

STATES OF JERSEY

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EQUALISATION OF WELFARE

Lodged au Greffe on 20th April 2004
by Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to agree that the cost of providing welfare for persons born in the Island should be met from parish funds with every parish contributing in accordance with the proportion of quarters of rateable value of land assessed in that parish;
- (b) to agree, in principle, that –
 - (i) each parish will be charged annually with the proportion of welfare costs for those born in the Island as is equivalent to that parish's proportion of the total rateable value of land in the Island,
 - (ii) a person claiming welfare will apply to the parish in which he or she is ordinarily resident, and
 - (iii) a central fund be established into which parish contributions will be paid and that provision should be made for the appropriate management, administration and audit of those funds by the parishes,

and to charge the Legislation Committee to bring forward for approval appropriate legislation to implement the changes.

DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT

REPORT

Representing the parishioners of St. Clement, I am fully aware that we, together with the parishes of St. Helier and St. Saviour, bear a disproportionate of the welfare burden brought about by the ever-increasing amount of social housing being built in our parish. Exactly how a fairer state of affairs could be reached has exercised the minds of many over a long period. The general consensus was that the native welfare should be divided amongst the parishes, so that ratepayers share the burden on an Island-wide basis and not by whether or not one happens to live in a particular parish that the planners in their wisdom chose to be the recipient of social housing.

Unfortunately, there was resistance from those parishes with traditionally little social housing whose inhabitants clearly wished to avoid paying higher rates.

During the last couple of years or so there has been a change in thinking as people have realised that this unfair state of affairs cannot continue. It seems that at last the 'I'm all right, sorry about you chaps in St. Clement, St. Helier and St. Saviour' attitude has become more mature. As a result, there was acceptance, albeit grudgingly, of the Policy and Resources' plan that was the subject of their parish 'roadshow'.

The essence of that plan was that as the States would not be likely to take on the burden of native welfare (non-native is already paid from central funds) a quid pro quo was devised whereby the States would take on the welfare but the parishes would accept a comparable expense currently funded centrally.

This is the essence of projet P.40/2004 lodged on 9th March 2004.

Unfortunately, the original idea of swapping welfare for road repairs seems to have become quite complicated. The main thrust of the swap is that the costs must be comparable as at May 2006.

In order to achieve that, we now see other items being added to the list the parishes will have to administer in return for unloading welfare. These include parks and gardens, public conveniences, litter-bin emptying, display and floodlighting, etc.

I am beginning to have grave doubts about the whole exercise.

For a start, it is generally acknowledged that the roads are in an appalling state of repair and would need to be brought into better condition before they could be handed over.

Quite where the funding for that will come from is not clear.

The other items in the 'basket' could add further confusion.

I also have doubts as to the ability of parishioners to be content with road repairs being carried out at their expense, but over which they have little control. What if one parish considers a main road within its borders to be more deserving of attention than a road in another parish, yet the latter is the one to be repaired?

I also have concerns with welfare being funded centrally. It occurs to me that whilst it is stated that the parishes will continue to administer it, that situation may not last long.

I remain to be convinced that a welfare system (as opposed to the type of benefits currently administered by the Employment and Social Security Committee) would be just as efficient administered from a central office as from individual parishes.

I am therefore convinced that retaining the present system, albeit modified by spreading the cost equally across all parishes, is the best way forward.

The parishes, having largely agreed to sharing equally the cost of road repairs as a swap for welfare costs have, by default, overcome the previous reluctance to share welfare costs. With that hurdle overcome, there's no reason why they shouldn't divide equally the cost of welfare, instead of indulging in a complicated and not fully explored

arrangement that amounts to the same thing.

With that in mind, I make no apologies for re-lodging a proposition made by the Connétables and lodged in the name of the Connétable of St. Peter on 26th September 2000.

By so doing, I am offering an alternative to P.40/2004 by inviting the States to adopt the principle of the 2000 Proposition and suggesting a suitable mechanism for equalising the funding (b)(iii) would be the creation of a Conseil des Connétables together with an Island-wide rate as suggested in the Policy and Resources Committee's plan.

Financial and Manpower implications

As this proposition involves a reallocation of money between Parishes there are no financial or manpower implications for the States.

TABLE 1

Parish	Percentage of 1998/1999 rate spent on welfare
St. Clement	47.91
Grouville	42.95
St. Saviour	39.20
St. Helier	32.56
St. Martin	28.16
St. John	25.28
St. Lawrence	25.14
St. Peter	20.97
St. Mary	20.06
St. Brelade	16.43
St. Ouen	15.20
Trinity	7.37

TABLE 2

<i>1</i> Parish	<i>2</i> Qtrs. 1998/1999	<i>3</i> % of total qtrs.	<i>4</i> 1998/1999 total welfare £	<i>5</i> % total Island welfare paid by each parish	<i>6</i> Pence per qtr. to fund welfare	<i>7</i> Pence per qtr. for all items excluding welfare	<i>8</i> Parish rate pence per qtr. 1998/1999	<i>9</i> If parish welfare is shared by all revised parish rate p/qtr.
St. Helier	255,107,919	42.576	2,312,433	52.855	0.906	1.994	2.900	2.724
St. Brelade	58,610,125	9.782	182,484	4.171	0.311	1.589	1.900	2.319
St. Clement	37,603,069	6.276	430,110	9.831	1.144	1.256	2.400	1.986
Grouville	29,120,938	4.860	228,675	5.227	0.785	1.065	1.850	1.795
St. John	16,289,725	2.719	66,825	1.527	0.410	1.210	1.620	1.940
St. Lawrence	30,943,729	5.164	139,655	3.192	0.451	1.349	1.800	2.079
St. Martin	22,426,357	3.743	119,345	2.728	0.532	1.368	1.900	2.098
St. Mary	11,419,888	1.906	38,286	0.875	0.335	1.365	1.700	2.095
St. Ouen	19,259,259	3.214	72,555	1.658	0.377	2.123	2.500	2.853
St. Peter	30,361,302	5.067	117,306	2.681	0.386	1.464	1.850	2.194
St. Saviour	73,973,432	12.346	646,770	14.783	0.874	1.376	2.250	2.106
Trinity	14,073,221	2.349	20,627	0.471	0.147	1.853	2.000	2.584
Total:	599,188,964	100	4,375,071	100	Average 0.730			