to be sharing information. We need our leaders within each government department to be communicating with one another to discuss some of the problems that they encounter and to come up with solutions as to how we can best resolve those problems as well. So I have done enough talking. Members are aware of the purpose and the intent of this proposition and I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy, the appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on P.69 as amended, 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. The proposition has been adopted: 32 votes pour, 12 votes contre, no abstentions.

POUR: 32		CONTRE: 12		ABSTAIN: 0
Connétable of St. John		Connétable of St. Brelade		

Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of Grouville		Connétable of St. Peter		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Connétable of St. Martin		
Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy C.F. Labey		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy M. Tadier		Deputy H.M. Miles		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy K.F. Morel		Deputy A. Howell		
Deputy S.M. Ahier		Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
Deputy R.J. Ward		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy I. Gardiner				
Deputy L.J Farnham				
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 M.R. Scott				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy R.S. Kovacs				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L.K.F Stephenson				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting contre: the Connétables of St. Brelade, Trinity, St. Peter, St. Martin, and Deputies Labey, Luce, Le Hegarat, Miles, Rose Binet, Howell, Tom Binet, and Alex Curtis.

11. Audit of Government Department Vacancies (P.73/2023)

The Bailiff:

The next item is Audit of Government Department Vacancies, P.73, lodged by Deputy Andrews. The main responder is the Chief Minister and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion to request the Chief Minister (a) to instruct all government departments to audit their current job vacancies and, by June 2024, identify those vacancies that can be removed as unnecessary to the functioning of departments, and the payroll reductions that would result from the removal of vacancies identified; and (b) to report back to the Assembly, by July 2024, on the payroll expenditure savings across all government departments resulting from this audit.

11.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

It concerns me seeing the quantitative data in relation to the Government and the expansion of the Government's size. This has been throughout the tenure of the Le Fondré Government and we have seen an exponential growth in headcount, and there has not been much justification for it. It seems rather peculiar because the Island has seen its population drop from 107,000 people to about 103,000. However, the Government and the public sector itself has increased by about 1,015 employees during that time. I find that rather difficult to try to justify. However, some Members may choose to do so in opposition to my speech. But, looking at that figure, an additional 1,015 employees over a 4-year period, excluded from that figure is zero-hour contracted workers, contracted staff, so payroll expenditure is much higher. In response to one of my questions that I asked, and it was a written question, payroll expenditure totalled about £455 million. That is an £87 million increase over a 4-year period. Again, that is an exponential increase. What happens? We see vacancies increase too. The figure stood at about 649, I believe. Now in response to a second question I asked some months later, the number of vacancies increased to about 900-plus. What we need to account for here is, imagine if those vacancies are filled, imagine the amount of payroll expenditure that would be incurred. It would be great. What we need to be listening to are the members of the public who elected us into office. We need to hear what they have to say. Because it has been made very, very clear to me there are clear concerns about the size of the public sector and the cost as well. I am all for valuing staff, however we also have to recognise the impact that the Government's recruitment is having on the private sector as well. Because there are many businesses within the private sector who are seeking additional recruitment and they cannot secure people because the Government is the main competitor. Because we have such a tight labour market, what we will often find is the Government is paying premiums for staff, which includes accountants, for instance, because accountants are in short supply. We are competing with financial service businesses for such accountants and we are paying over the standard rate that would often be applied had we not been in the position of having a tight labour market. The data is available for all Members to see in the proposition. If Members take a look at the salary band information before them, they can see public servants who were employed, who have a salary range between £60,000 to £80,000, increased by about £425,000 in that area. You also need to look at those who are employed who received a salary between £80,000 and £100,000. Again, that increased by about £79,000. But if Members pay special attention between those who received a salary between £20,000 and £60,000, there was a decrease. So if we are looking at the public sector and if we are looking at, say, for instance, an increase in payroll expenditure, often we will be looking at the whole structure, seeing gradual increases. But, no, that is not the case. What we are seeing is with the public sector it is becoming more top heavy. There are more people being employed. What about the workers? What about the people who keep our front line services going day in and day out? Their numbers have been fairly stable. In fact in some cases they have reduced. This is why I believe the appropriate thing is for the Government to have a re-provision of budgets to invest in social expenditure such as healthcare and education. We just need to look at those 2 budgets in relation to G.D.P. (gross domestic product) and our budgets are often quite low. If we are looking at education, for instance, at one point it was just hovering over about 2 per cent of G.D.P. In the last 3 to 4 years it has been increasing to near about 3 per cent. When we are looking at health it is over about 4 per cent now. But this is where we can be looking at the public sector and we can be looking at how headcount is increasing and nobody is really being

accountable for it. Because, at the moment, it is down to the public sector to generate all of these vacancies. Vacancies that I have to question: are they really necessary? Because 5 or 6 years ago we had a fairly moderate-sized public sector of perhaps 7,000 people and we have seen our population slightly reduce and somehow our public sector has increased by over 1,000 employees. Also, we need to think about this: there are several workers who have been excluded from those figures and that for me is quite alarming and something has to be done about it. As a non-Executive Member, it is my duty to bring forward this proposition whereby we can have an audit of vacancies to identify those vacancies and to really question the purpose of those job roles. Do they really have to be advertised? Do they really have to be filled? Also, we are going to take away opportunities from the private sector to fill the vacancies that they have as well. There has to come a point in time where we say enough is enough. We have to control the growth of the public sector because it is spiralling out of control. We just need to look at the Government Plan, an additional £47.5 million in growth bids. That is going towards additional expenditure, both in payroll and non-payroll expenditure.

[15:30]

There has to be a point where we say enough is enough because we have been depleting our reserves. You just need to look at the Stabilisation Fund, the value of which is now under £1 million, and the reprovision of such budgets could allow the Stabilisation Fund to be increased in value. Instead though, as it has been mentioned explicitly within the Government Plan, we are going to wait until 31st December 2024 before a decision will be taken where up to a maximum of £25 million could be transferred to the Stabilisation Fund. That is where underspends or additional income that the Government will generate will be transferred to. When, in fact, what has already been in place with all of these vacancies, if those vacancies are identified, the purpose of those vacancies questioned and the intent of which those vacancies potentially can be reduced, then such monies should be applied either to the Stabilisation Fund or it should be repurposed for investment in our front line services. So I move the proposition. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Is the proposition seconded? [**Seconded**] The proposition is seconded, yes.

11.1.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Every organisation requires a grip on their human resources, their vacancies, and their plans for future workforce. Vacancy management is a crucial element in managing any workforce, including public-sector efficiency and costs. If you spoke to officers in People and Corporate Services, they will confirm that I frequently say what gets measured gets done. This States Employment Board looks at a dashboard at each of its meetings. I have no issue with the principle of the proposition. We are all aware of the increase in the size of the public sector in recent years and that the rate of this increase cannot continue indefinitely. However, there are times when we do need additional posts. For example, I confirmed this morning we are currently looking at a teacher's workload. I have no doubt that we will end up employing more people if we are going to do anything to reduce that workload. The States Employment Board recently approved additional front line resource for Fire, Ambulance, C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills), and H.C.S (Health and Community Services). All much-needed positions for us to be able to provide and to continue to provide necessary services. We are also looking to convert people from zero-hours to annualised contracts to give the individual, our employee, some surety over their earnings and also to give us, the employer, surety that we are going to cover those jobs. That will increase the number of people that we employ but we will be employing them, in my opinion, in a more-efficient manner. Within People and Corporate Services, there is some excellent work being undertaken on strategic workforce planning. Looking at the requirements, future requirements, taking into account our demographic, and if you look at our demographic in our employees it is probably more frightening than the Island's demographic. We have to try to encourage young people to come and work for us and stay working

for us. So part of this work includes career progression, something we should celebrate and not worry about a turnover statistic. We do need a public sector that is less bureaucratic, makes the best use of technology, and is focused on supporting front line services. I am afraid that this proposition, while well-intentioned, just adds by stealth to the bureaucracy we are seeking to strip back with no credible benefit articulated. It just creates another layer of work and reporting. The policy of the States Employment Board issued this year is to create a central list of vacancies alongside effective data management, effective savings programmes, and budget management. Also effective controls when any department wants to recruit. With this approach, we can fill vacancies more quickly and remove those that are not needed, making the budget available elsewhere if necessary. In this way, the States Employment Board will be able to more effectively manage public sector staffing levels and focus efforts on greater efficiency. Drawing our attention away from this work that is already underway to streamline our recruitment will be counterproductive and will not support good management of the public sector. I am afraid we cannot continue to reprioritise programmes of work in response to ad hoc requests. For these reasons, I cannot support this proposition and I ask Members to vote against it.

11.1.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

First of all, when we look at propositions, it is very important to look at the wording and to look at the report and look at the implications. So the wording of this proposition is: “To instruct all government departments to audit their current job vacancies and, by June 2024, identify those vacancies that can be removed as unnecessary to the functioning of departments and the payroll reductions that would result from the removal of vacancies identified.” Later on, and I wrote this at the end of what I jotted down, but I will say it at the beginning, and I might say it again at the end, in the report it states: “There will be staffing requirement to reduce the number of vacancies across each government department.” So let us translate what this proposition means. It is about producing job cuts. So there is a message to those working in the public sector: “We will look to get rid of as many of your jobs as possible directly after you have emerged from the incredibly damaging process of the target operating model.” A lot of public sector workers who hear that phrase still get shivers up their spine about what happened to them during that process, and I have mentioned before about the constant battering of our public services, the demonisation of those people who work in public services. This notion that staff costs have gone up, well, if people get more experienced in their job and rise up the pay scale then they get paid more. So what do we want to do? It is a catch-22. Do we want to lose those experienced staff and get less experienced staff and then spend more money training them? Or do we want to keep the expertise, encourage them to stay here and put their money back into our economy, which is exactly what happens if you have more expendable income? So we have to be very careful about this simplistic approach to what we are doing. I am afraid this proposition is the product of developing policy via social media polls and the influence of small government lobby who will never be satisfied with the size of the public service until they do not receive the precise service they want for themselves at the precise time that they want it. That is one of the issues that we have got when people attack the public services constantly. Let us look at the implications of this and the reality for departments, and most importantly for the morale of staff. I can remember because I worked in it, the process of job evaluation that was undertaken by support staff in schools while I was there. Each member of staff had to, in effect, justify their own job, and the product was for many to recognise that they were going above and beyond the role they should have and perhaps they should stop doing it, i.e. it was totally counterproductive. For example, I want to give a shout out to the science technicians on this Island. They have to fit their diverse and essential role around a set of criteria that simply did not fit their role, and we recognise that they were a pivotal part of any functioning science department who went way beyond what their job description would say. Now, in this process you would say: “Well, they do not need to do these things. Do we need 2 of them? Do we need 3 of them?” What is the process for doing this? The effect on education and children’s services; they have undertaken another evaluation of roles and the threat of losing staff

cannot be underestimated in a sector where morale is easily damaged and where the extra mile has become the necessity of delivering much-needed services in our schools and our children's services. I for one will not vote for anything that damages that. Let us go through some of the Ministers; I will ask that. Can the Minister for the Environment lose jobs in Planning and other areas in his remit? How many complaints are received about delays in planning applications? But, do you know what, let us cut a few of those jobs because the headcount has gone up too much. Will the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs be happy to lose customs officers or those dealing with immigration queries? What about police numbers or support staff? Do we ask ambulance staff? What about infrastructure; where do we find these cuts? They will become very obvious when the wind blows and we ask staff to clear debris and get the Island running again, because that is when we see the reality of what happens when we take a wholesale hatchet to the number of jobs that we have in the public service. Or when we want to drink clean water or get our drains to work. The unfashionable things; the essentials of everyday life on a civilised Island. Let us look at Treasury. Will it be in the Tax Office? We have all got concerns about the tax return process and obviously the best way to address this is to waste staff time in contemplating whether their role is needed. We found that earlier today it takes 2 months to get a statement back about your tax but, do you know what, all of these extra jobs that we put in the Tax Office, I do not know what they are doing with their time. There are consequences of these simplistic approaches to public service. Let us move on to health. Do we really need those nurses and doctors? Those who transport patients, for example, they are not particularly fashionable, are they? But they do an essential job for us every single day. Or keep the ageing hospital work and repair the equipment. Perhaps the Deputy can list where he sees the jobs being lost in health, because that is what will happen. My Scrutiny Panel has just published a report into C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) and it is clear that staff are struggling to cover all of the areas they are asked to attend, but it is okay, asking them to justify their roles is the best way to deal with that obviously. That is the problem that we have here. So whenever the small government lobby attack public services we never get a clear picture of what is wanted, just headline grabbing and populist whatever about a bloated public sector. That is an argument I am willing to take on. The report has the following paragraph: "It must also be recognised with the number of vacancies changing on a daily basis, special consideration must be given for the creation of new vacancies during a period when payroll reductions are being prioritised." That is almost Orwellian doublespeak. It reminds me of my favourite Monty Python sketch which I will quote: "I think all right-thinking people in this country are sick and tired of being told that ordinary decent people are fed up in this country with being sick and tired." It is doublespeak. What we are saying here in this proposition is that we will create ... well, I do not know, in fact I am not even going to try and translate that paragraph; perhaps the Deputy can do that himself. The problem is that some areas are not headline grabbing: road cleaning, rubbish collection, day-to-day maintenance of wider public realms, support work, mental health services, which are so vital yet so rightly hidden from public view for the good of those being supported. I ask the Deputy, has he ever tried to employ somebody in the public sector? Has he ever gone through the process of trying to create a post because I have previously, and I know lots of people who have in education, for example. By the time you have agreed the field on the post being there the field of applicants has gone. They have gone elsewhere because you have timescales that you cannot reach. If that is the system that is creating a bloated public service, well, I do not know how it is doing it. The proposition is not well meaning, in my opinion. It is dangerous, and it is dangerous because: "I believe where vacancies are concerned prospective payroll expenditure savings can be made." That is a blanket statement. There are vacancies so we can get rid of them. The complex structures of public service provision are not even considered in that. That is not right. We can do far more damage by taking that approach than looking at the actual processes themselves and what we want to deliver. The conclusion to be made without evidence, without an understanding of the real importance of public sector for our Island, and the notion that we will have a swathe of public cuts because apparently people think there are too many people in the public services; these are the same people who are struggling to get their tax

returns, who are on long waiting lists at the hospital, who complain about the streets not being clean or complain that the public realm is not as good as it used to be because we have got about 5 different companies now doing the flowers for example, or looking after the parks. It is incredibly complex. In Millennium Park there are 3 toilets; there are 3 different companies who maintain those toilets. So if I get a complaint from somebody saying that the baby change is not working I have to search through 3 different companies to find out where the baby change is going. We had the public sector doing that before but this will be extra posts for the public sector and we cannot do that because we have a bloated public sector. The logic is not there. It does not work. I urge Members to reject this proposition and for each department to have a meaningful and structured approach to its vacancies. The debate and discussion need to be around what we value in our public services and what level of service that we want. That is the debate we want to have in this Assembly. Then we need to accept something - and this is a difficult one - we have to accept that we have to pay for it. If we want high quality public services we have to for high quality public services, or we accept second-rate public services in the name of job cuts, in the name of saving some money elsewhere. The debate over our provision in the public realm is way more complicated than simply taking a swathe of cuts in each department and giving quotas for cutting.

[15:45]

Topping and tailing of services was one of the worst parts of Government for many, many years, and as for this notion that we had a golden age of public sector when everything was fine and it was much smaller; I do not believe that is the case. There are issues with management in the public sector - of course there are - but that comes because there are issues with what we can produce in front line services. We need to take some courageous decisions if we are going to restructure. Not simply job cuts but train, encourage people to stay, encourage people to use their skills properly, and encourage people to contribute to our Island in the best way possible without constantly demonising people because they are referred to as being members of the public sector. I urge Members, please reject this and let us stop having this attack on our public servants. I am quite happy to stand up here and support them because they provide service that we all need every day. **[Approbation]**

11.1.3 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Unlike Deputy Rob Ward, I do not think it is particularly fair to suggest that the Deputy proposing this had poor intentions. I do believe that the points that he has made about the need to bolster the Stabilisation Fund, about the fact we do have a tight labour market, and the way in which the public sector is being managed may be seen to compete against the private sector that is trying to be more productive. There has been certainly voiced in the business community a frustration about a lack of productivity in government and slow pace, often in the area of policy making. There was something in Deputy Andrews's speech - and I could not quite see it in the supporting questions - mentioning that there was some distinction to be made between the number of managers and the number of key works. I am still trying to get to the bottom of that because I do not believe anybody is really saying that we should not have key workers. In terms of what is being proposed here it does seem overly simplistic though. It is as if, right, okay, you have got some vacancies, let us look at them and see if they are necessary, when in fact, as far as I am aware, usually when you are increasing spending in a department you have got to give a business case. I have seen some of those business cases in the course of scrutiny and I have got to say that some of them I might question the quality and whether there has been some real hard analysis about what the value really is to the public. Then we do have some really quite weird timing when it comes to this Government Plan and the timing of value for money reviews, at least in the area that I scrutinise. But in terms of saying: "Right, okay, let us look at these vacancies and see if they are really needed" there is a lot more consideration that needs to be done because we could be talking about what might be desirable in terms of cutting away dead wood, but at the same time there may be desirable new shoots and vacancies that you really do want to have filled. When it comes to people who perhaps could be employed a bit more productively, we could

be looking at retraining, maybe we could be talking about replacing and automation. But there are a whole load of principles and questions here in terms of how you resource retraining, how you resource automation, all these things which come into play. It is, I think, a very kind of difficult task. I am not saying it should not be performed but I understand the difficulties with the solution that is being proposed in this proposition. What I think is really part of the cause and part of what could be ... I see the Deputy's desire to try and address things; I have that desire too, but one thing that has been striking me more and more during this Assembly is what I would suggest is a lack of transparency on the part of the S.E.B. (States Employment Board). Perhaps we are not overly clear about what it is doing. One thing that I was interested to hear about was the Constable of St. John's mention of the strategic workforce planning. In fact, I had heard about this strategic workforce plan and I thought: "This sounds very interesting." I had heard from a member of the public sector and I did ask a member of the S.E.B. what this is, and this member of the S.E.B. told me that they did not know. Now, that may have been because it is being kept confidential and there may have been a concern about revealing that. But what really strikes me is we ought to know, we would like to know. So I would say although I do not really feel, based on what I have heard so far, I can support the proposition, I really think that it would be useful for the chairman or the vice-chairman of the S.E.B. perhaps to give us a briefing on that. It would be good to have more communications about what is being done to improve productivity, to address things like bullying in the public sector so that we can see perhaps some progress in these areas which are highlighted to us again and again.

11.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

It is heartening to see some speeches across the Assembly from Members who might normally have different political and economic outlooks saying that this proposition is not really doing what it may have set out to do, or if it does set out to do what it does it is not the right thing. I think this proposition is flawed. First of all, let us start off with the term "exponential growth". Did anyone else pick that word up because Deputy Andrews has suggested that our public sector has been growing exponentially? I am not a mathematician but I am a linguist and I know that if you are a linguist and a mathematician you would probably be very annoyed if you were listening to this, and you may be shouting at the radio, if indeed we are still broadcast on the radio. It is one of those things like apostrophes that get on people's nerves, or the word "decimate" when it is used to mean to get rid of the majority when it really just means to kill one-tenth of, or disenfranchise when you just feel like you have been treated a little bit badly. The classic one of course that I have heard in this Assembly is confusing, Pacific with specific, and let us hope you can swim if you find yourself in the former because you might need a specific rescuing in that case. We are not seeing exponential growth at all because that would mean year-on-year growth at the same increase. I think fundamentally what we see here is that there is a problem of course because although the proposition in itself could easily be supported if you took a very narrow reading of it, I think the first point to say is that it is already happening. I know that departments are already going through a whole series of what I would call a request to find cuts, so they are looking at all of their budgets, even though we are faced with a period of inflation where there is an expectancy of growth, that departments are looking at all their headcount which includes not just vacancies but also roles that may be able to be realigned or rejigged. Government is already doing that. Listening to the speech itself, it is very much a small government speech which I suspect has been influenced by listening to people who I would call the populist minority, but vocal minority in Jersey, who always think that wherever you are government is being run inefficiently and money is being wasted and it could be doing much better if only they ran it in the same way that they ran their own personal household finances. I am not saying we should not listen to those voices but of course they are unsophisticated. I do pose the question how the Deputy, on the one hand in previous debates, has held himself up as a social democrat and then he seems to be wanting to be even more small government than the current Government that we have which - no offence to them, I think they would wear the label correctly and willingly - is a conservative and economic Government of the right for the most part. So we have Ministers who I think are averse to

wasting public money. I think we certainly have a Minister for Treasury and Resources here who does not like wasting public money, and I think you have actually got to prise the wallet off him, so to speak metaphorically, when you are asking for growth bids. So it is a strange position if Deputy Andrews thinks that this Government is not working fast enough in that respect to decimate the public sector, which is possibly what he wants them to do. Deputy Scott is absolutely right in what she says that this is only one part of the equation, because of course I have always said there are 2 types of inefficiency; there is an inefficiency where you do not invest enough and there is an inefficiency where you invest in the wrong areas and, therefore, you waste money. But it is so much more difficult to identify areas where we are not investing sufficiently and, therefore, that leads to inefficiency either currently or in the future. Often it is because it is really difficult to find what the consequences are of those omissions. What I would say is that we can do that retrospectively by looking back at the past, and I think sometimes some Members in here, but also members of our community, can fall into the trap of looking back with rose-tinted glasses. They look back maybe to a point in Jersey's history during the 1980s and 1990s where, let us face it, money was pretty much flowing in. We did not have a lot of economic problems in that respect. To a certain extent as well Government could not spend money quickly enough. They could have adventures with things like the steam clock and they could produce lovely first day issues for stamps, which I think are great by the way. I think it is great we still have our own stamps; I am not sure about the steam clock but at least it works now. I remember somebody telling me, this was somebody who worked very closely and everybody would know this person but I will not name him because I do not want to attribute this to him, but he said: "I think it was much better in the past when we had the old style of membership and maybe when Members were not paid they made better decisions." He did not necessarily go as far as to attribute it to the committee system. But I did say: "Yes, of course, that might have been the case but do you remember there was also decades of child abuse that happened while those Governments were in place?" I mention that specifically today because there are certain things that our Government now knows and our Governments have known and need to put in place that they did not need to put in, in the place, or rather they did and should have put on in the past, which they have not been doing it. So quite rightly in all departments they are aware of safeguarding. We have a children's commissioner which we will be recruiting for soon. I know in another area there is great work that is being done at the moment in terms of multilingual learners, and I know that there is a conference that the Minister for Children and Education is involved in this week. That in itself also shows the fact that we are needing to invest in new areas as our knowledge becomes renewed about societal educative changes that we have, which we did not know about before, about the way we need to provide social security systems for people who were not captured in those systems before. Now we understand that if you are a child in Jersey you cannot be left to fend for yourself just because your parents do not have 5 years' residency. That is something we need to grapple with, and Pupil Premium, et cetera. So I am very worried when I hear this kind of proposal, which is very one-sided and asks for vacancies to be removed. What about job roles being tweaked? If it turns out that we have got a vacancy or somebody employed in a role which is perhaps coming to the end of its usefulness we might also need to look to repurpose that role, to move that person to a different area. So I think for all of those reasons that have been mentioned, this is not the right proposition. I would add my voice to those who go out and say that we do need to value our public sector. It does not mean of course that we always agree with what a particular current Government is doing and that action should sometimes be faster in coming forward. But I do not think we can lay that blame at the door of the public sector who, remember, are in dispute with Government in some areas for the current rounds of pay. This is not a proposition that helps that narrative or that discourse in any meaningful way and I think we should reject it for all of those reasons.

11.1.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

First of all I remember thinking, as Deputy Andrew, when I was the chair of P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) and first time saw an increase by 1,000 people recruited into the Government. I

remember myself raising these concerns. I fully understand where the Deputy is coming from but becoming a Minister and seeing what is happening on the ground and what challenges our public service are facing, especially in my area, it is really important to understand the specifics and not to send 1,000-plus, because there are lots of pressure.

[16:00]

I will not go too far, I will just quote 2 numbers from my department. This year from January until now we have recruited 113 people into schools to support our inclusion. The minimum that I need to recruit is 176. If we are going to the headcount it sounds astronomic but this is the minimum and I do have a budget, and I am grateful for the Council of Ministers, and we are continuing because we have managed to recruit 113 people already. The second number that I would like to quote to the States Members, during last year, only last year, from Q2 2022 until Q2 2023 we had 100 per cent increase in referrals to A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and autism assessments. From 2020 to 2023 we had a 700 per cent increase in the referrals. We have increased the headcount last year from 22 to 64 and this year we are going to increase to 80 to meet the demands. Would somebody suggest that we do not need to do it? I do not think so because there is a demand, we need to support, and we need these people in the jobs. If you are looking into the pay grades, the psychiatrists come in very high pay grade, psychologists come in very high pay grade. To say that we have high pay grade ... but they are front line; these are the people who are needed to make the assessment. I really understand where the Deputy is coming from but knowing that we really need to see clearly case by case and understand. Thinking about C.Y.P.E.S., just between C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and schools it is more than 200 people being employed. It is important, and I will not back up because we needed to deliver needed services.

11.1.6 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

I will not be long, I just want to say I am sure that the proposition was well-intended but from someone that did not work or did not have anything to do with the public servant sector or knowing how the system works there, it is very easy to think that it can be overstaffed and not too many people are necessary. To be honest, I was thinking the same until I was part of that civil servant team in Social Security and that is when I understood the actual level and volume of work that is involved behind all that team. It is across different other departments similarly. Looking from outside you think: "They are not spitting up enough, those claims are taking maybe too long to do" but that is exactly where you need more people to be effective sooner rather than having a backlog on people, checking why it is not done and then duplicating the work or following up on the work rather than doing it effectively. Well, if you have the right amount of number of people the effectiveness comes there. On the text of the proposition, how it is worded where it is necessary to reduce those jobs, it can be interpreted ... who is going to take those decisions? It can be very easily weaponised as well because if someone does not understand how the system works, or is not very full involved with the staff can take the wrong decision. So for this aspect I do think this proposition should not pass.

11.1.7 Deputy E. Millar:

I would just like to make a couple of observations on Deputy Ward's speech earlier on because I do absolutely agree with what he said. I think there is far too much talking down of our public service. I do, however, feel that there are a few ironies in his speech, and I am sorry he and some other members of Reform are not here, because this morning at least one person made a kind of generalised throwing of a rock at the Comms Department. There are human beings working in Comms and they work very hard and the generalised criticism - unsubstantiated criticism - that they are not doing their job is very upsetting for them. Deputy Ward also mentioned the Scrutiny report into overpayments and the people in C.L.S. Some people in C.L.S. will have been very upset by that report because there was this continual presentation of C.L.S. as people who are heartless, evil, callous, who do not care about the public. Many, many people in C.L.S. work very, very hard to support the public and

I really would like to see that being recognised now again because they do work very hard to support the public. Nobody gets it right 100 per cent of the time but we do need to be careful about how we present our public servants, particularly those who are public facing. Deputy Ward himself has, on occasion, made remarks that I have thought were very cavalier about the public service. For example, we have tried to resist a proposition on the basis that it would involve a huge amount of admin work and the response is: “Well, they just have to get on with it.” That is public servants that he says just have to get on with it, and we need to bear in mind all these burdens that we are attaching to public servants when we bring propositions and we make comments of that nature. So I absolutely support the public service and I think I would like to ask us all to heed Deputy Ward’s words and think about how we speak about them in future. Just briefly on the proposition, I also think it is unnecessary and I do not support it because it suggests that people in the public service, managers and chief officers, really just do not care, that they just let vacancies drift along for no good reason. I was a chief officer in a small government department - non-Ministerial department, apologies - and I can tell you that we managed vacancies very, very carefully. There is more than once when I have lost a full-time employee, I have recruited them in at half-time for a temporary period to see if we can make that work to reduce staff numbers. Was it enough for that job to do? When you have a new rule sometimes, when there is a new law and new responsibilities, it may take time for those responsibilities to really come to the fore. So again, although I had done my business case, which is a tortuous process as Deputy Ward said, to get our one person, our one F.T.E. (full-time equivalent) I recruited eventually a part-time basis until the workload built up on the understanding if that person did not want to do the full-time job we would do a job share. I was regularly, at least quarterly, challenged by my finance business partner as to what were the vacancies I had, when were they going to be filled, did I really need them, when was I going to recruit. Chief officers are held to account by H.R. (human resources), by S.E.B., by the finance business partners and by management of vacancies. The implication that that is not happening is very far from the truth.

11.1.8 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Deputy Millar’s criticism of Members who may take swipes, I think was her phrase, at the Comms Unit prompted me to rise at this point. I was going to say to Deputy Andrews that if his proposition had been purely about the Communications Unit I would have supported it. That is not an idle swipe; I have been saying this for the last 20 years. There are some things that Government does which I do not believe it needs to do, and one of them is communications. The Island is full of private communications or P.R. firms who are perfectly capable and willing to take on communications work for our States departments and for our Parishes if we need the help. I would also suggest that the media would far rather talk to a Minister or Assistant Minister without having to go through the filter of the Communications Unit, which I gather is currently the case. I make no apology for saying that. I think we could do with fewer than the current number of Communications Unit officers, and I know that members in that unit know there is nothing personal in my saying that. Indeed I know many of them well and some of them I count or used to count as my friends. But when these people joined the unit they presumably knew - because, as I say, I have been saying this for 2 decades - they were presumably told that: “The Constable of St. Helier will occasionally make remarks in the States about the unnecessary size of the unit that you are joining and do not pay any attention to him when he does it.” So I do believe that there are probably other parts of government as well where the right approach could find vacancies that could well be deployed in front line places where we really need them. I absolutely agree with what Deputy Ward was saying about the growth in the kind of vacancies that we really need to fill as an emergency. But I do not take back what I said this morning. In fact what I said earlier today about the Communications Unit was about the fact that it took Islanders hours to get information about the gas outage, which should have come very quickly from a well-staffed Communications Unit.

11.1.9 Deputy T.A. Coles:

First, I want to address this, in my opinion, misconception about a bloated civil service. If you had not noticed, we live on an Island, we are fairly independent in our organisation and the services, therefore, that we provide all come through from central government. If we look at our health service, that is all supported locally through central government, where in the U.K. a borough similar sized to Jersey with a similar population is governed by its own little borough council. They do not have to take responsibility for the health service provided by the N.H.S. Our police and fire service, again all done through central government, where again in the U.K. it is done nationally. Our central government looks after everything that we do on-Island. It is not fished out to a different national agency that comes in and covers us off. So we have to maintain a public service that by number of head of population will look larger than other jurisdictions, but that is because we cannot fish these things in as easily as these other areas do. This is why it needs to be supported and needs to be encouraged and people should not feel that their positions are constantly under review and constantly under threat. We see quite frequently in Government Plans and decisions that we have things, value for money savings or efficiency savings; it is because they are continuously reviewing the amount of manpower and the amount of resources that are being used for all these functions. We see it all the time that this audit is basically happening 24/7. What makes a public service more efficient is actually efficient processes. We have an auditing process for our processes within government; it is called the Comptroller and Auditor General. She goes in and she evaluates all the processes the government do and then they come back with recommendations which will improve efficiencies within government and then it is up to Government to take those recommendations. This is where we could look at Ministers, chief officers and we should be saying: "Come on, the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) has made these recommendations, why are you not fulfilling them?" This will give us the most efficient and best use of public service. I am also worried about this use of number of headcount because during a recent P.A.C. review we have been hearing - especially within the police service - that we have individuals who are double or triple hatting. These are people who take up varying roles and responsibilities as well as their other day to day stuff so they are forced to step up in a time of crisis. Well that surely equals more risk and more vulnerabilities within our sectors, that maybe people should not be triple hatting; double hatting maybe is a step too far as well. I mean, Sir, I look at your role, you sit in here and you also sit in the court across the way. A lot of responsibility and a lot of work for people. So I do not support this proposition; I feel it is bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake. We have methods in place to review efficiencies within government. We need to provide the best support for Islanders and hearing that the Education Department is well on its way to recruiting all the essential support staff that children on this Island absolutely need to have the best start in life fills me with joy.

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

I have bitten my tongue a number of times today when government communications has been mentioned and I have resisted turning my light on, but I am sure the Constable of St. Helier is not surprised when I do take to my feet just for 2 moments. I know we are straying from the point of this proposition but I will return to it, I promise. I would just strongly absolutely refute that there is any kind of filter in place on Ministers or Assistant Ministers and many members of this Island's media do have the mobile numbers of Ministers and Assistant Ministers and regularly make use of them, as do various members of the public and others as well.

[16:15]

I think any claim that this Government has somehow increased its filters on Ministers is absolutely the opposite. We are reducing those barriers that have previously been in place to try to improve openness and transparency and provide greater opportunities of communication. Any suggestion that there is some kind of filter on Ministers I think is disproved quite often when you watch interviews with Ministers on the television or listen to the radio. I am grateful for the comments of Deputy

Millar because she sums up my thoughts again on a couple of occasions already today on this matter of government communications and showing due respect to all our public servants as well. One more thing I just would add on communications, that I think sometimes this Assembly neglects to recognise what government communications involves. There is a relatively small press office of 5 people. There are then people working in lots of other communications roles, and let us not forget that some of those individuals, it is their job to provide States Members with information. We have had questions today about how States Members are provided with information and part of the roles are around that, so they serve lots of purposes there. To return to the proposition, I agree with what other people have said, that I do not see the need for this at this stage and I will not be supporting it.

The Bailiff:

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

11.1.11 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I would just like to thank all Members who have contributed to this debate. I feel there is a need to correct Deputy Ward. He was predicating that this will involve job cuts. I just need to clarify that this is about vacancies; this is not about people who are currently employed by the Government. There are over 900 vacancies, as listed in the proposition, and that was the last correspondence I received from the Executive. So this is not necessarily about reducing roles, this is reducing vacancies that are being advertised and that is in itself prospective payroll expenditure, so those roles if they were filled, then of course the Government would be increasing expenditure and that would be payroll expenditure. Now, I think Members have articulated quite clearly, those who have spoken anyway, that they are in opposition to my proposition, however, there has not really been any acceptance of the growth of the public sector and no views have been held in that respect apart from services go through a process where they identify where there is a need for vacancies and then those vacancies are then advertised and hopefully then filled. However, the one question I do raise is: is there really a need for all of the vacancies we currently have? I do not believe there is because if we look back at the data that has been provided within the proposition you will see quite clearly there are now a number of discrepancies in terms of headcount over time across the salary bands. If you look back at, say, 2017, 2018, the Government was fulfilling its purpose; it was providing essential services for members of the public and is continuing to do so. But it is continuing to do so where it is fulfilling additional capacity that I believe has to be questioned because we, as a Government, maintain our revenue streams, we provide a standard level of say corporate taxation at 10 per cent, personal income taxation has been relatively stable and, therefore, we have to plan for the future within the value of our revenue streams. But what I question is we need to see the reprovision of budgets, and I know Deputy Gardiner mentioned what it is like being the Minister for Children and Education because she has seen it from a completely different perspective compared to when she was, say, the chair of the Public Accounts Committee. I totally get that and I genuinely do believe social expenditure in education and health needs to be increased. But what I would also add is we do need to see a restructure in headcount within those areas, we do need to increase capacity with our front line services in health because there are far too many managers, if we look at health for instance, and there have been several exemptions when I have been asking questions. I have been given figures but the true figures are not being provided, and because there are certain loopholes that are in place that is why I am provided with a response. Okay, it is a legitimate response but it is not giving me the full detail of what is really going on within the department itself. I know with, say, Deputy Tadier, he crashed into me in terms of proclaiming myself as a social democrat and then coming up with this proposition. For some that might be a more conservative approach about small government. But in essence what I am really standing for is a government that is improving its administration, providing more effective and efficient services. One of the objectives we as a States Assembly have to be really working upon is how we can increase a more prudent level of technical efficiency across the public

sector by minimising the level of inputs that we use and by making sure that people have a public sector that is offering good value for money. I find it very difficult when I am looking, for instance, at the Government Plan. We see growth bids of, say, £47.5 million and then at the same time there is £10 million in efficiency savings that has been secured. It is counterintuitive because really what we should be doing is we should be standardising our budgets, not increasing them when potentially there is dysfunction within certain departments and decisions are not really being made with voracity, and then we have to question our services being delivered and being delivered well because that is of course another topic that could quite easily be discussed. We just need to look at the resilience we see within the Health Department to cultural change. How are we supposed to be improving public administration in certain departments when you have got senior management who are not enabling change, they are actually resisting change? It does not matter how determined certain people may be, if you are up against it from that perspective how are we supposed to be improving? When it comes down to this proposition and the true intent of analysing vacancies and looking at ways of how we can reduce the extent of those vacancies; this is a job for the non-Executive and this is the reason why I have brought forward this proposition. I was questioning the Executive and I could see there was no intent to address this issue. Some are questioning: “Well, we do need to increase headcount” but is that really the best approach? Is that really the most effective way to make progress? Because there are other alternatives: investing in technology, improving the modernisation of our government. That has not really been something that has been touched upon in this debate but that would allow us, as a Government, to be investing in the right areas, to improve public administration, and to also allow the public to see where improvements are being made. Because I know Deputy Curtis has been doing a very good job in the very short time he has been allocated in his position to implement a digital strategy across the government, and that is going to take time. But I certainly feel the topic of vacancies has to be addressed at some point in the future. If it is not today then it certainly will need to be addressed at some point later on this term, because I do not really have full faith in the current processes that we currently utilise because look how many positions have been filled across the last 4 or 5 years, and that for me is proving to be very disconcerting because that is essentially budgets that are tied up in certain areas across the government as an organisation, that maybe could be targeted towards social expenditure and, as I mentioned before, you just need to look at education and healthcare expenditure. It is relatively low. You need to think about investing in human capital, investing in our people, making sure that they can aspire high in life. Also we have got to think about our ageing demographic and the low level of expenditure that we see and that cannot be sustained and, therefore, I am not targeting public servants because this is not going to affect them directly, this is about looking at vacancies that we currently have. Of course the number has probably gone in excess of 1,000 vacancies since the last time I had a response to the question that I asked of the Minister. Surely enough is enough, and we have to ascertain some level of control, reprioritise where our budgets are and invest in the right areas. So I think I have given it my best shot, and it has been quite clear that some Members of the Assembly, if not maybe all, will be repudiating my proposition but I will be calling for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on P.73. If Members have returned to their seats then 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. The proposition has been defeated: one vote pour, 44 votes contre, no abstentions.

POUR: 1		CONTRE: 44		ABSTAIN: 0
Deputy M.B. Andrews		Connétable of St. Helier		
		Connétable of St. Brelade		
		Connétable of Trinity		
		Connétable of St. Peter		

		Connétable of St. Martin		
		Connétable of St. John		
		Connétable of St. Clement		
		Connétable of Grouville		
		Connétable of St. Ouen		
		Connétable of St. Mary		
		Connétable of St. Saviour		
		Deputy G.P. Southern		
		Deputy C.F. Labey		
		Deputy M. Tadier		
		Deputy S.G. Luce		
		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
		Deputy K.F. Morel		
		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
		Deputy R.J. Ward		
		Deputy C.S. Alves		
		Deputy I. Gardiner		
		Deputy L.J Farnham		
		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 C.D. Curtis		
		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy M.E. Millar		
		Deputy A. Howell		
		Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy B. Ward		
		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
		Deputy L.K.F Stephenson		

The Bailiff:

That concludes Public Business and we now move on to the Arrangement for Future Public Business, and I invite the chair of P.P.C. to propose that arrangement for the future meetings.

ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

At the moment there are 10 items of business listed for the next sitting on 7th November. Looking at the propositions listed I believe that we will be sitting on at least Tuesday, the 7th, Wednesday, the 8th, and Thursday, 9th November. As ever, please keep the week free to be able to sit on all 4 days if necessary. I propose the arrangement of Public Business.

The Bailiff:

Do Members agree the arrangement for Public Business proposed by the chair?

12.1 Deputy T.A. Coles:

I am not quite sure of the process but is it possible to propose that we start on the Monday to get questions out of the way before starting Public Business on the Tuesday?

The Bailiff:

It is possible to propose that. Chair for P.P.C., do you have any observations on it?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I am happy for the Deputy to propose that.

The Bailiff:

Very well. Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** The proposition is we start on Monday; are you proposing Monday morning or Monday afternoon, Deputy Coles?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Monday afternoon, sir.

The Bailiff:

So at 2.15 p.m. on Monday afternoon. That is seconded; does any Member wish to speak on that proposition.

12.1.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Might we have some time to consider this so that those of us with caring responsibilities are able to try and make arrangements for that afternoon before we make the final decision on it?

The Bailiff:

Well, I am sure, having heard that, Deputy, Members will take that into account. There is a proposition that is seconded and, therefore, it will need to either be withdrawn or put to the vote, but the position obviously is that this is talking about when the next sitting starts and it will be difficult to secure a requirement that the next sitting starts at a different time if the Assembly does not resolve today as to when it is going to sit. Deputy Coles, you have already proposed, you did not make a speech?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

It was just if the chairman of P.P.C. was able to confer with Members and bring opinion back. If she is happy to do so I will withdraw this on the outcome of that survey.

The Bailiff:

Well, of course we are now finishing the sitting so there will be no further sitting which can decide when we are going to sit, if you see what I mean, so you would have to have a universal agreement to arrive as if by one accord, which seems somewhat unlikely in the circumstances. It seems to me the decision needs to be made now when the Assembly will be next convening because there is no mechanism for changing the time other than a sitting of the Assembly.

[16:30]

12.1.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just ask, if people are intending to withdraw anything perhaps they can let people know early because one of the issues we have got at the moment, things are being withdrawn at the very last minute in Assemblies. One prepares and goes through all the information and then suddenly we are not addressing it. For example, there may be something on the agricultural thing, there are other issues that are being discussed in the background, which is good, you can come to conclusions, but I just ask for people to let people know early and we sort of know where we are then. It helps also with the caring responsibilities for those who have it.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? The proposition is to start at 2.15 p.m..

12.1.3 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

Just to say that some people will be having to attend meetings which have been done well in advance and also that involved other people to attend those meetings, so they have rearranged those diaries. I am not saying that we cannot rearrange diaries but we all know the difficulties some of our officers have in trying to get everybody together. I just want to make that point, if I may.

12.1.4 Deputy S.G. Luce:

I apologise again to Members for delaying my debate on agricultural and fisheries. I can assure Members it will not be delayed further than the next sitting. But the reason I rise is to say this: we have a day for the States Assembly and we have 3 continuation days which is taking us up to the Friday evening. If we feel that we do not have ... if we cannot finish in those 4 days then we come back to the Monday afternoon, but I feel in this case the chairman of P.P.C. has advised us it is a 3-day debate. I do not see the reason for coming in on Monday afternoon at all.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this proposition? If no Member wishes to speak I close the debate. Do you want to respond, Deputy Coles?

12.1.5 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Yes, it was just an option to try and get us through a bit more efficiently and we can finish questions at one point. I am open and obviously happy with the arrangements of States business but I feel it should be up to States Members to readdress the schedule as and when it is required. So would like a vote please, Sir.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seat. The vote is whether or not the Assembly starts at the sitting next scheduled but rather than on the Tuesday, on the Monday at 2.15

p.m. to deal with questions. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. A vote pour means we will start at 2.15 p.m. on the Monday. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The proposition has been defeated: 3 votes pour, 41 votes contre, no abstentions.

POUR: 3		CONTRE: 41		ABSTAIN: 0
Deputy C.F. Labey		Connétable of St. Helier		
Deputy R.J. Ward		Connétable of St. Brelade		
Deputy T.A. Coles		Connétable of Trinity		
		Connétable of St. Peter		
		Connétable of St. Martin		
		Connétable of St. John		
		Connétable of St. Clement		
		Connétable of Grouville		
		Connétable of St. Ouen		
		Connétable of St. Mary		
		Connétable of St. Saviour		
		Deputy G.P. Southern		
		Deputy M. Tadier		
		Deputy S.G. Luce		
		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
		Deputy K.F. Morel		
		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
		Deputy C.S. Alves		
		Deputy I. Gardiner		
		Deputy K.L. Moore		
		Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
		Deputy P.M. Bailhache		
		Deputy B.B.S.V.M. Porée		
		Deputy D.J. Warr		
		Deputy H.M. Miles		
		Deputy M.R. Scott		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy C.D. Curtis		
		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy M.E. Millar		
		Deputy A. Howell		
		Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy B. Ward		

		Deputy K.M. Wilson		
		Deputy L.K.F Stephenson		
		Deputy M.B. Andrews		

Deputy Tadier, you have your light on. We are about to walk out the door so what can we do for you?

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is just for the arrangement of much future business. I think this does raise the issue of the fact that we know that the set piece debates, as they tend to be called, it would be helpful to know in advance whether we coming in on the Monday, so those are the ones which we tend to come in for. If P.P.C. could give consideration to when those are so that Members do not book those days off as holidays which they might otherwise do legitimately but they can be here to ask questions or answer them.

Deputy A. Howell:

You very kindly said that we should all come tomorrow morning to listen to the verdict of what you have decided overnight.

The Bailiff:

No, not in the slightest. **[Laughter]** I am afraid I am not so delusional to think that Members will come in on a non-sitting day just to hear me hand down one decision relating to a question. No, that will be circularised by email. Technically I am supposed to do it by 9.30 a.m.; that may, if I can have the indulgence of Members, prove a little bit difficult because of other commitments. It may be some time mid-morning, but that will be when it will come through. Very well, the Assembly stands adjourned to 7th November at 9.30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

[16:35]