

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

WEDNESDAY, 24th MARCH 2021

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[9:30]

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

PUBLIC BUSINESS - resumption

1. Land Transaction under Standing Order 168(3) Office Accommodation Project, Union Street, St. Helier - Deferral of approval (P.18/2021) - resumption

The Bailiff:

We now continue with consideration of the Land Transaction under Standing Order 168(3) Office Accommodation Project, Union Street, St. Helier - Deferral of approval, P.18. I have no Members listed to speak, so does any Member wish to speak?

1.1 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

I am not going to overly rehearse the arguments that we had yesterday afternoon. We spoke about costs and the blasé approach we seem to be taking currently to spending tens of hundreds of millions of pounds. We spoke briefly about process and I cannot understand how a process for an alternative site is just so easily transferrable to another site and I believe that needs investigation. We spoke about timing and how we flit between sites at the drop of a hat and pretend that it is all in the plan and under control, and that concerns me greatly how we can move so fast from one site to another. We spoke about value for money and, when things happen as fast as this, I certainly have not been made fully aware of the value for money and why this has not been scrutinised better. Our office strategy is to me a big disappointment. We have had the Philip Le Feuvre House, La Motte Street, options in Broad Street where we are and where we might be, and then Cyril Le Marquand House itself. I have always been concerned about Cyril Le Marquand House because who in their right minds moves out of a building and leaves it empty to go off and rent somewhere else at the cost of millions? We keep being told about money to be saved but we have spent millions and millions of pounds in Broad Street so far on a full repairing lease, renting a building while our previous office has been left empty and that to me is a disgrace. Then there is the elephant in the room, the *bête noire*, that the Chief Minister will not mention because, let us be honest, he has never really been a fan. Yes, I am talking about the Jersey Development Company and the International Finance Centre. First we were told there was not space there and it was not an option but that is no longer the case because it is now accepted that the law officers need to stay separate and independent and that it would not be right to put services in a building such as this. When it was a private developer tendering for a privately-owned site such as J1 in Broad Street, this provided a good reasoning for not selecting the Jersey Development Company, as uncomfortable as that might have been. However, we now have a private developer building government's new headquarters potentially on a government-owned site which is going to appear, and does appear, very, very strange and is going to send a message to the market that the product potentially being delivered by this third-party developer is superior to our own development company. We have got to remember that J.D.C.'s (Jersey Development Company) remit is set out in the company's articles of association and says the following: they are to act as our preferred developer for projects of Property Holdings and that has been agreed and as directed by the Regeneration Steering Group. That means that they were and are in the perfect place to deliver our new headquarters. That site at I.F.C. (International Finance Centre) 2 has a full planning consent, its delivery is therefore significantly de-risked and it is also the first and currently the only office building in Jersey designed to achieve B.R.E.E.A.M. (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) "outstanding" which aligns the Government's own commitment to the environment and to sustainability. Interestingly, B.R.E.E.A.M. "outstanding" was a requirement previously until it would appear that it was realised that other people could not meet it and that requirement was downgraded to B.R.E.E.A.M. "excellent" in round 2. We talk about saving money, we talk about saving money a lot, but we should almost have this office built on the International Financial Centre now. People say: "Do not delay and we must just get on" and those are the arguments we had around the selection of the hospital site. But I say to Members

saying: “We have just got to get on” is not a good enough reason for making decisions like this. To proceed saying: “Do not delay, we have just got to get on” is not good enough. Then I get to the crux of my argument on this site and that is around housing. The Minister for Housing and Communities said yesterday that he liked the plans and I have to agree with him. The design that we have seen for this office development next to the Parade looks very nice. He says, the Minister for Housing and Communities, it was a better use of the footprint, and I agree, but I do not think he goes far enough. Because I think we need to make even better use of this footprint at Cyril Le Marquand House and that is to make better use of it as an accommodation site for housing or whatever. We always knew that this building would be either reinvented or rebuilt for people who really need it in our essential services: doctors, nurses, consultants, other healthcare workers, teachers, those people who we desperately want to get on to the Island but at the moment struggle because the quality of accommodation we offer them is quite appalling. We have a new office site at the Waterfront, let us use it. We also desperately need housing and let us use the Cyril Le Marquand site for that. We cannot afford to build offices on a site that would be ideally suited to try to help with the thousands and thousands of units of accommodation that we need to build in the next few years. Senator Mézec was absolutely right when he used the words “bad smell” yesterday and I cannot help but agree with him that something just does not smell right to me here. If we did not want to use the J.D.C., what are we doing? How do they think they feel when we select a third-party developer to build for us when we have our own development company? The profits from the J.D.C. are used to invigorate other areas, to move on to the next site. The profits from what are being proposed today will stay in a third party’s bank account. How can that be right? In conclusion, we are saying, the Assembly, that we are committed to the environment, and we have declared a climate emergency, and yet we are not going for the best environmental option.

[9:45]

We say we are committed to our staff, yesterday, how we want better offices for our staff to work in, and I quite agree, but we are not going to put them in the best building. We say we are committed to the people of Jersey who desperately, desperately need housing but we are going to build an office on a site which would be far better suited to accommodation. I urge Members to support this proposition today, to seek clarity, to seek more information and to not act hastily.

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

I am very pleased to follow Deputy Luce. We may not agree on everything politically but I think what this shows is that the concerns that surround this project go across the Assembly. They go across parties, they go across political beliefs because there are genuine concerns. I want to start by just reminding everyone that this proposition is about giving time to undertake effective scrutiny and that is the crux of the argument. The response from Government seems to not be one of looking at the project itself and its value as much as trying to put a barrier between Scrutiny and Government which I think is unhealthy, it does not need to be there and the opposite needs to happen. The enabling of a scrutiny process on this project is vital and it is vital for a number of specific reasons. The most obvious of those reasons is that this is an extremely long-term project. The deal is a strange one and trying to explain it is not easy. I will use ballpark figures because really that is all we have got. So we are saying we will give a piece of owned Jersey land, an asset of the Government, of the States, of the people of Jersey, to a private developer who will build on it. Then we will rent for 4 years at around £4 million a year, that gives us £16 million spent already. At the end of that we have the option to buy, which is around £88 million, or something like that, and if we do not buy then we enter into a 22-year lease of around £4 million a year, so that is circa £4 million, so that is about, what, 22 times 4 is £44 million. No, it is more than that, is it not, of course, it is £88 million. Of course, what a similar figure that is, £88 million. At the end of that 22 years we seem to then say: “Well if we do not want it, it goes back to you for a 77-year lease and you can do whatever you want with it.” So this is a deal which needs to be looked at in detail by Scrutiny. It needs the effect of this over the long term, the implications in terms of what happens during those Assemblies which will be very

different. We do not know who will be in charge of the project during the time that these things happen and so that uncertainty needs to be dealt with now. The other issue that we have over these long-term contracts is the detail. Senator Ferguson said yesterday that we do not have the details, she seemed to suggest that these things will not happen like P.F.I. (private finance initiative) deals in the U.K. (United Kingdom) but I would suggest to Senator Ferguson that this is exactly the issue why this scrutiny needs to happen because we do not have the detail on who is responsible for repairs, who is responsible if the building itself is not up to standard and who is responsible for the snagging lists. As somebody who moved into a brand new school during my career, I can tell you now that those snagging lists get longer and longer every day as you work in a building. We must understand the long-term contract and what it means for the Jersey taxpayer. We seem to have taken an asset, as was said before, and it could be turned into a long-term liability. Now the only way that we can really adjust that today is to undertake the scrutiny that is referred to in this proposition and, most importantly, at the end of that proposition it suggests a debate on the proposition lodged by the Minister subsequent to the presentation of the Scrutiny report that provides for agreement or otherwise of the States Assembly to proceed with the land transaction. We are committing the States Assembly and the people of Jersey to a 99-year deal. If we are not certain as to why and what we are doing, then we should not be allowing that to happen. I would ask the Chief Minister, and I would ask the Government, to accept this proposition to say we can allow this level of scrutiny to happen because it can be constructive and it must happen if there is to be certainty in the Assembly among other people as well. We have not had that certainty and these things have already been mentioned about Broad Street, this sudden change, what is a new project - not the second project, but a new project - that is why I asked the question yesterday. If we look at what is happening today even in the U.K. with Liverpool Council, there may be a stepping-in over some of their contracts and deals that have happened. Those are long term, they happened a long time ago, and Jersey could be in a very similar situation if we are not certain as to what is happening. The issue over the Finance Centre and the Jersey Development Company I think is a very real one and that relationship needs to be addressed in the longer term, a strategy that this addresses. I have serious concerns over this project, a number of Members have serious concerns over this project. I would say to the Constable of St. Helier, are you certain that in the long term this is the right type of project for the centre of St. Helier because in 22 years' time that building could go back to the developers and could become absolutely anything because we have no control over that, we are writing that control away. Finally, if we are not certain in the long term as to what is happening to Jersey assets, to buildings that we use, then we should not be making decisions on them now where future Assemblies, future generations and future taxpayers may be paying a bill that we have taken responsibility for without the adequate level of information. So I will finish by saying, I know we have had this issue over the hospital. I believe there is one big difference for the hospital which, the debates over that, for me, is that that is a space which can be expanded into and is a very different situation, a necessity way beyond office blocks. There is one other thing I will mention. The long-term nature of this contract has to take into effect the pandemic and the changing work patterns, the effects of Brexit, so that people may be based in Jersey but not working in Jersey. Employing people from abroad on contracts where they are not situated here is becoming much more possible because of the effects of the pandemic and the changes to working. In the long term, unless we understand the implications, we could be left with what is a huge white elephant in the centre of St. Helier with future generations wondering how on earth this decision was made. I urge Members to support P.18 and let us go through a proper scrutiny process before we move forward. Thank you.

1.1.2 Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter:

I suppose having the benefit of adjourning overnight means I could consolidate my thoughts on yesterday's proceedings. It appears that there are some misunderstandings on the part of several of those that spoke in favour of the proposition. I would therefore like to offer my understanding on the principal matters discussed yesterday and hopefully correct some of them so we can all agree to finally move forward with this project which, lest we forget, had its roots laid some 15 years ago.

The importance of this matter in hand is massive. The risks of cancelling or curtailing procurement are significant with potentially £1 million of costs expended being aborted without an award, effectively dead and wasted public money. The risks of delaying the award are also significant with costs of £1 million for each month of delay in delivering this long-awaited part of the estate rationalisation. The first misunderstanding which I will correct is the procurement process. The procurement has been operated to accord with the requirements of the Public Finances Manual and the approved procurement strategy. The procurement dates and the selection award criteria on which basis the final development partner will be appointed were published to all organisations at the outset. All changes to procurement were made in accordance with the agreed project governance. Secondly, the Government has always anticipated there would need to be included within the rules of this procurement competitive process, measures that kept the competitive tension between the Government and the final preferred bidder alive after the point that the final bidder had been confirmed. Therefore, within the procurement process confirmation and being issued to the bidders, the Government reserved its right to withdraw an award to the preferred development partner and award to the reserve bidder in the event that the development partner either withdrew from the process after receiving the award decision letter or attempted to make material modifications to essential aspects of its final tender. This last point is exactly what in fact happened and to the credit of the Government they have ensured that the previous 12-month performance was not lost, avoiding wasting the £1 million that was allocated for the procurement within the Government Plan 2021-2024. This is standard procurement procedure and put in place to mitigate foreseeable risks. This is why the Government is in this position and proposes to award the contract to the reserve development partner whose solution meets the Government requirements, is affordable and, again, in fact represents excellent value for money against the present market rates for alternative proposals received and can be delivered within 3 years of us signing the contract. Thirdly, the Comptroller and Auditor General herself, in her report issued to the Government on Operation of Land and Buildings dated June 2018, I seem to recall, criticised the Government for their lack of action with rationalising the estate when she stated: "I am concerned, for example, that the proposal for a new fit-for-purpose office building for the States, although backed by a compelling business case, took too long to develop and has stalled due to a lack of an agreement on funding. There is no single reason why the benefits anticipated from changing the way in which property is managed were not fully realised." Fourthly, some misunderstandings on the finances. We are not selling the site. We are not committing at this stage to buy or spend £90 million to £100 million, whatever. We are, however, committing at this stage to lease the building for 25 years with an option to buy the building within the first 3 years. Even if we only stick with the lease option, we will pay a little more than we presently pay for rent but we will save significant sums of money by reducing the size of the existing office estate by circa 45 per cent. In addition, we will release over 10 brownfield sites and realise productivity savings in a new fit-for-purpose headquarters. Any decision to make the commitment to purchase would require a separate business case, a separate governance process to the board, political oversight group, Council of Ministers, Scrutiny and Members and would be subject to a separate decision either through the Government Plan or subject to a further Standing Order 168. Finally, perhaps the biggest misunderstanding made by several colleagues that have spoken favouring the proposal yesterday, the decision before the Assembly today is one of risk transfer. We are ready to sign a deal with a competitively procured, vastly experienced and capable development partner. The minute the States signs, the risk of design will be passed to the development partner. The risk of obtaining planning approval will be passed to the development partner. The risk of constructing the building will be passed to the development partner. The risk of finishing the building will be passed to the development partner. The risk of delivering on time will be passed to the development partner. The risk of delivering in budget will be passed to the development partner. So long as these debates about: what next, what if and why continue, the risks shall always remain with the public. We have a fixed option purchase price agreed for acceptance at our discretion any time over the first 3 years, effectively giving the Government up to 6 years before outlaying the capital sum. Alternatively, we have a fixed rent agreed inclusive of all the costs of building and furnishing the

building which will be benchmarked for up to 25 years if we require. So, in conclusion, I would like to reiterate the point that my colleague, the Constable of St. Helier, made when speaking yesterday, nothing that has been presented in this proposition has convinced me or should convince my colleagues to walk away from getting on with delivering the project. In my view, further delay and prevarication sends a message that we struggle implementing major strategic decisions.

[10:00]

This proposition will do nothing to enhance this Assembly's reputation in the eyes of those we serve. I urge Members to allow this project to continue without further delay and deliver the Government H.Q. (Headquarters) that we so desperately need and I say: "Let us just get on with it."

The Bailiff:

Senator Moore, you have a question for the Attorney General?

Senator K.L. Moore:

Yes. I would like to ask the Attorney General whether he could rule as to whether members of the Planning Committee may have a conflict of interest as the Minister for the Environment declared that he perceived he did yesterday. It rather surprised me to hear the Deputy of St. Peter referring to planning issues when he is, himself, a member of that committee.

The Bailiff:

I am afraid, Senator, I do not think that is a matter of legal advice for the Attorney General. A matter of a conflict of interest is a matter between the Assembly and arguably the Presiding Officer. This is calling a matter in or pushing it forward and I do not think ... it was a matter for Deputy Young whether he wished to recuse himself, and he did. But there is nothing to stop, I think, other Members of the Planning panel, if they feel that they wish to contribute to the debate and vote, from continuing to do so. I do not think that they have a conflict of interest as such because there is no decision for them that they will or will not be voting.

Senator K.L. Moore:

I am grateful for the advice, thank you.

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour:

Deputy Ward wanted a question as well to the A.G. (Attorney General).

The Bailiff:

I apologise. Deputy Ward?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, to interrupt you, Constable of St. Saviour, I would not want to do that. I want to ask the Attorney General after Deputy Huelin's speech regards the legal position of handing on the risk for large projects and what the Government's position is in terms of implementing the legal position regards that risk. Because it seems to be very pivotal in this debate that we can, in some way, pass on the risk to someone else and just wash our hands of it. So what is the Government's legal position and what legal right do we have and how do we get any redress for that situation? There is a terrible echo, by the way.

The Bailiff:

Yes, there is a bad echo but I think we were able to hear you. Perhaps someone has their microphone on who does not need to. Mr. Attorney, are you able to give assistance to the Assembly on the transfer of risk that has been mentioned in debate?

Mr. M.H. Temple Q.C., H.M. Attorney General:

In general terms, yes. I think it is entirely a matter to be dealt with in the relevant contract. The terms of the contract would provide that, in the event of an overrun of the project, or an overrun of costs, then, for example, one of the parties to the contract bear the consequences of that. So I think beyond that general statement, well it is to be dealt with in the contract. I do not think I can assist further because I am not sighted on the particular terms of these contracts involved.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I wonder if I may just briefly rephrase the question because that is a very useful answer because I think I was asking slightly something different; I have just realised that. The question to the Attorney General is, in a long-term contract such as this, if the company who takes on that risk either ceases to trade or changes legally their position, does that risk continue and how can that risk legally be traced, if you like - I do not know what the word is - or tracked, is there a position in law where that contract would be so binding or is it with just one particular company at one particular time? It is the long-term nature of legalising these risks that I am concerned about.

The Bailiff:

Is it the question, and excuse me for paraphrasing, whether the transfer of risk survives the successors to the company in question or its administrators or receivers should it become bankrupt?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that is a good way of putting it, thank you for that.

The Bailiff:

Does that assist you, Mr. Attorney?

The Attorney General:

Yes. Well, to start with I am sure there will be various contractual mechanisms which can be put in place to try and alleviate the risk of one party entering into insolvency, so, for example, some escrow monies can be set aside, insurance arrangements might be put in place. But as regards if one of the parties were to enter a liquidation, then in normal circumstances, unless there is security taken, then the counterparty with a claim under the contract is an unsecured creditor and would rank quite low down the list in the company's liquidation or if it was dealt with by way of *désastre*. So it is quite a large area of law; there are also various potential claims against the directors of the company in certain circumstances if it could be established that they had caused the company to wrongfully or fraudulently trade. There are a number of remedies that are available, none of them are particularly straightforward, but this is quite a large area of law but I hope that assists the Deputy in summary form.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is very useful, indeed. Thank you.

1.1.3 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I was very disappointed with what was going on yesterday because I would have liked the Scrutiny to be allowed to do their job. People are saying that offices, as we knew them, now will no longer be in use, they will no longer exist. I was disappointed with Deputy Labey's attitude. He was so excited that we were going to borrow money and this was a very good time to borrow money. We must come down to earth. This cavalier attitude that we are adopting in this Government has to stop. We are borrowing money to have a wonderful larger-than-life hospital, we are borrowing money to have a larger-than-life office building, we are borrowing money for a larger-than-life sports facilities on this Island. This gung-ho attitude cannot continue. I have got 5 great-grandchildren and I worry for them because, when they are younger than me, when they are at a working age they will still be paying for facilities that this Government has approved and I just think that is completely wrong. Please, let us stop this cavalier attitude, let Scrutiny do their job, let us go through this, because this

is not ringing true and none of what we are doing is ringing true. To have interest at a very low rate, it is a good time to borrow money, possibly, but not for this Government. This is ridiculous. We are borrowing money left, right and centre and we are going to have to repay it and I just think this is completely wrong and I am very, very sorry. Thank you very much.

1.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Just to bring this back to the wording of the proposition in front of us and reading through it, before I get into any of the complexities and detail of what is being proposed by Government for this project, is simply to say that I think that any fair-minded, impartial person reading the wording of the proposition would be struck by how reasonable it is. It would be strange if States Members acting in the best interest of the Island did not adopt it, irrespective of what their final position in the States final decision on the actual nature of the project might be. The reason I say that is simply because it is allowing Scrutiny to do its job. Is this a controversial project? Clearly it is a controversial project. Are there several ways in which this project, if desirable, could be delivered? Yes, that is also the case. Is there a monopoly on the idea of the best way to do that and deliver that? The answer is no, there are several ways in which this could be delivered. What is the purpose of Scrutiny? How do we know whether the Government of the day is doing the right thing? Beyond the usual political differences, ideological differences, how do we objectively determine whether a particular path forward is correct? We use the mechanism that we have as an Assembly which is the Scrutiny function to do that. Scrutiny needs to have the time and it needs to have the information that they are seeking in order to put a project like this through its proper scrutiny. If they do not do that, and if we do not let them do that, irrespective of where we are in the Assembly on scrutiny as a Back-Bencher or as a Minister, then we are doing a disservice, not just to our system and our Assembly but to the whole of the Island, and that is what the proposition is asking us to do; parts (i), (ii) and (iii). So all of those requests are not just entirely reasonable but it would be reckless if we did not allow Scrutiny to do that job. Now, looking at some of the merits of the project before us, I was struck by the previous speaker before the Connétable, Deputy Huelin was talking about risk, risk, risk, risk, and it is all going to be assumed by the private sector. That is strange, is it not, that the private sector wants to take so much risk? Why do they want to take so much risk? You have to ask them what are the costs and the other benefits involved? What are the benefits to government and to the public if we do not go with what the Government is proposing here? It seems to me that there were so many questions that remain unanswered, not least the fact that irrespective of what we think of the Jersey Development Company, we have a Jersey Development Company. I remember their saying, which was one I probably did not understand when I was a young politician, that you do not have a dog and bark. I think I know what that means now. The whole point is that if we have set up specifically a body which does building projects on behalf of the Government of Jersey, on behalf of the States of Jersey, then why are we not using them? Are we saying that we do not trust them to deliver a project of this nature? Why is that we would automatically go out to the private sector to one of our competitors, if you like, to build something for us when we have our own company? Surely that is a slap in the face for the body that we have already established for the specific purpose of delivering that kind of project. I am not an expert when it comes to property development, and I have never claimed to have been, but I do take an interest more generally in philosophy. Something that has come to my mind is the 14th century philosopher William of Ockham. Although I may be stretching exactly what he said, essentially he looked at problem-solving, and he said that when you look at a problem you should tend to look for the most simple solution and it is usually the case that the most simple explanation of a problem is the correct one. Similarly, if you are trying to solve a problem or, in our case, if you are trying to build a building, which is essentially what we are trying to do, take it back to its most simplest form. When a solution is proposed that is overly complicated, then you are right to be suspicious of it, you are right to be questioning of it, because it is always the more detail there is, the more scope there is for something to go wrong. I look at it simplistically like this: we own a piece of land, we have a building which exists and we want to make the building into something else, either by knocking it down or redeveloping it. We want to use that building and we

want to put our staff in it. Now, if we owned a piece of land in our private lives, what would we do? If we had the capability of building a house there ourselves for us to live in, we would just do it ourselves. If we did not have the expertise to build the house, we would get a friend or a company to do it. But if we owned the company that built houses we would probably get the company that built houses to build our house for us and then we would live in that house. Then if we did not want to live in the house anymore, we would sell the house. Or if we decided that we did not want to live in the house for a couple of years, we could rent the house out, somebody else could live in the house and we could go and live somewhere else in the Island or move abroad. That is what you would do. You would not come up with a contrived policy where you say: “Well, let us get somebody else to build a house for us because they are going to take the risk.” What is all this talk of risk? We know that if you ask a company to build a house for you, your own company or you do it yourself, it will be built. You build it and then you live in it, you occupy it. So, I am sorry if that is over-simplistic but that has to be the starting point. Of course, there might be other considerations but that is what it boils down to. It is not as if the Government does not have money. It is not as if the Government does not have a revenue stream to pay for things that are in the public interest and of public benefit.

[10:15]

We have that. It is not like somebody who does not have any access to a deposit or funds and therefore needs to go to somebody in the private sector to loan them or build them something which ultimately they cannot afford. So, I would like to hear what Scrutiny have to say, having looked at it. Again, if we are saying we do not want Scrutiny to look at it, it seems to suggest that we do not have confidence in our Scrutiny function and our Scrutiny people. If that is the case, that is really unfortunate, but I have not heard anyone overtly say that is the case, so I think we need to let Scrutiny do its job. I think we have a right, irrespective of where we sit in this Assembly, to make sure that the decisions we make are not done on the hoof, are not rushed, but are the correct ones for our Island, especially when they result in potentially decades of potential paying off of those assets that we build for the public. Thank you.

1.1.5 Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade:

This is a very interesting one and I have been listening to obviously both sides of the argument. I have got to declare, right from day one, I have been very keen to progress this particular project and I think it makes so much sense to have one government under one roof where it is a one-stop shop, really, for public services. It makes total sense. I have been asking questions ever since I became a Member back in 2014 trying to push this along, so I am delighted to finally see that it is to this stage. Life is all about timing and one could argue that the timing is not particularly great at the moment, what with post-Brexit, we are in the middle of a pandemic, our finances are somewhat stretched, we do not know what the future brings and I can understand there is a great deal of concern over the degree of borrowing that this Government is considering. I do hope when the Chief Minister speaks that he will address, and I have heard this for the second time, the figure of £250 million being proposed on spending on Fort Regent. That is eye-watering and quite staggering. Obviously, we are all aware of the hospital and the cost of that and £100 million being proposed on the sporting facilities which is, let us face it, going to go over 10 years; nevertheless it is still £100 million, so I can understand why the public are concerned. The Constable of St. Saviour is absolutely right, it is future generations that are going to have to pay for this, that I am so aware of, as I am sure we all are. What I find so compelling about the argument proposed by the proposition, the main proposition, is the 11 points made and they are very alluring. We go down from 21 buildings to 8, for example. There is an operational saving of £6.8 million per annum. Over 10 years, it is £68 million saved in just efficiencies, so that goes well towards paying for the projects in the first place. We talk about coming down from 21 to 8. Well that will free up Philip Le Feuvre House, for example, in La Motte Street, so that will go to housing. We have already heard that South Hill will be going to housing. With regard the International Finance Centre, frankly, I think that should be full of companies that have

financial-based businesses. I think Cyril Le Marquand is a good site and will bring regeneration in the area which is much needed. As I say, I will continue ...

The Bailiff:

I am afraid, you seem to be breaking up, Deputy Truscott, we cannot hear you.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

I do apologise, am I still breaking up?

The Bailiff:

No, you are clearer now.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Yes, the Fiscal Policy Panel did suggest that we push some economic levers, stimulus levers, in the short term and I think this will make an excellent project to keep the economy going. So, all in all, I am pretty much in favour of pressing the buttons here to launch this and I will not be, quite likely, supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Deputy H.C. Raymond of Trinity:

Can I just ask one question? There was a point raised by the Deputy of St. Mary with regards to conflict and the fact that he sat on the One Government board that dealt with the beginning to the end of this particular question of the office accommodation. I am allowed to speak, am I, I am not conflicted by the fact that I sat on that board?

The Bailiff:

No, it is not a matter of conflict, the board you sat on. This has now been brought before the Assembly and there is no reason to exclude yourself, Deputy of Trinity.

1.1.6 The Deputy of Trinity:

I am probably going to come from a totally different viewpoint with regards to what has been said. I have listened to many debates in this Assembly and, I must say, I found yesterday afternoon's and this morning's somewhat frustrating, and I would have to say that is an understatement. I recognise that some in this Chamber obviously have far more experience of debating than others, I recognise and respect that we have different views with regards to our political leanings, although we have all been voted in to represent our parishioners or Islanders, but what I cannot accept is the situation we now find ourselves in. As you know, I took over as Assistant Minister for 3 separate departments, all of which have major infrastructure issues. To be quite frank, our property portfolio is a disgrace; I have never seen such a mess. Buildings not used that have been laid empty for years, and I am talking in terms of some buildings longer than 20 years, and nothing has been spent on them. This is not a problem that has just occurred recently, this has been going on. Let us face it, just like any property, whether it is your own home, whether it is States properties that we look after on behalf of the public, if you do not look after them, they fall into disrepair and you only have to look around this Island. I would further ask, with the comments that are made within this Assembly over the last 24 hours, the vast experience all of you have in dealing with contracts of such nature, I do not think there is very many of us in this Assembly that have dealt with £100 million contracts; in fact, I think there are very few that have dealt with £1 million contracts. I can assure you that it is the same now as it has been for many years, whether you are buying a house or dealing with States properties. When I was in the U.K. I can honestly say that I was part of a large funding organisation that dealt with large commercial building companies wanting to build houses, shopping centres and, yes, sporting facilities, which I might mention later on. When I was involved with borough or county council negotiations, the secret was not to let tenderers or developers or vendors know the cost of the deal you were negotiating with others. Why? Because you wanted the best outcome, the best deal for your client and, in this case, the best deal for the Jersey taxpayers. So when I was asked to join

the One Government group concerning the development of new offices, I felt I had something to offer, but then I saw life - I saw life repeating itself - the one I had done before, except for one thing, the one area which I still cannot get my head around at the moment, and that is public scrutiny. I fully understand the need for scrutiny and accept that it is part of the fabric of political Jersey but there are occasions, and this was one of them, when negotiations had to remain behind closed doors until the deal was ready to be struck. As I said before, the secret was not to let others know the costs of the deal you were negotiating; I would add that this should also be the case when we come to negotiate funding for other developments like the hospital and Fort Regent. I will just say one thing on Fort Regent, I think the media has got the wording wrong and they have completely misunderstood what I have said. We have said that the cost of £100 million to be spent on Fort Regent is over 10 years but I did not say that it was all going to be States money, so I think there is confusion there. But we must look at every large development that Jersey undertakes in future because it is so important to the Island. I went to the first One Government Committee meeting and was absolutely staggered that the discussions concerning accommodation for our staff had been going back since 2005. I was brought up to date with what had been discussed previously. At the beginning of 2020 the One Government Committee was given all details of the ideas and suggestions that were being put forward for the new States office accommodation. As the year progressed, the debates obviously became more detailed and to get the best deal for the States it was vitally important, as I said earlier, that negotiations were kept confidential. We had problems, we had people making offers, then they withdrew the offers. You are getting that situation now. Obviously I can only speak for myself but I do believe that all those on that OneGov board and, I would have to say, most of them, and, in fact, all of them, they all realised it was such a sensitive nature, and until we had everything to hand it was not possible to share anything in the public domain. We did of course advise and brief Scrutiny of what was going on as laid in the comments and provided some amounts of documentation. Many questions were asked, we hid nothing, and the team of the OneGov board asked every possible question under the sun. Therefore, in conclusion, I have to say that I will not be voting for this proposition as I believe that following all the previous negotiations, and having seen all the paperwork, that the deal now being presented is a good one for the States of Jersey and its taxpayers. I will, however, leave you with one comment, and that was made by Deputy Gardiner yesterday, that an overhaul of our properties and future developments must be undertaken immediately, otherwise these debates will just go on for ever, nothing will be done, and properties will fall into further disrepair and that is the risk that we face today. I will just remind you of one thing; 1988 was the first time that we had an inquiry about what we should do at Fort Regent; 32 years later we still have not decided. It is appalling. We have got to change this approach, and all of us have to change this approach, all 49, not just one, all 49. Thank you.

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

I will admit I was sitting on the fence on this and have had a real dilemma. I do believe we need to get on with this project, we really do, but not at the expense of proper scrutiny. This is a reasonable proposition. Having slept on it and done some more research, I will be voting for this proposition as I cannot in a clear conscience vote against it. There are still so many unanswered questions, things that just do not add up. In closing, I would also like to add that I am irritated by the continual stance of Government that those of us not in the Government do not understand. I would like to say to them: "Yes, we do understand" and that is why I will be voting for this proposition.

1.1.8 Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I think it was an appropriate time to come in because hopefully I can help give some clarity on comments made by certain Members. It has been an interesting debate so far and, fairly obviously, it will not be a surprise to Members, particularly following the comments circulated, that I am speaking today in opposition to this proposition which, in our view, threatens a serious delay in an essential project. A reduction in the number of office properties occupied by the Government has been a principle discussed since even before the ministerial system was adopted. There has been a

policy included in the 2007 States of Jersey Annual Business Plan and the 2013 M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan). There has been a strategy adopted by 2 successive Governments and now, after more than a decade and a half of work, it is a project that is close to realisation.

[10:30]

By that, I mean a matter of days. Reducing our office estate has a number of benefits, which I know Members are familiar with, but I, however, think it is prudent to reiterate again some of those benefits now, again, for the benefit of this debate. So this project would reduce the government's office estate by more than 45 per cent from over 385,000 square feet today to 215,000 square feet. Doing so will free up much needed space, primarily in St. Helier, for housing. This will reduce both the government's literal footprint in Town and our carbon footprint, with a smaller office, built to higher environment standards, helping us to meet our environment commitments. It will allow for annual revenue savings of around £7 million a year. The latent productivity benefits are far harder to quantify, but they are no less real. In addition, delivery of services will be enhanced, achieving government synergy as well as capital receipts and also releasing brownfield sites. That will provide, and it has been alluded to already, a vital stimulus to our local construction industry and provide employment for hundreds of Islanders at precisely the time when we need to rebuild our economy following the impacts of COVID-19. That excludes the further projects that will occur later on the newly freed-up sites that the Government will vacate as part of this move. This project really does have the potential to unlock the issue surrounding our estate. We all know how critical it is to get more housing sites into this pipeline. I repeat, this scheme unlocks the sites that we own. The office prospect is about more than just financial good sense. It will also improve Islanders' access to government services, enhancing their interaction with government and ensuring services are delivered efficiently. As has also been referred to, locating at Cyril Le Marquand House will lock-in regeneration at the bottom end of the precinct. With this particular location it is not that far to Albert Place and then the markets. Finally, the new office will improve facilities for staff, supporting their well-being. That includes significantly improving things like ventilation and air-conditioning in a post-pandemic world, to say nothing of economic improvements, which we can make for staff, for example, that means having desks that you can stand at. This project is, therefore, not only positive from an economic perspective but also from a personnel one. It will reduce costs and raise standards, improving both our delivery of services and our facilities for staff, all the while securing an overall saving for the taxpayer. Doing nothing is not an option. Inaction would cost significantly more. I will say it again, I will also say it further down in my speech, our calculations are that doing nothing compared to this project would cost in the order of £30 million more. Making a choice to not do this project means making a choice that you want to spend £30 million more on a decaying state. Basically, inaction costs more and that is also from the missed savings, as I have said, from rising maintenance costs, across an unnecessarily large and aging estate. As the Deputy of Trinity has very eloquently put it, it is an estate which has suffered from under investment over a number of years. I fully appreciate and understand the Connétable of St. Saviour's comments, but this is about future generations. It is not a cavalier attitude. To address a comment from the Deputy of St. Martin, moving out of Cyril Le Marquand House when we did was forward looking. It has given us the flexibility to include that site in the scheme. If we were going to rebuild Cyril Le Marquand House in any shape or form for officers or any other site that we occupied, we would have to move out of it to build on it. What we are doing is we have moved out in advance. It was one of the sites that came in. We know how we have got there. I will cover that later in my speech as well. It means that we are in a position to go. Rather than being in a position to agree in principle and then wait, for the sake of argument, a year or whatever to find another location and then to move out. Also, if we do nothing, it removes the otherwise significant potential for new brownfield sites suitable for affordable housing. It misses the potential of getting them into that pipeline. It will mean missed savings and missed opportunity for real investment into service of our Islanders and facilities for government staff. It could mean jeopardising the current project. It has been claimed that this has all taken some Members by surprise. The Council of Ministers approved the strategic outline business case - I will

call that the S.O.C. - for this project in September 2019. This was provided to Scrutiny in November 2019 in the form of a full private briefing, with a detailed slide deck on the S.O.C. and the project. The full 140 page, hard copy of the S.O.C. was issued to Scrutiny on 17th December 2019. The P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) received a private briefing on the estate strategy and the office accommodation project in January 2020. They received a further briefing on the impact of COVID-19 on both the estate strategy and the office accommodation project in June 2020. C.S.S.P. (Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel) received a private briefing updating them on the progress of the project in July 2020 and again in October. So there has been regular engagement with panels over the past 15 months or so and pages of documents. Let us also be clear, the office accommodation project forms an important part of each of the last 2 Government Plans. I will just allude to it, in the Assembly I would hold this up and wave it around, this is the extract from my records of what was in the Government Plan that the Assembly approved in 2019. It is in the Government Plan 2020-2023. It states: "We will bring forward and invest in a new office facility that can accommodate the government's long-term needs." On another page it refers to this as an action point: "The primary strategy is to bring forward and invest in a new office facility that can accommodate the Government of Jersey's needs." Separately: "The One Government office modernisation project, which will consolidate our office estate into a single administrative headquarters, where all non-front line colleagues will work. This will facilitate more effective use of accommodation, release sites for redevelopment for alternative uses, including housing and promote better teamwork and collaboration across functions and departments. These projects are transformational. They will address longstanding deficiencies in the public estate and reshape the delivery of services to Islanders and other service users." Those projects which were listed include the office modernisation strategy, Fort Regent sports facilities and I.T. (information technology). It was a recognition that we were setting out a plan, a long-term plan, to start dealing with a lot of the underinvestment, as we have heard so many times, that we needed to do into our estate and our infrastructure. Again, under the office modernisation strategy it states: "The office environments are outdated, based on a variety of space and standard desk types. While some have been configured as open plan spaces this is not the norm and there are limited other work settings to choose from across the estate. This does not support the ways of working the departments need in a modern collaborative government." In the Government Plan that we approved last year it specifically states: "In last year's Government Plan, we outlined our proposals to bring forward a new office for States and government employees." This bit is important in terms of the timing and the notification: "In 2021, we will finalise the contractual arrangements for the development of the new office arrangements. The final detail of which is due to be completed by November 2020." That is what we, as Members, approved. The Council of Ministers is recommending that we initially lease the proposed new facility from 2023 with the option to purchase the building by 2026, when further information is available about Jersey's economic landscape. That is what we are debating today. It carries on later in that plan: "We have reviewed the principles of the S.O.C. to assess the implications of the pandemic on the project. We continue to consider the case to build a new office as being valid." Just to touch separately and very, very briefly, as Deputy Truscott raised the comment about Fort Regent, what we are not doing at Fort Regent is committing to huge sums of money at this stage. That, fairly obviously, would have to be an Assembly decision. What we have done, and is in the Government Plan, is there are relatively small sums of money, between £5 million and £8 million roughly, which is in the capital programme and other parts of the spend, maybe some small sums in Fiscal Stimulus. This is all in terms of small-scale projects, about place-making, about putting the gardens back into a good state, while we start working out how to address all the legacy bits, including legionella, present fire safety standards and the sheer lack of investment into that building for a very, very long time. It is about putting the soul back into Fort Regent. The Deputy of Trinity made reference to how long that has been going on for. We are not committing to the significant sums that are being bandied around. What we are saying is we need to have a long-term strategy and this is starting to set the foundations on that. I am going to go back to the final comments in the Government Plan on the office strategy: "It will enable the public service to more effectively discharge its duties to support Ministers, the States Assembly

and the public it serves. It will also improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational costs that support the public estate as well as enhance productivity savings, which will be fully articulated in the final business case.” It repeats: “As part of the 2021 Government Plan, we will finalise the contractual arrangements of the development of the new office arrangements and the final detail of which is due to be completed by November 2020.” I believe the plan, from memory, was lodged in October. The detail was agreed and it was to the political oversight group in the very first week of December, the Council of Ministers a week later and then papers went to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel on 15th December. That is all laid out in the timeline in the comments. Just to wrap up on those dates, the Council of Ministers confirmed the selection of a preferred and reserved development partner on 9th December, subject to the approval of the Government Plan, which this Assembly gave on 17th December 2020. What is important to note and, again, explains some of the queries that have been raised and have also been covered in briefings that we have given to Members, that a full business case, which was given to Scrutiny in December 2020, roughly over 3 months ago, has both options contained in it, i.e. the figures for both schemes, the figures that were referred to as bidder A and bidder C. That is why we were able to switch so quickly from the preferred bidder to the reserve bidder. The work had already been done and shared with Scrutiny in December of last year. A clear process has been followed throughout this project, one that Scrutiny have been familiarised with and kept abreast of. More than 800 pages of evidence, briefing notes, slides and business cases have been provided since 2019. In my genuine opinion, the Government has engaged with Scrutiny significantly on this project over the last 15 months. We would have been pleased to have seen a review take place. Indeed, the minutes of C.S.S.P. on 19th November 2019 state that the panel agree to defer consideration of any possible review work until it reviewed the S.O.C., which it received on 17th December 2019, i.e. just a month after that meeting and more than 15 months ago. The panel then agreed to receive regular briefings from the Government of Jersey officers on progress with the project and that is what has been happening. We have kept, principally, the C.S.S.P., but also other panels as well, engaged during this whole time. It is a great shame that the S.O.C. did not raise their desire to review this earlier, because a significant delay at this late stage after 15 months will have huge consequences. If P.18 is approved by the Assembly, given the requirement for a further debate, which is in the proposition, it is unlikely that this issue would return to the Assembly until July at best and more likely in September, i.e. a delay of 4 to 6 months. As outlined in the proposition, the financial consequence, as identified in P.18/2021, estimate the cost of any delay at approximately £1 million per month. Any protracted delay could mean that the procurement process could fail. If this were to be the case then further delay would be caused as the procurement process would need to be restarted. This would have associated abortive and repeat costs. It is likely that there would also be other additional financial and reputational impacts to the Government. We have outlined those in slightly more detail in the briefings to Members. Let us be very, very clear, as I have stated on a number of occasions, and this is trying to address some of the remarks of Members that Members have raised during the debate, this is not a P.F.I. contract, and I would not be supportive of it if it was. This is a turnkey solution, with a provision of all the furniture.

[10:45]

We retain ownership. We retain control. We build our own destiny of the lease or purchase of the building. Under the proposal, as outlined by the Deputy of St. Peter, none of the risks lie with us. I will just refer again to what he outlined in his speech. The risk of design, the risk of obtaining planning approvals, the risk of constructing the building, the risk of finishing the building, the risk of delivering on time and the risk of delivering in budget are all passed to the development partner. In relation to comments surrounding S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company), and I need to split these, one lot I disassociate myself from as I have found them somewhat distasteful; it was a very clear and transparent and competitive process. But just before I would go further there, I was surprised by the comments by the Deputy of St. Martin, because he did turn down the offer of a one-to-one briefing. He could have asked all those questions to his heart’s content, as we have done with other Members. We have always wanted excellence and we have never changed that requirement.

Also, just to address one of the points that the Deputy of Martin raised where he was saying why are we not using S.o.J.D.C. as a developer. Well, the same question can be asked as why we did not use S.o.J.D.C. to construct Les Quennevais School or the police station or any other of the developments we have done. The whole point here is this is about having open and transparent processes and competitive processes. I am surprised that the Deputy and others do not recognise that; otherwise we would only have one developer on the Island for any government project. To date, that has never been the case. One of the principle reasons to repeat again the one bid not making it to the final round was that the size of the building being put forward was too small, by around 20 per cent. Let us also be clear, the scheme is not predicated on one Minister or department taking part and that would not have affected the fact that the proposal that I have just referred to and previously was too small for what we specified. Also to remind Members, on the final scheme, Scrutiny was briefed on 3rd February, bearing in mind the business case was provided to them approximately 1½ months before. States Members were briefed just under 2 weeks later, in advance, not after, of the M.D. (Ministerial Decision) being signed and then uploaded. That is all on the timeline in the comments. There are 2 specific comments made by the proposer that need commenting on for the purposes of this debate. Firstly, it was suggested that we were turning a public asset into a liability. I wholeheartedly disagree with that statement. If doing nothing is going to cost £30 million more than what we are proposing, I would submit that the proposer got this the wrong way round. The estate is at present costing us £7 million a year more than it should and that this cost of doing nothing means that the existing office estate is more of a liability than an asset. That is what we want to rectify. In short, we are not seeking to spend £100 million. The decision that S.O.C. wish us to defer is to lease the building, which operationally will save us £7 million a year. However, if I have understood matters correctly, I did agree with the statement that there was a risk of leaving us with buildings that do not meet the need of the community. While I do not think this is what the proposer meant, I would entirely concur. If we do nothing, if we delay this project, then the risk will be much greater, that we would retain expensive, environment unfriendly buildings that do not meet the needs of the community. That is not a legacy I want us, as States Members, to pass on to the next Assembly or the next generation. This project has followed a clear procurement strategy and decision-making process, all of which have been approved and shared with Scrutiny. This project has been identified on a whole number of different occasions over the past 14 to 15 months to Scrutiny, this Assembly and on a number of pages in 2 Government Plans, with approval of funding to get us to this stage. In concluding, I really want to briefly summarise again the benefits of this project: doing nothing will cost us £30 million more than the cost of this project; operational savings are just under £7 million a year, excluding productivity savings and excluding any capital receipts; it will release brownfield sites; and it will have a positive regeneration impact on St. Helier. I therefore urge the Assembly, please, to reject this proposition, to support the office accommodation project and to provide a stimulus to our economy, a saving to the taxpayer and an improvement to our environmental credentials, and support Government employees.

1.1.9 Senator S.W. Pallett:

Firstly, I just wanted to comment on my Progress Party colleague, Deputy of St. Martin's speech, a speech that I totally agree with. In fact, I was not going to speak this morning because he said most of what I wanted to say. However, there were some things said this morning that do require comment. It was the Deputy of St. Peter's speech that, rather than comforting me, set alarm bells ringing and really made my mind clear as to why we do need to have further scrutiny of the office strategy and the path that we are intending to take. Virtually everything he said just said to me: "That needs scrutinising. This needs scrutinising. That needs checking. Are those facts correct?" I am not a doom-monger over this project. I am not somebody that does not believe that we have to do something in regards to a new office, because we do. The design of the new building in Union Street is something that I find quite attractive. However, the fact of the matter is, is that for me process should be followed and Scrutiny should be given the opportunity to look at the decisions that have been made and provide a report to this Assembly as to some of the things that have been said and

some of the comments that have been made by Government. The Deputy of St. Peter made several comments. He said that procurement should follow. Well, I would like to scrutinise that. Maybe that is true, but I want to check that that is the case. He used the phrase “competitive tensions were kept alive during the process”. Well, that may be the case, but I want to make sure that that is correct. In regards from the move from Broad Street to Union Street, material modifications were made to the tender, which meant the changes. As part of Corporate Services, I would like to look into that. I would like to see what those changes were. Now, they may have been in documents, but the issue is about when a scrutiny process should have started. I am going to come on to that. The preferred bidder meets the Government’s requirements. Well, that is as may be. Again, there has to be a time when that needs to be checked and that needs to be scrutinised. There is no doubt, and I do not think any of us will disagree, that like the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General), we all know we have to rationalise the estate. There is no argument in that. We keep getting preached at about that. We all accept that. Changes to property management, property management within the States has been dreadful over the past decades. We all accept that. We know that has to improve. Savings are made by reducing the number of operational sites. That is as may be, and we all accept that, but the savings need to be scrutinised. This figure of £6.8 million seems to follow every single project around. We need to be sure that that is correct and that the figures we are being told are correct. We can only do that through a scrutiny process. I accept there is a risk in every project, I have worked in the building industry for a long time, every building project has risk, but passing risk on to a development partner, along with a long list of issues that are going to be passed to the development partner, needs scrutinising. I do not understand totally what that means. I am sure there are other Members who do not fully understand what that means. By doing a full scrutiny process on this, and to be fair the Scrutiny Panel are ready to go on this, is we do not need to walk away from this project. Nobody is saying that we are going to walk away from delivering this project. What we are saying is that we want to make sure it is the right deal, we are going in the right direction and Scrutiny should be given the time to do that. A comment was made that we were putting the reputation of this Assembly at risk by not moving this forward. Well, turn that around, I think we are putting the reputation of this Assembly at risk by not fully scrutinising this project now, before we go any further and before any contract is signed, to ensure it is the right thing for the public and the taxpayer. Deputy Tadier used the word “reckless”. I would not quite go as far as reckless to move forward, but it would be dangerous and would be setting precedence around ignoring scrutiny that I do not think is acceptable. I have moved back into Scrutiny very recently, but I have always respected the fact that Scrutiny should be given the opportunity to carry out their reviews independently, in a way that serves not only the Assembly, but also serves the public. We are in many respects giving away a piece of real estate to a private developer for 99 years. We are potentially going to lease it back for 25 years or potentially buy the building. However, what happens if we lease it back for 25 years? The developer then gets that site for another 74 years. That is a huge financial incentive. Again, it needs some scrutiny. A lot of this is around when the scrutiny should have taken place. I am going to come on to that in a second. I want to also move on to some things that the Deputy of Trinity said around confidentiality. Of course, there needs to be confidentiality when you are dealing with preferred bidders, to a point. However, we have to remember this is taxpayers’ money here. He said that he fully understands the need for scrutiny. My honest opinion is there are Members in Government at the moment that do not understand what the role of Scrutiny means and the respect that Scrutiny should be given to carry out their reviews. He used the phrase “remain behind closed doors”. Well, Assistant Minister, I am afraid you need to dream on, because these things are not going to stay behind closed doors. They need to be fully scrutinised. The public need to fully understand what is going on. They need to understand the financial commitment that we are going to take if we go down the route of this office strategy. Scrutiny respects confidentiality. I am going to say that again, Scrutiny respects confidentiality. They need to be briefed and they need to be respected for doing that. If they need information, they should be given it. They should also be given the time to carry out the necessary review. The Assistant Minister, the Deputy of Trinity, mentioned Fort Regent, 32 years. Absolutely, it is a disgrace that buildings such as Fort Regent have not been refurbished or

renewed or regenerated over that period of time. However, what has happened in the last 3 years? Absolutely nothing as far as the public are concerned. People ask me all the time: "What is happening with Fort Regent?" They see nothing happening. So we need to be careful about some of the comments we are making around action that has been taken recently. I am now going to move on to when to scrutinise. For me, you scrutinise something when you have all the information. Again, we are told time and time again that Government has provided all the information to Scrutiny. Well, if Scrutiny had taken the decision to carry out its review, let us pick a date out of the list that was provided, of 9th December, so many things changed between 9th December and the decision that Government took on 22nd February to produce R.19, the Ministerial Decision. That had they started a review on 9th December, put their terms of reference forward, they would have been moving the goal post. They would not have stuck to the date R.19 was produced. Admittedly a lot of the information was there, but the decision was not taken until, like I say, 22nd February. We need to have a little bit more respect for Scrutiny; respect that they will get the work done in the shortest possible timeframe possible, so that the Assembly can decide whether this is the right route to go. For my part within Corporate Services at the current time, I am not, like I say, a doom-monger. I do want to see action, but I want to see action taken on the back of good evidence, of the Assembly having all the facts in front of them and having an independent scrutiny process having taken place that can give us all comfort that this is the right route to go. If we have got ourselves into all sorts of tangles with contracts that are unrealistically going to cost us over the next few months, then that in itself should be scrutinised.

[11:00]

We do need to carry out the scrutiny process and I would urge Members to allow Scrutiny to do this piece of work and to make sure that what could potentially be a huge sum of money that the public are going to invest in this new office and this strategy is the best possible deal for the public.

1.1.10 Deputy L.B.E. Ash of St. Clement:

I would like to start with Deputy Ward's excellent point where he said that we do not know the effect that COVID-19 will have on working practices on the Island. It is a very good point indeed. We do not and we cannot know. We may see a return to normal. We may see more working from home. As alluded to, we may see more working from abroad. That makes the taking out of a lease, rather than the full sale purchase of a building, all the more sensible. Over that period of time, we will be able to see where the land lies and the direction of travel. Last week when the new sports plan was unveiled, it was remarked upon by one of the attendees that it was nice to see something happening at last. It was a nice positive statement. It was also an incorrect observation, because it was merely a plan. Until we see a JCB drive into view, it will remain merely a plan. Like so many of our plans, it will have things put in its way, obstacles will appear, will hove into view very quickly. After that meeting, many people were saying it went very well and we received positive statements like the one I have just alluded to. I remarked to the person who made that comment to me: "Give it 2 weeks. People will be objecting the various facets of that plan." I was ridiculously optimistic; 8 hours later people were objecting to various facets of that plan. The sports plan, like the hospital and so many others, needs to move from wonderful, well-designed intentions into the finished product. So often these things have not occurred and it is not because of the plans. It is not because of the lack of finance. It is because the Assembly have tried to find a better solution. Of course, the Assembly act with the best of motives, but the consequences are often financially disastrous. Before voting on this today, I would like Members to ask themselves this: how many of these delays have saved money and how many of these projects have even yet to take place? We do not have to look far to see an example: the hospital, the gift that has kept giving, or more accurately, over the last 10 or so years, kept taking taxpayers' money with no returns. If previous Assemblies had found some strength and leadership, millions - and I do mean millions - would have been saved. They did not and now costs have risen quicker than you can say: "I know a couple of French chaps who will knock a hospital up for £100 million." Have we learned from that? I realise that that delay will cost the taxpayer yet

more money. Have we learned from that? Are we, over the next few months, going to be seen as an Assembly that, despite COVID-19, makes major decisions that will benefit the Island for years to come or are we going to once again ask the taxpayer to pick up the bill for the Assembly indecision? We have heard some excellent, eloquent speeches in this debate, but I would remind you of the words of David Lloyd George, who said: “The finest eloquence is that which gets things done, the worst is that which delays them.”

1.1.11 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

I have been in the Assembly for 13 years. Anyone who knows me or what I have stood for knows that I am firstly independent and I am not afraid to criticise the Government when I feel it is justified and necessary. I could never be accused of being a Government today. Now, I want to make a number of comments. Some of them were also made by the Chief Minister, but I had them down beforehand. Let us go back to what this thing stems from. Scrutiny are wanting to scrutinise this because, as some had said: “Something smells. Something is not right. Lots of excuses have been put forward.” Let us go back to the tendering process. The tendering process was carried out according to the best standards and procedures. Developers were asked to tender. Those that did were sifted according to set criteria until only 2 remained. There was the preferred bidder with the Broad Street site and a reserve bidder for the former Cyril Le Marquand building. In accordance with the tender process, the States entered into detailed negotiations with the preferred bidder, who after entering into a formal agreement then said they wanted to change their tender in a fundamental way. They were reducing the office side of it and wanting to put residential into part of the building. Now, that was a fundamental change. If the States had allowed them to do so, it would make a mockery of this tender and any future tender process, as it means that any tender resulting in a contract could be undone immediately after it was entered into and renegotiated. Secondly, under the law, it could lead the States open for a lawsuit, because they should have given, if they did open up the tender and agree to the changes, to all the other tenderers to put revised bids in. If they did not allow them to do that then they could be liable. Now, this is a totally sensible thing that the Government have done. They set out the criteria, everyone bid on the same basis and then they accepted the preferred bidder. Then they wanted to change it. For the Government to go along with that, would basically have left them subject to criticism, not only locally from the other tenderers, but word would get out and it would be known internationally, because this was put through the European tender process. Everybody would be aware of the fact that these tenders were not worth bidding for because it could be changed at any point, at any time, so Jersey’s reputation would be in shreds. This information was given to Members in the briefings that were given to Members. I can remember asking questions about this and I was fully satisfied with the answers that I received. I am sure that Scrutiny have had this as well. Deputy Luce amazed me when he said he does not know how we could seamlessly move from the preferred tenderer to a reserved one. That is why you have the process in the way that it is done. You have a back-up. As the Chief Minister said in part of his speech, it helps you if the preferred contractor attempts to do something that he should not be doing, that you have your reserve and you can pull away. I might also add that this is standard practice in major contracts. Under what is being proposed, it was mentioned how the financial risk is being transferred to the developer. We own the freehold to the site, but all the risks associated with the design, build, planning, cost overruns, are all transferred to the developer. I personally think this is a very good idea. As someone who has worked at the head office of one of the largest construction firms in the U.K. at the time, Sir Alfred McAlpine, these were considerations in all contracts that McAlpine entered into, i.e. do they enter into a fixed price contract or do they enter into a cost-plus contract? Now in a fixed price contract, the company is taking all the risk of all cost overruns and it could be it would be ... sorry, Sir, are you hearing the distortion?

The Bailiff:

There is a slight distortion, but we can still hear you, Deputy.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

All contracts that we entered into, many of them had liquidated damages clauses, which meant these were the fixed price contracts, but if we overran by a week or a month, we would have to pay fixed sums of money to the client for the overrun. That type of contract incentivised us to make sure that we brought the contract in on time and on budget. In fact, my job as a professional buyer was to enter into contracts, some for millions of pounds, for the materials that went into the building, such as concrete, blockwork, electrical, ventilation systems, you name it. It was my responsibility to buy the materials for that. We started off with a bill of quantities that the firm came up with, which was their estimates of what these things would cost and that is how we based our bid. It was my job to try and buy those materials at the same quality standard but for less money. Every pound that I saved in the purchase of those materials was an extra pound of profit for the company, so tremendous incentive in that sense. The same was also true of the subcontracts I placed, whether it was for the demolition of the building, the still fixing that goes in the site, the concrete that went into the site, the blockwork, the painting, everything else that went into it. So you have an incentive to bring it in under what you estimate it would cost you. Now, the alternative was a cost-plus contract. Basically that means that the price you were going to get the contract was fixed at a particular date and any cost overruns over that you would be reimbursed by the client. Of course, we would be delighted with that, because there is no risk to us, there is no great incentive to us to reduce the cost; the client is going to pay. So what is being proposed here is a sensible suggestion. Dandara, as the new proposed contractor, will be paying any cost overruns caused for whatever reason. Going back to Deputy Ward's comment about what happens in the future if they go bust? Well, when I was with McAlpine, we had companies we contracted with that did go bust, but we also made sure as part of the contracts we had with them is that there would be a bond or there would be an insurance policy that would reimburse us in that circumstance. So as long as the States have got their contracts in order, and I believe that they have because they have some good people working for them at the present time on this particular and other ventures, then I think those things would be covered off. Now, I just want to say a few other things too. The flexibility of this contract, the point has been made, and I think it is a valid one, we can either purchase the building outright in a number of years. After 3 years we have to give notice and we can buy it after so many years. Or we can lease it. Now we do not know what the impact of the pandemic is going to be fully. We do not know what the impact of Brexit will be fully, because we do not know the impact that that will have on the finance industry. There are many other factors that are uncertain. This contract builds in that degree of flexibility. Therefore, I support it. We do not have to make an immediate decision. We do not have to borrow immediately. I want to address this whole thing. Different Members are assailing the Council of Ministers from all sorts of different angles. For example, Deputy Ward is against private finance initiatives. I hate them; I think they are wrong. I think this one, however, the way that the financing can be done, is acceptable. The Chief Minister has said that he would not go with the type of private financing initiatives that have occurred in the U.K. and proved to be dismal failures.

[11:15]

That is not an issue here. Going back to borrowing, we have some Members in the States ... and in the whole 13 years I have been here, I have heard the arguments before: borrow, no, on my dead body. When I first came in the States, the States were expected to finance their expenditure, every single year. The Fiscal Policy Panel brought sense to the States by suggesting that you finance over the medium-term. In other words, you choose the economic cycle. Originally it was over 4 years, a much better type of budgeting. Borrowing has its place. Is there anyone in this Island who does not believe we need a hospital, that we do not need schools, that we do not need housing? We borrowed £250 million to give to Andium. Why? Because previous States ... and I blame former Senator Terry Le Main as being one of them and former Chief Minister, Frank Walker, for this. The Housing budget for maintenance was handed over to the Treasury, so no maintenance was done on the housing. When I came into the States I can remember going to Pomme d'Or Farm, and seeing the mould on the walls, seeing the windows. Anybody who saw the programme on ITV last night, on the news, talking about U.K. properties that were not fit to be in, well many of ours were not and it

was because of underfunding and the divergence of the maintenance budget. How did we get around it? We had to borrow £250 million for 2 purposes, (1) to bring the existing housing stock up to acceptable levels and (2) to build new housing. I also am prepared to borrow in the future for building more houses. Why? Because the rents we will get will help service the debt that we do and will not be a burden on future generations. The people living in the houses will be covering the cost of the debt. Other borrowing is acceptable for infrastructure, things that we need. We talk about climate change. We are going to need to spend hundreds of millions of pounds in the future for coastal defences. We want to have decent sewerage works. Fort Regent is a project for the future, maybe there will be some borrowing and maybe there will be private finance in it. The £100 million that was talked about for sport, I heard the Deputy of Trinity being reported as saying there are some private individuals who would like to get involved to help provide these facilities. Good, let us share the burden; as long as the deals are right for the Island. The £800 million that was talked about for the hospital, is there anybody who feels we do not need a new hospital? We should have the best facilities for Islanders. It will not be for this current generation. It will be for future generations; it will be there for them. I personally am not ideologically opposed to borrowing. At the present time, worldwide, interest rates are amazingly low and we can lock into relatively low-cost deals. So do not cut off your nose to spite your face. Let us look at the options, but I do not adopt dogmatic views: borrowing over my dead body. That is totally unacceptable. I am also going to come on to the political narrative. I have been, as I say, in the States for 13 years. I have taken part in Scrutiny for those 13 years. I fully support Scrutiny. But in my view, Scrutiny over the last 3 years has changed and it has changed in the sense that it has become more political than it was previously. I am beginning to wonder if we have crossed the line between being a critical friend and being used as outright political opposition. It seems that perhaps this is because of the rise of political parties. We have Reform, which used to be part of the Government, who are now in opposition. We have the new Progress Party, which is made up of one previous Minister and an Assistant Minister and probably others who support them. We have a number of hidden, we can say, political parties or alignments, where people are at the present time not coming out and may come out before the election or they may be too fearful to come out in case people see who they associate with and they do not want to be associated with them. We also have some disgruntled ex-Ministers and Assistant Ministers. There are people who feel they should have political office for one reason or another. So we have a number of competing agendas that are going on in the States at the present time and I do believe that it is damaging. I was going to write to the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* at one point and say enough is enough and extol many of these comments I have and give examples. Scrutiny has its place and should be doing its job. On this particular one ...

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, I have to stop you; that is 15 minutes. We have not brought a bell into the room, so I cannot ring the bell, but that is your 15 minutes.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay, Sir. Thank you. I think I have made my points.

1.1.12 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

I would like to thank all Members who have spoken for their many different points of views. It has been more than interesting, because I came in here with a particular perspective on this matter, which I will outline ahead, but there is no question that I have been thinking very strongly about the Scrutiny aspect of this and do we need to involve Scrutiny more than has already been involved. Certainly in their comments to the proposition, the Council of Ministers document quite clearly had all the Scrutiny engagement. There clearly has been a lot of Scrutiny engagement. It strikes me that a lot of this debate is about mistrust and mistrust of Government, which is something which often happens within a States Assembly and particularly happens since 2005 when ministerial government came in, because rather than the Assembly having that sense of shared Executive responsibility that responsibility is now concentrated in the hands of a few. That does bring about a scepticism; one

that I often share, before I became a Member of the States and continually since I have been a Member of the States. I understand very much why Scrutiny want to, in a sense, cross the Ts and dot the Is. If we look back at the history of this project, while it has gone through the Government Plan and while it has been on the table for a number of years within this Government, there was a lot of surprise in the Assembly, including myself, when the Minister for Infrastructure lodged the report about the land transaction for Broad Street and what had been the Le Masurier site. That came about, and not being on the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel I was not expecting it, and saw it, so I was very pleased when Senator Mézec asked some questions about it. Then I think everyone was extremely surprised when that was suddenly withdrawn and replaced with this Cyril Le Marquand House project. It is very understandable why people suddenly asked questions. It looked like there was not a strategic approach. It looked like the Government was jumping from one project to another on something of a whim. So it is right that people in Scrutiny questioned that. I believe it has been questioned; those questions have been asked and we have been given the answers, as Deputy Higgins just said, that the bidder or the winner of the tender and the Broad Street site materially changed that project, as we understand it, without the Government's go ahead. They added housing to the project. That materially changed the bid. So because there was a substitute bid or a second-placed bidder, we have been told that the winner of the bid was then told that they would not be going ahead with the project and it would be the secondary bidder who gets the project. So that is the explanation we have been given. Really, the question is, as States Members, do we trust that explanation or not? I find it hard to think that we have been given such a clear explanation of why the change went ahead and not have trust in that explanation, because if we were to find out that that was not correct then there would be a very, very high political price to pay. So I have to think to myself: hold on, we have been told face to face, all of us, that this is why the project changed. So I have come round to accepting that that is why the project changed. We then have the second aspect of this, which I think many people are concerned about, particularly in Scrutiny, which is the unusual nature of the financing and the leasing of the land and so on. This is, after all, a States-owned site. Why? Why are we, as Senator Moore said, turning an asset into a liability? It has taken a little while for me to get my head around that. But at the end of the day, if what we are being told is correct, then it seems like quite a clever financing option. We will pay nothing for 2 or 3 years until the site is built, then we are committed to 3 years of rental and then at the end of those 3 years, the States of Jersey, which by then will have a different Council of Ministers, will decide whether they want to continue and purchase the site and so on. That initial 3-year break during the build gives us, as the States of Jersey, the opportunity to assess our finances in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. So there is some sense in that new way of financing. At the end of the day, if we were to just go out as the States of Jersey and source our own builder and say: "There is the land. Please demolish the Cyril Le Marquand House and please build us a brand new office block on there" we would be having to pick up that bill from day one. As we know, that would be, given the current economic situation and the public finance situation, a difficult situation to be in and would tie up money that perhaps we need elsewhere immediately in paying for something which we cannot use yet. We would have 2 or 3 years of payments for the build costs and we would be unable to use the building. So there is, in my head, a lot of sense in that financing option. Of course, there are concerns about possibly giving up the site for 99 years, but equally we have been told that the savings that we will make in achieving this are such that it makes a lot of sense. When you are in a situation like this it is a good idea to try and find the common ground, which is the States of Jersey wants an office strategy and has decided for many, many years that it should consolidate all their offices into one or just a few buildings and indeed this does that. So we know that there is common ground. We are all agreed that we need to build a single office building. The question is: is this the right way to go about it? There has been a great deal made of the S.o.J.D.C.'s lack of involvement in this project, but we have been told the S.o.J.D.C. has been involved in this project. They were invited to tender and they did submit a tender. That tender lost. That is what happens in a competitive tender. I do agree with the comment that was made earlier that said: "Would we, therefore, be handing out all States contracts to S.o.J.D.C.?" Because if that was the case, if that is the attitude the States were to take, then our costs would rise significantly,

because you would essentially have a monopoly provider of all States building projects and they would become rapidly very inefficient. I still wonder why we cannot use the International Finance Centre, we are told it is too small. I guess it is only too small if you want it to be too small, because you cut your cloth according to your need. I am not convinced that the I.F.C. sites are too small, they are just not big enough for the aspirations that this Government has. I personally do feel that there is a little bit of scrutiny that could be done there. I also wonder whether the Government has really taken into account the changing need for office space post-pandemic. I do question whether that has really been taken into account because I will be very disappointed if the Government is still expecting all its workers to be tied to desks.

[11:30]

If that is the case, then that is a very short-sighted way of thinking. Is it enough to warrant these delays, *et cetera*? I am not so sure. I have been thinking very, very hard about this because I believe in good scrutiny of the Government but the thing that has convinced me to not vote for this proposition is the Gloucester Street Hospital rescindment debate. As I said in that debate, were it to win and it did, that rescindment decision basically meant that we did not move ahead with the hospital. It basically meant that we ended up with a much more expensive hospital and it was second-guessing a decision that had already been made by the Government. At some point - and I have said this many times while I was on Scrutiny - you have to let the Government go ahead and get on with its work. Otherwise, we end up - and Jersey is in danger, in my view - of ending up being seen as a poor partner. I can see comments coming into the chat and I just remind Members that comments to the chat are only there for the function of this Assembly and not for passing or not continuing the debate. I apologise, Sir, for jumping that role but it was just off-putting to see these chats come up. I was very aware that, by rescinding Gloucester Street, we would end up in the big no-man's land which, in my view - and I apologise to Senator Farnham - is exactly where we are. We now have part of the community telling us that we have made the wrong decision, part of the community is telling us that it is far too expensive, that we do not have the right facilities in there and so on and so forth. All that has happened with the rescindment debate is we have ended up extending this debate further and further and further. What we do not have is a hospital and, as I said back then, if we carry on with the Gloucester Street site, if we do not continually second-guess the decisions that have already been made, then we would have a hospital. We would have much more of a hospital today than we do because, at the moment, we do not have one. It is with that in mind that I sit there. It has nothing to do with whether I am a Member of the Government or whether I am a member of Scrutiny. My thinking is purely at some point we have to let the Executive execute their decisions. By not doing that, we are turning Jersey into an unfavourable partner when it comes to these big capital projects. That does not mean Scrutiny does not continue. I would expect Scrutiny to be very close on this and particularly from the P.A.C. side of things. I would expect them to look very carefully at the decisions that have been made and if it is the case that decisions were made poorly or that decisions were made with poor evidence or were not researched properly and so on and so forth, then it is up to those who lead these decisions to own them. That would mean the Chief Minister and the Minister for Infrastructure standing up and saying: "Yes, we got that wrong." That is why we, in theory, have ministerial government so that Ministers can stand up and own their decisions and, in my view, this is one of those decisions that needs to be owned. If Scrutiny come back and then say: "You know what, it was all right after all" and then it goes wrong, then the States Assembly is the owner of the decision and that means, in many ways, there is no owner at all. In this case, I will not be supporting the proposition. I feel that the responsibility for this is being taken by the Chief Minister, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Minister for Treasury and Resources and, in fact, the entire Council of Ministers and, with them, this decision will rest and we will judge them on it. If things go wrong, then it is their decision to own. They are the ones who said: "We do not want more scrutiny." Fine, they will not have more scrutiny in my view but, should this go wrong, then I expect them to stand up and say that they have got it wrong and, for that reason, I will not be supporting the proposition.

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

I will try and be brief, use Occam's Razor and keep it simple as Deputy Tadier so finely demonstrated to us. I basically want to make 2 points. The first is what is the role of Scrutiny and when can they act? The fact is - as we have heard from the Chief Minister - that briefing after briefing and information after information was given to the Scrutiny Panel during last year, for example, but that was still policy and development and, as such, could not be scrutinised. You cannot have a public meeting on policy and development. The Chief Minister would have objected straightaway if that was the case. Only when we have the proposition in front of us can we then scrutinise and it seems to me that this particular contract and this particular arrangement is crying out for good, effective, efficient and prompt scrutiny now. We have had a long and rambling debate yesterday and today. Many good points have been made. That needs to be boiled down into effective scrutiny to say that this is a good deal for us or not and that can only happen from now. We are threatened with the Chief Minister who briefly explored the timescale of how Scrutiny might work and ended up in September. We will not see anything before September. Well, I am sorry, but if the Scrutiny Panel I was on could not do an effective and efficient assessment of what is going on in this case in less than 2 months, I would think they were being very inefficient altogether. I think some sort of timescale that is not next September must be put on this scrutiny and we should let them get on with it. The second issue I have to examine briefly is this statement from the Deputy of St. Peter that our partner had taken all the risks. All the risks. I am looking at that statement and saying: "What sort of organisation are they? Are they doing this out of the kindness of their hearts?" "We will take all the risk. Do not worry." No, this is a very P.F.I.-like structure where there are costs down the line, either in the rental arrangements, purchase or whatever. There is a profit to be made by this company for taking on that risk at the beginning of the process and so I am saying, some might say cynically, realistically there is something in it for Dandara. Do not worry, the payoff will come down the line. With those 2 thoughts in mind, I shall be supporting this call for scrutiny and delay in order that we should properly, effectively and efficiently scrutinise because that is our system. Policy is developed, policy is presented and scrutinised and this is the way it should happen.

1.1.14 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

It is good to follow Deputy Southern and Deputy Higgins because of, again, the 2 different views on Scrutiny. Deputy Southern knows that he and myself scrutinised income support right from the beginning. We were in so many meetings, it was one that worked, it was a long process, there was some good input early on and there were amendments at the end but we worked very well on policy and development. Scrutiny is evolving. I do not necessarily agree with the words of Deputy Higgins that it is becoming more opposition. It definitely evolves. It has not been going that long. It is 15 or 16 years and then every 3 or 4 years, you get different people that guide. I want to say to Senator Vallois who said yesterday: "Scrutiny is not opposition" that I absolutely agree with that. When this proposition was lodged, the Scrutiny Liaison Committee had had discussions around C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) and if you do not know anything about this Chief Minister, I will tell you now. He will always try to accommodate where he can. We looked at the dates, we looked to see if there could be an amendment and if we could do any more. Unfortunately, it was all about the timing that if we have this sort of delay, we probably would lose this project and when we lose this project, we lose much, much more. The Deputy of St. Martin basically said: "Well, I want Cyril for housing and not office." Well, where would you then start? The catalyst is the office strategy. We need a big project. We need to bring all these 21 buildings together into 8 and we need to then free up and decide where all these others are going. Deputy Gardiner said yesterday that it does not really matter where it goes in St. Helier. Well, to the people in St. Helier and the businesses around there, it does matter. I also want to talk about the people. I am the Minister for Diversity and Disabilities and I want a brand new office space, not just for our workers but for the public. Everything from La Motte Street would be going down there. Brand new facilities for our people to go in, the customers who go in and want to go in. Obviously, it is not open at the moment but it is not the best building for accessibility for some people. I want to do this. I really think that today is: "Do we just delay?" It

is not an option. I have seen so many different office strategies being brought together since before 2005 and the main thing is you have to sort out the States building first. Liberate are out. I think it has finished the accessibility to the States building and you will know yourselves that these 21 buildings that we are talking about are probably very dismal and that is why they have to go. A lot of our public cannot get into them. I really think if we could have waited and had the scrutiny done without this project being in jeopardy, this Council, like we have done with many, many other things, would have accommodated Scrutiny. I cannot emphasise enough. We talked about this. We cannot do it. Deputy Southern said: "Why would it be a September debate?" If you read the proposition, we have to come back after the report in June, there has to be another proposition and another debate to say whether, I think it says: "To agree or otherwise of the States for the Minister to proceed with the land transaction." Total uncertainty. This Government can do some fantastic deals and our reputation is just getting shot. This one is not for this Government. It is for the people and it is for all our workers. We have heard that we need to have our workers in the best environment. Yes, be together, but in the best environment. This will do it. I cannot agree with this delay but I will say there is no way that we did not try to accommodate what Scrutiny want to do. It was the final issue and we just cannot do it. I really urge people who have not made up their minds to think of the public, think of the people that will need to be in this building and think of all the other sites this will free up. Then it will have a fantastic knock-on effect and they can be housing projects. If we do not do this, we could lose the whole thing and we will be back in the new Assembly saying: "We must have a States office strategy and we must have a new States office block." I am not prepared to wait. I have been waiting 16 years. Please do not support this proposition from Scrutiny.

The Bailiff:

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

[11:45]

1.1.15 Senator K.L. Moore:

I thank everyone who has contributed to this debate and listened attentively as it has been a long debate. This debate, let us just be clear at the very beginning, is not about delay. It is about allowing Scrutiny to provide assurance and governance over what is a major project for Jersey and, therefore, contains risks. Of course, we all have different attitudes towards risks and it was interesting that both Deputy Ash and Deputy Morel referred to the debate on the rescindment of the hospital and the consequences of those. Deputy Ash suggested that delay brings with it greater costs, which is exactly what we have seen with the hospital situation unfortunately. Deputy Morel argued that the fact that we moved away from that hospital has brought with it some other issues and ended up in situation where we are not moving in, what some people would see, a favourable direction particularly with regard to the cost. What I would like to be very clear about in referring back to that rescindment debate in February 2019 was that on several occasions Members of the Government assured States Members that supporting the rescindment would deliver a cheaper hospital. Now, as both of those 2 Deputies that I have just referred to have made very clear, that debate led to nothing of the sort and it is issues and promises such as that do lead to the sad lack of confidence that we currently have in Government. That is borne out once again in another survey that has been published today identifying significant concerns in some of the decision-making. That, therefore, brings in the important role of Scrutiny; that oversight and that governance. Yes, perhaps we should have brought in an adviser at an earlier stage but we have tracked this with the Government over a period of time but the majority of the valuable and important information and certainly the changes in this project have come in the later months. The procurement papers that the Minister for Treasury and Resources referred to yesterday were not shared with Scrutiny until 22nd September. At that point, there were still big questions about which departments were going to be in the new building and which were not, and whether Morier House was to be sold and all of the inhabitants of it put into the OneGov building or

not. Those debates rumbled on for some considerable time and at the last meeting we did have with Government over the proposals for Cyril Le Marquand House, it still was not entirely clear which of the more at arm's length organisations were going to be included in the scope or not. There is a lack of clarity and, clearly, a lot more work to be done with regard to this project. I would contend that not only would this pause for scrutiny offer greater assurance and clarity to both the public and the Assembly but it also will enable the Government to really get its ducks in a row and give it that little extra time that it needs to firm up the project for itself and dot its I's and cross its T's. One absolutely critical thing Members must consider very seriously is the lack of an estate strategy. We are being told that we need to propel this and, yes, I agree with the previous speaker and many others that we do need an office for our government people and one that is fit for purpose and modern. Absolutely. I do not think there is a Member who has spoken today who disagrees with that. However, what we must be clear about is what we are doing with all of the estate. The Comptroller and Auditor General who the Deputy of St. Peter referred to I am sure would like to see that in place first before so many different projects are being put into boxes that cannot be changed once the strategy is completed. It makes no sense to tie the Government and the Island down to yet another major project when that critical piece of that strategy is not yet confirmed, not yet in place and does not have the agreement of this Assembly. There are also of course issues about value for money. This is an unusual structure. It is not a structure that we see in Jersey at all and it is not a structure that this Government has entered into previously. Therefore, it is important and valuable that some fresh eyes are given the opportunity to glance over it to better understand it, to interrogate it and to ensure that it is giving us value for money. Not just for today, not just in 2026 for whoever is in the new Government but also for the great-grandchildren of the Constable of St. Saviour and all of the other children of this Island who will have to be paying the bills and ensuring that the Island is well run in the years to come. There are risks around contracts that have been much discussed over the course of this debate and that is also another aspect that the subpanel that will deal with this with members of the Public Accounts Committee alongside Corporate Services members and Environment and Infrastructure members will be able to interrogate and understand. We have also talked about - and, again, this connects back to a lack of an estate strategy - that difficult decision between whether this is an office site or whether it is a keyworker accommodation. In fact, the Chief Minister did assert very clearly last year in a press conference that he saw the Cyril Le Marquand site as being a perfect opportunity to release quickly keyworker accommodation which we know is so needed. I have talked about the difficulties around the non-ministerials and which departments are going to be in the scope and which are out. We have also mentioned the role of a general development company and, yes, their bid was not successful. There are questions to be asked about that too of how the proposition P.73/2010 played into that, the restrictions that are placed around the Jersey Development Company within which it operates and how that played a part in its ability to tender a competitive contract. I certainly feel that there are questions to answer in that regard. Construction is a busy market. There are, as we all mentioned, a number of major construction projects currently planned for the Island and going on so the question does need to be asked whether this proposal is poor in terms of its timing, whether it will clash too much with the hospital project and others that are planned for this time and whether it will cause overheating in that market. Rather than providing economic stimulus, it could increase costs and bring greater inflation to Islanders and those private individuals and companies who will also want to conduct capital programmes in the years to come, which we should of course all be supporting. I am going back to the main issue here. This is about oversight, it is about governance, it is about getting to the bottom of that bad smell that Senator Mézec and others can sense and being able to offer the Assembly greater assurance in its decision-making. Yes, I have sympathy with the position of many and, as the Constable of St. Helier has always articulated very well, there is a desire to do something but this Assembly must ensure that, in achieving that something, it is doing the right thing and not just anything. Today, in the United Kingdom, we are waiting to see the Communities Minister bring a statement to the House of Commons with regard to problems that have arisen at Liverpool City Council. A report has been published I think in recent days about issues that have arisen there with regard to building and development projects. These are large projects. They are

sometimes open to difficulties and, therefore, any opportunity that provides this Assembly with greater assurance about the governance around significant projects should only be welcomed, in my mind, and I really would urge Members to support Scrutiny in doing this piece of work. We will be prepared to do it quickly, we will turn it around as effectively as we possibly can but we will offer greater assurance and we will be doing our duty to not just the Assembly but also to the Island and to Islanders who have concerns about this project. So with that, Sir, I ask for the appel.

The Bailiff:

I ask the Greffier to place a link into the voting box of the chat. The link is there. I open the voting and ask Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The proposition has been defeated:

POUR: 20	CONTRE: 24	ABSTAIN: 0
Senator I.J. Gorst	Senator L.J. Farnham	
Senator T.A. Vallois	Senator S.C Ferguson	
Senator K.L. Moore	Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré	
Senator S.W. Pallett	Connétable of St. Helier	
Senator S.Y. Mézec	Connétable of St. Clement	
Connétable of St. Lawrence	Connétable of Trinity	
Connétable of St. Saviour	Connétable of St. Peter	
Connétable of St. Brelade	Connétable of St. Mary	
Connétable of Grouville	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Connétable of St. Martin	Deputy J.A. Martin (H)	
Deputy G.P. Southern (H)	Deputy of Grouville	
Deputy M. Tadier (B)	Deputy K.C. Lewis (S)	
Deputy of St. Martin	Deputy M.R. Higgins (H)	
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet (S)	Deputy S.J. Pinel (C)	
Deputy of St. Mary	Deputy of St. Ouen	
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat (H)	Deputy R. Labey (H)	
Deputy S.M. Ahier (H)	Deputy S.M. Wickenden (H)	
Deputy R.J. Ward (H)	Deputy G.J. Truscott (B)	
Deputy K.G. Pamplin (S)	Deputy L.B.E. Ash (C)	
Deputy I. Gardiner (H)	Deputy K.F. Morel (L)	
	Deputy G.C.U. Guida (L)	
	Deputy of St. Peter	
	Deputy of Trinity	
	Deputy of St. John	

The Bailiff:

That concludes the ordinary Public Business. The remaining item before the Assembly is the in-committee debate on population policy.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

It seems to me that, in any event, we should adjourn now and the only question is whether we continue this afternoon and begin with the population policy debate or we adjourn until tomorrow morning when the matter is then otherwise fixed to start. I had allowed a full day which is morning and

afternoon and if we start this afternoon, we will have the afternoon and tomorrow morning if Members want to use it. It is a matter for Members as to whether we adjourn until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow or until 2.15 p.m. this afternoon and a Member will need to propose I think one or the other of them. Senator Vallois, you speak for P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) presumably.

[12:00]

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes, thank you, Sir. On this particular subject, I took the opportunity to get a sounding from Members last night. The majority have come back to suggest that we adjourn and start this afternoon so can I make that proposal please?

The Bailiff:

Yes, you can and I can see it will be seconded by Deputy Morel. Is that correct? **[Seconded]** Yes, very well. Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition that we adjourn and start this afternoon? If no Member wishes to speak, then I will assume that we can take this on a standing vote unless someone wishes to have a vote in the link. So could anyone indicate whether they wish to vote contre, in which case, I will have it in the link? No Member so indicates. Therefore, I am assuming that this is a vote *pour* on a standing vote and the Assembly stands adjourned until 2.15 p.m. this afternoon.

[12:01]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:16]

2. Population Policy (Consideration “in-committee”)

The Bailiff:

Greffier, do we appear to be quorate? Would Members please indicate in the chat whether they are present, so we can have a quick quorum check please? Twenty so far, we need to be 25, then we are not quorate. Deputy Martin, you have just made us quorate. Thank you very much indeed. We are quorate and we can continue. The final item is the in-committee debate requested by the Assistant Chief Minister, the Deputy of St. Peter, to discuss general policy in connection with population. Can I remind Members, although I am sure Members do not need reminding, in-committee debates, Standing Order 97 applies. So, unlike usual States debates, each Member can speak more than once and there is no vote at the conclusion of any discussions. I will shortly call upon the Deputy of St. Peter to start the debate and at the end of the time allocated for it I will ask him to sum up to the extent he wishes, simply to draw the debate to a conclusion. The normal time limits on speeches apply but of course Members can, if need be, speak more than once. The Deputy of St. Peter and the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel are main responders and have been given the opportunity to speak for more than 15 minutes of time. Plus Members, as I have said, can speak on more than one occasion if need be. We were scheduled to start tomorrow and I allocated a full day for this debate on the basis that Members may wish to take that time to fully express their views. I will allow the same time; that is within my discretion. So the maximum time allowed for this in-committee debate is from now until 5.30 p.m. today and then from 9.30 a.m. tomorrow until 12.45 p.m. That is when the in-committee debate will end. We are ready then to proceed. We start with the Deputy of St. Peter.

2.1 The Deputy of St. Peter:

Firstly, let me thank Members for agreeing to hold this in-committee debate on a common population policy and you, Sir, for allocating a generous amount of time to what we all agree is an important debate, not just for the Members of this Assembly, but for all Islanders. In advance of this debate, the Chief Minister lodged report R.41/2021, which gives some background information for the

debate, and which I hope Members have found useful in gathering their thoughts. To meet P.120 and to have a debate on a common population policy by the end of the year, I and we need to move quickly. Your views at this stage will provide valuable initial input towards achieving this deadline. I thought it might be helpful to first garner the Assembly's views on the themes that are important to them for a population policy. Then, in a second session tomorrow morning, to debate the tensions that might exist between these themes and how they might be balanced in a common population policy. I intend to carry out a content analysis of this debate to highlight those areas that are important to the Assembly and to take these forward into our consultation process. I look forward to your open and candid speeches in sharing both your priorities and how we can collectively address the key tensions being our finances, our society and our environment.

The Bailiff:

Before I open the debate, I will just mention that, although Members can speak more than once if they wish, I will of course give priority to calling on those Members who have not yet spoken, and we will deal with it in the same way that we normally do when people want to ask more than one question.

2.1.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is a very interesting idea to have a public in-committee debate on this subject, one which perhaps is the most talked about. An area that is seen as perhaps the biggest issue and perhaps the cure to all our ills. But I want to voice a word of caution around this debate very early on and any future policy. Population is a little like exercise, we all know it must be addressed, but too often we ignore it and hope that it will all be fine. When we do address the issue, we must do so with thought to ensure that we are taking the correct actions. If we take the correct approach it improves our lives. If we do not get it right we can cause more harm than good. There is a lot more to population policy than simple numbers. We are an Island that is in a particular position with population. Many Islands have the issue of falling populations. We are the opposite. Subsequently, we face the challenge of space, resource, and all the areas of public service required for a modern society. In short, we face unique challenges. So what is needed in this policy, we must identify the pressures that are leading to changes in our population. Is it purely migration, is it birth rate, is it that people are living longer? Until we know the pressures and the balance of these pressures, we cannot create a solution. So we must have detailed research and use the data from the census to inform and direct our population policy. Our latest census only took place on Sunday. Any changes to the make-up of our Island and the people that live here will have knock-on effects. We must understand these effects and enter the change with open eyes. We cannot deny the political drivers behind any population policy. We do not find such a policy as a naturally-occurring entity. It is created by our political representatives. Those who lead change must take responsibility. We need to decide on the nature of our society. What do we want for the residents of Jersey? I would say that we must have a society built upon a skilled workforce, one where every member of our community has value and can expect to be valued. We must be a modern, living wage, highly-skilled society. That is if we are going to have any chance of controlling our population and provide for the needs of all our residents. We need some realism around our population. If you are to limit it in any way, we must ensure we educate throughout people's lives. We must offer the chance to retrain and gain skills to provide the services and economy we need. We need to anticipate and be proactive around changes to workplace processes. I am sure many will mention artificial intelligence and the possible long-term effects on employment. We need to decide whether this will lead to fewer people working the same number of hours or similar numbers working less with greater access to leisure and family time. These are huge political questions that any policy will affect. One of the most divisive features of any community is inequality. Any policy must not create tiers within our society. Economic division and rampant inequality are not good for quality life, particularly on a small Island. I understand the pride in those who were born in Jersey but we are a diverse Island and we must have equal pride in all our communities. Any population policy must address this with understanding, clarity and sensitivity,

to the wider world beyond our shores. The most obvious area for policy to impact is in the realm of housing. Unless we address the overall standards of our homes, the spiralling cost, and the motive of profit that drives the rigged market, population policy alone will not solve the issue. We need a fair taxation system, a system of one tax regime with common thresholds. One where we pay our fair share according to our ability to pay and to have support when we need it. As the pandemic has shown, certainty only comes from strong support from the States. Our health service must be accessible to all. Public health must be at the centre of this. This link to access to healthy food, space to exercise, health and well-being, education, and the ability to balance home and work life is essential. For too many, working long hours from perhaps more than one job, this is a dream that cannot be realised. Sustainability is the key concept that must be at the heart of any population policy. In terms of land use, green space, water resources, energy use, food security and many other areas that are seen as environmental factors. I want to see clear definitions of sustainability and that this is one of the limiting factors. Long-term factors such as climate change and the wider context of Jersey on the world stage are vital. At a conference during the lunch break, I am trying to balance the 2 things on climate justice and security. I heard 1.2 billion people risk displacement in the world due to climate change by 2050. Jersey is at risk from climate change, both physically and in terms of the nature of finance and the green economy and investment into the future. Yes, we need to address population. As a Deputy of St. Helier, we seem to face the most development for housing. It is here I would finish. Population policy must be fair, flexible and designed to suit the needs of the majority with genuine sustainability at the heart. If we get this right, we have the chance to build better for the future. If we get this wrong, it will be the future generations that will pay. I hope the Government will be inclusive in the development of this population policy of Members across the Assembly, the political spectrum and background. I look forward to the debate and I look forward to hearing others' thoughts as well.

2.1.2 Senator S.Y. Mézec:

Deputy Ward has made some really important points in his opening speech, which was really excellent.

[14:30]

Just looking at the report we were provided to help us guide our way through this debate and asking for this first part to describe our visions for Jersey over the next 5, 10, 20 years' time and how a common population policy would help achieve that aim. One thing I would add to what Deputy Ward has said is that I would hope that the years ahead of us are nothing like the years we have just had. I am of the view that Jersey has essentially had a wasted decade. Post the financial crash, however some may wish to paint those years, they were not good years for Jersey. We have not recovered from that crash in a way that ordinary people in Jersey can claim has benefited them. All the statistics bear this out. I have been doing some research recently on affordable housing and how the cost of housing has changed over that decade. That is probably where I mostly want to focus on for my contribution in these debates, because housing really is a fundamental issue for people's well-being in the Island. It of course is drastically affected by population policy because of the demand that can put on us to provide decent homes for everybody on a relatively small land mass where there are competing interests in what parts of the Island we try to preserve. We all want to preserve as much of our countryside and coastline as possible. Some would prefer to pile homes in St. Helier. That is all well and good, but only if you are genuinely providing decent affordable homes there with good amenity and facilities and open green space there. Those things seem to be forgotten about all too often unfortunately. In looking to how we proceed in future years, we do have to be real about the previous years that have got us to this situation that have been a combination of bad luck. Because we did not cause the financial crash, we did not ask for it to happen, and so how the Government had to react to that was never going to be ideal. But it is the case that we have become a more unequal society in that time. It is the case that, in the short period of time in that decade where we have had economic growth, it has been driven by population growth. Where real-terms earnings have been

frozen in that decade, productivity has not been the driving force in that economic growth, it was population growth. That is unsustainable. There comes a point where we just will not be able to maintain a basic standard of living for people here, making sure we have enough places in schools, making sure we have enough schools. That people can manage their days effectively in dropping their kids off and picking them up while being able to work, while not contributing to traffic congestion and all the rest of this. Those are issues we are going to have to really think hard about and be conscious of when setting a population policy. In many of those years leading up until now, we have either not had a population policy in place or we have had an interim population policy that was more or less ignored. So one of the lessons that has to be learned in putting a new common population policy together is that it has to be realistic. We have to provide ourselves with the means of applying it. That means being wary of what sorts of talent and skills we are going to need to have come into the Island. Not all of those will be high-earning jobs or business leaders or innovators. Lots of those are likely to be jobs like carers. We know we are going to need more people working in that area in the future. More people working in the health system. Something that is vitally important to our well-being as a society. But which is often not particularly high-earning. Understanding that the value that people contribute to the Island when they are here is not defined purely by how much tax they end up paying. While we are talking about tax, we also have to understand that part of our future has to be based on having a fairer tax system so that the people who are here are contributing properly to our public services and we do not rely on this really bizarre system we have of high-net-worth individuals that come to the Island. We boast about how much tax they pay here that they otherwise would not be paying as if that is something to be proud of. As if supplementing our tax income by having a relatively small number of super-wealthy people who come and have a distorting economic impact while they are here is clearly a broken system. So I would like to think that at some point in the next few years we can develop some sort of population model and tax model that does not claim to have that sort of reliance on those sorts of people whose contribution is not what people think it is. Partly because I want to hear what other people want to say, I will stop speaking now, but I may have a think about contributing some other points further on based on what people have said. But the main gist of what I have said at the beginning of this debate is to add to what Deputy Ward said and say that we do need to consider the things that have gone wrong over the last 10 years if we are to know how we move forward. That will mean reaching some conclusions that will probably be inconvenient for the people who are in charge of delivering on those mistakes in those years. But we have to get real if we want to move forward properly.

2.1.3 Connétable J. Le Bailly of St. Mary:

Population control is not about keeping people out. We need people with skills in order to have a variable economy. We need health workers. We need semi-skilled workers to service the low-paid industries, which local unemployed find it beneath them to work in. It is getting harder to attract these people to the Island. We need an incentive to do that. It is the same incentive that we need to exploit in order to stop our young people leaving this Island for more-lucrative alternatives elsewhere. That incentive is housing. We need to supply realistically-priced housing to our lower-paid and essential workers. Either rental or first-home buyer. It may be that we need to have a 2-tier system whereby certain categories of people are eligible for this realistically-priced housing. In the case of first-home-buyer housing, this should remain in that sector, not be sold on for profit. If it must be sold on, this should only be with cost-of-living increase only and returned into that sector. Our greatest problem with a population policy is still lack of adequate housing. We need housing now. First-time-buyer housing could be produced at half the market price. We need to do that and we can do that. It may mean a radical rethink on how we produce the product. By that I mean a design change. Flatpack housing, it is the only way to go for realistically-affordable first-home-buyer housing. This is not a solution for all housing, but this should be considered for a certain category. Small groups of housing, which could be absorbed in most Parishes. We do not have enough skilled tradespeople on the Island to produce the housing required in a conventional build. We would have to poach these people in from mostly the U.K. This would only add to our problems. But we could

produce flatpack housing on-Island using our local back-to-work people in a factory-type unit with people completing a small part of each process, thereby gaining a multitude of skills and reward for doing so. It may be that we need to provide work permits for certain categories of people. Those who we need to bring in who are considered essential. Housing status is a massive incentive to anyone wishing to make a life in Jersey. It is a commitment on behalf of that person to remain in Jersey. It is also a commitment to work for the benefit of Jersey, enhancing our communities.

2.1.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

I did not plan to speak early in the debate but Connétable's speech prompted and I would like to make 2 points currently and I might come back. First of all, I do agree, we all know that we have big housing problems. But what I would like to look at is to address inconsistencies between work permits and housing qualifications. Whatever we will decide, 4 years, 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, it should be consistency between people where they can work and where they can live. What I mean, for example, if somebody come to Jersey to work on the licence, during the first 5 years they can work for the firm that contracted them and they can live anywhere. After 5 years, they are allowed to work anywhere but if they would like to move a home to work to different finance firm, for example, they have to leave their house and to find unqualified accommodation. So it is either/or. Or they can work for one company and live anywhere or they can work anywhere but live in unqualified accommodation where we have problems. Generally, if we decide to go, I personally think that unqualified and qualified for rent might be keeping our prices up as well because we have unqualified accommodation, some of them not the best standard and they are much more expensive than the qualified ones. I would like maybe a different debate about qualified and unqualified. But for the immigration policy, I think, like the Constable says, if we have 2 tiers or 3 tiers, and we would like to attract people, they need to have good-quality accommodation and can allow themselves to find accommodation that is suitable. So consistency. Another inconsistency, and again this is connected to the accommodation, after 5 years people resident, Jersey residents, will be entitled for the rent support. At the same time, they cannot rent qualified accommodation. So they are renting accommodation from private sector, more expensive, and getting rent support for the more-expensive accommodation. Something to consider. The second point that I wanted to raise, whatever we decide about the immigration policy going forward, I wanted to make it very clear we are not in any way being critical of the people who already decided to call Jersey their home. Any policy change in no way should disadvantage immigrants who are already here. Jersey must not create a local caste system whether residents are born here or not born here. So I feel that, after Brexit, it has become increasingly likely that we might have immigrants come in, maybe we will have more, we do not know. But whatever needs to be done to fully protect their rights and conditions that people came to the Island up to now, it should be done. We cannot sacrifice the rights or well-being of those who are already here. I say it is important for me to control the growth of our population. I think we will need the licence system just to protect what we have in going forward.

2.1.5 Senator L.J. Farnham:

I find it interesting that we always refer to our population policy, our population measures, as something to fix. Population and the way we manage it presents a great opportunity, a really important opportunity, for the future growth and development of the Island.

[14:45]

In its simplest form, a population policy is a set of measures for the States to modify the way its population is changing. I go back to that word "modify". I do not think there is a policy that we can put in place and say: "We are going to follow this for the next 10 years" and then have another one, a bit like a census. This is something, a population policy has to evolve. We have seen our population grow exponentially for a number of different reasons. I am not sure if we are going to go into it in the debate today, but some of them beyond our control in relation to the rights of people for residency after periods of time, access to work in Jersey from the European Union. The opportunity we have failed to grasp is how we could have done what the new migration plans are suggesting, although we

might need to fine-tune them, and that is to ensure we can staff our important economic sectors without causing an unsustainable strain on our future population. So we are starting to look at that. I cannot underestimate the importance of allowing the skills I think the Constable of St. Mary alluded to, the skills necessary to come into the Island. Not just for financial services, which of course we know is of massive importance to our commerce and our economy and our community, but of course for education and health. I have learned a lot more about that dealing with the new hospital project. Because the infrastructure that we put in place, and I did not speak this morning on the office block development, but when we provide good infrastructure, good modern 21st century working environments, we tend to attract the best people. It is a bit of a catch-22 because, to put the right infrastructure in place, we need to be able to guess or estimate fairly accurately how our population is going to change. Growing our population is not necessarily a bad thing as long as we manage it carefully. As long as we ensure we are bringing in the right skills. As long as we ensure we can staff the front lines of our valuable tourism and retail and agricultural sectors without necessarily causing a long-term unsustainable position. So we need a policy so we can plan and manage our infrastructure accordingly. I might like to speak again a little bit later, but I just wanted to mention those points and underpin, if I may, at the risk of repeating myself, the importance of modifying our policy. One of the positive things we can do at the moment, as we have discretion, and that has been helpful. I know Senator Mézec and I sat at the same table wrestling with policies that are hugely difficult to be consistent with. We need to straighten that out. But retaining the ability to have discretion to help people is important. But we must not underestimate the importance of growing our population. Managed, sustainable growth can be a very good thing. I use the productivity word because I know Deputy Southern is going to come after me for that, but that is one of the benefits of improving our productivity, I mean improving our economic output, growing our economic output, but not needing to grow the resource to produce that economic output at such a level. So I hope that stimulates a bit of debate.

2.1.6 The Deputy of St. Martin:

This is not a speech either; it is just a few thoughts that have come to me while I have listened to this first half hour. At the risk of repetition, it is quite interesting to hear so many people talking about housing in a population debate. Of course, it is right, population and housing are the 2 most talked about subjects in our community. The first thing I would like to suggest, I do not know how much raw data we can extract from the census, it does seem that we have to wait months and months to get data from it. But it would be very useful and helpful to have data from the census so we know where we are. I do not know if anybody is really surely accurate as to how many people have left the Island in the last 12 months, but we know some people have. It would be interesting to know where we are currently. I would just like to agree with Deputy Ward about education. Surely into the future if we are going to keep our population under control, educating all our children to the best of their abilities has to be one of the keys. We want as many jobs as possible on this Island being taken by local people. There is no reason why we cannot do that. But we do have to address education because if young people cannot find jobs they do 2 things, they either stay here unemployed or they leave the Island. I am seeing increasing amounts of young people leaving the Island and not coming back. It is right that housing and the cost of housing construction has to be addressed, absolutely. Whether it is over-55 retirement homes, sheltered homes, first-time buyers, shared equity, social housing, we desperately need to build more houses. But it is the cost of those purchases and rents that are starting to drive people away, our young people away. We need to address that and the Constable of St. Mary is absolutely right, we need to look off-Island for ingenious ways of prefabricated buildings. I know prefab will not be a phrase that people will be comfortable with, but of course these days prefabrication off-Island could be very, very different to something that we might have seen from prefab factories 30 years ago. I am just going to finish with this, the thing that terrifies me the most, and I have said this in previous debates on immigration, on this Island is depopulation. We do need to increase our population on the Island. We need to increase the number of people working because we know the number of people like myself who are getting older are going to double in a very short

period of time. Those people need to be looked after. So the thing I really fear the most is depopulation. I know that is a difficult one but I say to people who come up to me and say: "We need to be back at 100,000; there are too many people living on the Island." I say to them: "That is fine, I accept your argument that 100,000 is the target model, but you tell me which 6,000 or 7,000 people get on the boat in the morning." That is where the argument falls down. We cannot unfortunately reduce the population of the Island. It would be a terrible thing to happen. I know there are pressures and challenges from an increasing population. But those challenges are by far the best of the type of challenges you can have from population. I will just leave it there for now but I would just like to say to Members, increasing the population of the Island is vital, but it is also vital to make sure that population increase is done as slowly as we possibly can, which is why educating our children to the best of their abilities is vital.

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

Many of the decisions we make as States Members are influenced or should be influenced by migration policy. The word "infrastructure" covers a multitude of our Island assets, which are all built, financed and maintained by us. Those needs are dictated by the numbers of residents in the Island. I have experienced in a former ministerial role the burgeoning expansion of our drainage network, our road network, utility needs in general, and of course the construction industry and housing. I will not even mention the health needs of an ageing population. The traditional tourism and fisheries industries have not changed in size. In fact, in many areas, they have contracted, as has the finance industry. We must therefore take great care in any migration or population policy not to exacerbate this situation. Commerce is an essential part of a vibrant society, so we must give it support. But not at the risk of compromising the way of life that we all value. The Island is a finite sum and the more selfish will say: "We like it as it is. Do not let any more people in." Others will realise that an ageing population means that on the present trajectory we will have insufficient numbers of people contributing to the social security. The answer to this, as is often the case, is a question of balance. In order to achieve this, we must establish protocols and policies within which government officers can work. A previous speaker suggested that we do not have sufficient skills on the Island. But I would contend that this is due in the main to inadequate training and provision for the future. We must do more for the education level, more at the further education level, and make it easier for employers to provide on-the-job training. I look forward to hearing contributions from others during the course of the debate.

2.1.8 Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade:

I begin by an apology to say I have not prepared a speech. But obviously the whole point of in-committee debates is that we can express our broad canvas of views. Mine are based on my reflections, having been 40 years in Jersey. I am not born in the Island but I have seen, from the late-1970s, the transformation of the Island, during which time its population has grown from around 80,000 to around 106,000 or 107,000, which is a 30 per cent increase. Of course I have also seen the transformation of the quality of life. Jersey at that time, when I came to the Island, was very much closer to the U.K. in terms of its economics. Therefore, wage levels were generally consistent and the house prices were not absolutely out of order. Of course, at that time, our community enjoyed it. My worry is, over those last decades, various generations of politicians have sought to try to put a limit or set a target, a number, but of course those things have never worked. At one time, there was a time when the States decided they would have no job growth whatsoever and then dived down into a recession. Because we put our foot on the brake, we shot downhill very, very fast indeed. Obviously, they were trying to achieve where that balance is, but the starting point is I ask myself: "Where was the vision of how Jersey should be in the future? What sort of society do we want? What sort of quality of life do we want? What sort of fairness and equity do we want in our society?" I do not think we have ever had that. So the growth in population, I do not believe, has been planned, it has happened. It has happened incrementally as a result of our collective economic aspirations. When we ask ourselves the question, what do we do going ahead? Certainly, this is something that

should be done, focusing on the next decade, on the next 2 decades even. This is very much for younger people, because I have enjoyed the periods of really outstandingly good quality Jersey life. But I seriously worry about future generations. I seriously worry about our young people and their access to homes. I seriously worry about whether or not we can really meet the aspirations, not just aspirations, the needs of our ageing community for our health service. I desperately worry about the opportunity for the breadth of education that our young people are going to have to have. Because the world is going to get even more competitive. We are on our own now, we are not in the E.U. (European Union). We have tensions internationally. There is the artificial intelligence changing the nature of work.

[15:00]

We need to be able to have those services. Yet, what we have, I am being frank, we have a broken tax system that results in a situation of massive inequality. The population, going forward, is not just a question about saying: "What are our skills? What are the numbers like? This industry needs this. This industry needs that." No, this is about having a holistic vision. A holistic vision so those judgments can be made by political Members. Why is the tax regime so problematic? What we have is that our essential public services have been resource-constrained. They are not able to respond to the needs sufficiently flexible. We are in danger of living beyond our means of the physical constraints of the resources we have in the Island. We have a finite land area. Our infrastructure is in many ways at the limits. So now there is a real task to be done here about to set a new vision. People are going to say to me: "We have had all that. We have those. We have these lovely documents that we produce and publish. We have these critical factors and we are going to do this." But I am afraid in reality, motherhood and apple pie, and the difference between reality and those visions is very, very wide. So this really needs a fundamental look, root and branch, and I do have a doubt, and I put this out there, I have heard it said that we are going to have this policy all sorted out by the autumn this year, November. We will certainly know a lot more then. We will know about the census numbers that can tell us where we are. We are likely to know a lot better where our economy is, hopefully on the way out of this dreadful COVID situation. We will know more about the needs health-wise and so on. We will know more. But is it likely, let us be frank, a dying States and a dying Government, because there is only a year, that one could suddenly magically produce these new policies in the dying months? Is it even right? So I wonder, I just put that out there, I would like to hear what other Members think about that. Because, to me, this is very much the agenda going forward, which is very long term. It is really important that people really have an opportunity during the debates that do happen in the elections, because hopefully we are going to get clarity about party politics. Hopefully, we get the new election rules, which will make things a lot more engaged for the public. This debate can start to happen. Another thought has occurred to me. It occurred to me and I put it there, I would like Members to think about this. This is so important, it is a whole-society issue for the future, particularly young people, is there a role here for taking the approach that we have adopted, and it is beginning to look very positive, for having a citizens' assembly to come up with a vision. That way, a bottom-up view, so that we can then set goals. Because I do not think one starts a population saying: "Here are the numbers, tick the box, different industries, this that and the other." I do not think that is the approach. I think it is a fundamental look and real political choices to be made. It would be very, very good if the political parties that are formed take firm positions and enable that debate to happen effectively. I do apologise. It is not a structured speech. I wanted to throw those ideas in and see how they gel or do not gel. So I have deliberately done that to stimulate. But I look forward to hearing now. Thank you for giving me a chance to speak.

2.1.9 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I am sure nobody was holding back and likewise I was not. I sometimes like to listen to other people's views before I can formulate and, again, I do not have a written speech. I have some facts and figures here that I will quote in a minute from the perspective of being the Minister for Social Security. But a few comments I would like to make about a few speeches. I absolutely agree with Deputy Gardiner,

anything that we are bringing in cannot be retrospective. It has been tried before. Qualis used to stop, they were 5 years, overnight they went to 10, then they were done away with. It did not help. We need a good plan. My concern, and I was on the board, with the overall plan is that, as of 1st January this year, we have the immigration - which is through the Home Affairs, from everyone now who used to be able to walk into Jersey from Europe - have tests they have to meet. Then we are proposing a 9 months and 4 years. To go back to Deputy Gardiner again, that will stop people getting to their 5 years of residency. This is a choice. If then they do not stay, they do not become a part of the Island, they do not qualify for this and that. But who are we going to attract? People do look around the rest of the world. With the 2 coming together, I have great, great concerns. I just say that because it is one of those things. I absolutely understand the education part, but at the moment we have the largest unemployment for many years. But probably, when the season starts, we still do not have enough unemployed to fill all the jobs that are needed. So it is one of those things. As Minister for Social Security, the population of Jersey that is getting older is already here. They are not the people who are going to probably leave, and why would they? They have been paying for the generations before them's pensions and healthcare and everything else in their taxes. When they retire at 65 or 66 that may need to be looked at. But the next generation needs to be paying; the working generation needs to be paying for the people who are retiring. That is the system we work in. So it is very concerning to me. There are more people going to be reaching their 65th birthday in a few years than our children, Jersey-born children, are reaching their 18th birthday, when they are probably ready to start work or go off to uni, *et cetera*. I always probably am the party-pooper in the room when people say: "We transfer skills. We cross-skill people. We upskill people." I say: "Who is going to do the healthcare workers, the dirty work, the real nitty-gritty that has to be done?" Some blank faces. Because these people are doing a job that is absolutely needed because people get older. Unfortunately, not all, but some people, as they get older, need more care. That is more cost. Then, the smaller the working population this end who are supporting those people, is our tax structure right? It was mooted by some people that people would be happy with a trade-off. That they would not mind a small increase across the board in tax and social security, *et cetera*, if they could see that the population was maybe not increasing so much or flattening out. But that has not been tested. It is all right for us to speak what people might like and might do. I just seem to not get that feel. I may speak again, but I just wanted to put those warnings out there. I agree with the Deputy of St. Martin as well. We could be worse, we could have a decreasing, really quickly decreasing, population that some small countries and islands find themselves in. They are in a worse position, they really are, and going through COVID. That is the other thing, the new immigration rules under Brexit have not been tested because we have had COVID and we basically have industries shut. So I do not know if States Members are expecting a number that is going to be produced by the end of the year. I would caution on that, whatever way we decide to go, if we all agree. But putting a number on it so soon with all the unknowns, I would be very, very wary of. That is really all I have to say. Sorry again, I have gone all over the place, but I wanted to make those comments and hopefully it has helped some people.

2.1.10 Deputy G.J. Truscott:

This is really going to be quite a complex debate. We are being asked to provide our vision for Jersey for the next 5, 10 and 20, years. I have to confess, my crystal ball is a little cloudy and it is cloudy insomuch as we are in the middle of a pandemic and, again as alluded to this morning, we are in post-Brexit times. About the numbers, using the Deputy of St. Peter's analogy about turning on the taps and turning off the taps to control population, he is absolutely right. It is about control going forward with our population control measures. But, like a dripping tap, eventually the bath will fill. That has been the problem by trying to achieve balance we have always let that dripping tap continue to drip. We do have to make a bold decision at some point and say: "It is going to be 110,000," for example, and we stick to that. At that point, it is where data, and the Deputy of St. Peter and myself are both aligned on this, it is all about the data. We need to know the ins and we need to know the outs. Not only that, we need feedback from our business leaders, from the Chamber of Commerce, *et cetera*,

with projections for future demand going forward. As I say, it is an incredibly complex thing that we are debating here today. Everybody is right, there are so many things that we would like as a society. We are talking about a new hospital, £800 million. We have just given the green light to £100 million office development. There is a debate regarding Fort Regent, whether we should go off and spend £250 million or whatever the figure is. There is a lot of nice things that we would like. But what is imperative going forward that we have a very strong and vibrant economy. The days of low wages is probably coming to an end. We are competing now in a very different world for labour. If Jersey is going to be able to attract people on a 9-month or a 4-year contract, then certainly the salaries are going to have to be attractive. We are also vulnerable to things like sterling. Should sterling depreciate significantly going forward, it will become likewise difficult to attract members of staff from areas where their currency is much stronger. There is the ageing demographic and, as we say, that in itself is going to cause issues and it will need to be addressed. It can be addressed. Currently, we are working on quite a low social security contribution. Going into this, we will have to look at charging more to those who can afford it to contribute to the demographic issue. As you say, there are so many different facets to this, it is difficult in a simple speech that I have not written, but just going from a few notes, to put together. It is young children, my young children, more of a young adult, but needing housing. We have all touched on it today. But again, regarding housing, you need a decent job, a decent salary, to either pay the mortgage or pay the rent. So it is vital, absolutely critical, that we get the economy right. Therefore, getting the population right to feed that economy is the big questions. It is about education and I agree with a number of Members who have previously spoken. We do need to grow our own and we have already started a nursing academy. We really need to do more of that. Not just talking nursing, we are talking social workers, electricians, and we need good grades coming from our schools so that they can go off to university, come back, and earn a good living here. But again housing is pivotal because if anybody is going to live a fulfilled life in Jersey you really do want to put down your roots and have a roof and a home to call your own going forward.

[15:15]

I will leave it there and, as I say, a very complex issue. Something I will listen to other Members, gain their thoughts on things going forward.

2.1.11 Deputy M. Tadier:

This is a very serious subject. I will start with a little bit of levity before moving on to something slightly more serious with the rest of the speech. I have circulated a photo that Members may have seen already on social media, which is quite amusing. It shows a crossing that has been put in, or the road markings have been redone recently outside Waitrose in St. Brelade, and the arrow is pointing the wrong way. So on one side it says: "Keep left" but the arrow is pointing towards the right. As a couple of commentators on social media commented, they said: "It looks like Jersey's Government has finally produced and unveiled its radical new population policy to control the population in Jersey." A lot of people got that. I make a more serious point now, which we can all agree with hopefully, when it comes to this very sensitive issue of population discussions. That is that I hope we all agree that racism should play no part in the discussion of what Jersey's population should be, how it should be controlled. That is why I was really disappointed by one political commentator who is asking for candidates to come forward in the next election to see him and to see former Deputy Jackie Hilton. It is the former Minister for Housing who is a political commentator and, who knows, might be making a comeback. His comment on that photo was to say: "Probably done by one of Deputy Tadier's foreign recent arrivals who will be standing in next year's elections." I think it is important to call this kind of thing out publicly, not because I do not have a thick skin and I can take robust political discussion and criticism directly. But when it comes to the insinuation and the directly racist, I do not think they are undertones, it is a completely racist post, the insinuation of course here is that a foreign worker coming to Jersey is presumably too thick to know the difference between left and right. Those kind of comments from a former Minister for Housing, who is no doubt

a political ally of some current Members in this Assembly, is completely disgraceful. Because we have to remember that Jersey's long and proud history has been built on the fact that immigrants have been coming to our Island, whether it is in the time when maritime pursuits were really popular and the Jerseymen and women made their living from the sea, from fishing, or from the less-savoury aspects of privateering or outright piracy. But agriculture, tourism, finance, we have always relied on a healthy inward immigration system. That has been important, not simply for the economy, but it has also been really important for the gene pool. I do not just mean the biological gene pool. I will refer to the cultural D.N.A. (deoxyribonucleic acid) of the Island, which has been constantly renewed and transformed by the fact that, even though we are a small Island, we have this diverse pool of people who choose to call Jersey their home. It is one thing for a Jersey-born person to say: "I live here and I am a proud Jersey person." But we did not do anything to choose to be here. We just got dealt that card and many of us stayed and many of us love it. But other people have made it a choice to give up something and perhaps to come here either temporarily or, in many cases, to make Jersey their home. We need to recognise that. How many times have we heard people say: "I came to Jersey in the 1970s, in the 1980s, just for a holiday and I ended up staying. I ended up getting married and I set up a family and I have been happy ever since." There are no doubt people whose ancestors could say: "You know what, I came to Jersey in the 1660s just as a soldier, or for whatever other reason, and I stayed because I loved it so much." We do well to recognise that. There is not a monopoly on Jersey identity and that needs to be said. Moving on though, the whole area of population discussion does throw up some inherent or at least, if not inherent, contradictions, certainly some tensions. Because, if you said to people, your average person, and certainly your average politician or political contender: "Do you think that we need to do more to control the population?" They would say: "Yes, probably." If you said: "Do you think the population should remain the same or decrease?" Most people in surveys would say: "Yes." They would agree that the population should not increase and, if anything, we could do with a few less people in Jersey. It is one of those of course where the person you are asking or the person you are speaking to, they are never the problem, even though they are contributing to population. A bit like traffic on the road, it is always other car drivers who are the problem. It is never yourself. They are the ones holding you up rather than the other way around. But we accept that is human nature. But there is an issue here because of course, if you said to people: "Do you think we need to build more housing in the Island?" they would probably say: "Yes, absolutely, we need to build more housing because we need somewhere for young people or even older people who are trying to downsize to live." So you want to decrease the population but you want to increase housing, so how does that work? Because it seems to me that there are natural capacity inhibitors when it comes to population, namely work and accommodation. So, if you do not have work and you do not have accommodation, it is probably really difficult to live in Jersey. You could probably live in Jersey without work if you had accommodation but you would need to have some way to pay for that or have free accommodation. If you only had work in Jersey, you could probably get by with sleeping on someone's sofa for a certain amount of time, and I recognise the fact that there is something we call informal homelessness that exists in Jersey. But ultimately, if you do not have somewhere to live and you do not have a job, you are not going to be staying in Jersey very long unless you are very independently wealthy, and then you are probably welcome anyway. You are probably staying in a hotel and you are effectively a tourist. So there is a tension there. I would say that everybody in Jersey has to live somewhere already and they may not be particularly well-accommodated and we might need new housing, but presumably we need to get rid of the bad housing as well. So there is a tension there. I also think that people want mutually exclusive things, they want to have a low population, ostensibly that is what people seem to be coming back with, but they want somebody else, like Deputy Martin said, to do the dirty work, to do the bad jobs, in inverted commas of course, because we know that all professions are valuable and are noble in many ways, often the most noble professions are the least well remunerated or the least well-respected. That is the irony and that is something we have to change. So if we are going down the route of grow-your-own, what are we saying? Grow your own care workers? Why would somebody who is locally qualified want to be a care worker if, for

example, we do not pay their travel time? Or if their employer does not pay their travel time. If they only have 2 weeks holiday a year, paid holiday, why would they want to do that when they can get a job with protected characteristics, for which you have to be here for 5 years in the Island, which pays better and has better terms and conditions? If all the other jobs do not need that qualification period necessarily, because we want to fill them with lower-paid workers with more precarious terms and conditions in terms of their work contracts. So that brings us back to the point that, yes, we could have a scenario where we close the borders, and this is obviously an extreme scenario, you close the borders and you say: "All jobs have to be filled by local people and let the market decide." So, if you cannot get a job that you want, your dream job, you have to take your less-dreamy job to do. But it goes back to the point that people want to be able to earn high wages and then go and sit in a café or a restaurant and not have to pay a lot of money because they want to be served by someone on low wages that keeps the cost down. That goes right across the board, right into our agriculture and fishing industries, whereby, if we were to truly pay the cost of goods and truly consume local, then we would probably have to be prepared to pay a lot more money to do it. So that brings us back to the point, and these are just thoughts, again I have not written a speech and that is probably obvious. But sometimes it is useful to speak off the cuff and listen to what other Members have said. The null hypothesis if you like could be: "Why do we have to do anything at all?" The answer to that is because it is political suicide. If politicians, as former Senator Syvret once said, were to tell the public the truth, they would not get elected. That probably goes across the board for environmental issues, *et cetera*. But hopefully, similarly, we are not here to try to lie to the public either. So what we need to do is look at how we not just manage the numbers of the population, if indeed that is what we are going to do, but how the population are looked after when they are here to consider their human rights, which is going to be fundamental and a very difficult sticking point for many Members in this Assembly who, on the one hand value human rights, but on the other hand wish to try to find a way, in a small Island, to have some kind of protectionist system operating. I make no apologies for calling it a protectionist system because that is inherently what it will be. So, again, this might throw up more questions than answers, but we have heard the point that it could be much worse. We could have a depopulation issue, a depopulation problem. If and when that does happen that will probably be largely due to factors outside of our control. So we do have to make those tough choices about where we put the population. I just bring it back to the fact, if you are one of those Members who thinks we need to go gung-ho and build lots more new housing, then do not come crying to me if you realise that the population has gone up because we have much more capacity in terms of housing, and therefore we have a lot more people living in Jersey. I will leave it there.

2.1.12 Senator K.L. Moore:

It is a difficult debate to keep it all together without repeating some of the points that have been made. But it does seem that we are achieving some common ground this afternoon, which is a good thing. So perhaps it is useful that we consider similar themes together. Hopefully, the Deputy of St. Peter will manage to draw out of those similar and common themes that we share some helpful points for him when he draws up his proposition. Like Deputy Martin, I do not think it is wise to focus on a number. A number is divisive. It also does not focus on what we need as a community. Because population is about skills, it is about raising revenue, it is about serving each other, it is about being a community and a space for us all to live. The potential for depopulation, and others have mentioned this too, that concerns me more at the moment. We see the cost of living driving people away and causing people not to return when they have been away, either for work or education. It is a real worry. As more and more people choose to leave because of their inability to access affordable housing, I can see a considerable problem coming down the track unless something is done to stop that tide. Because we will not be able to fulfil our fundamental services such as education and health. Therefore, we will see a breakdown of society. In order to maintain that population and help everybody to enjoy a good quality of life here, it is my view that we need to focus on wages, particularly the living wage.

[15:30]

But also to have some acceptance within the community that automation has to be a part of life. Greater automation is the only way that we can help to maintain skill base. There have been examples, perhaps in the hospitality industry, of a group of restaurants who have chosen to automate certain functions within their operations. It reduces the need for people and they have been able to balance that out by offering all of their staff the living wage. That is an exemplary way to approach the issue and we ought to be encouraging other parts of that sector and other sectors to follow suit. We are all aware that the agriculture industry, who have also invested in equipment to further mechanise their operations, and it would have been nice to see perhaps some fiscal stimulus solutions coming forward that would assist them and other sectors to further pursue mechanisation and automation. To help us resolve this problem. What fundamentally needs to be maintained in any proposal that touches on this subject is that people are treated with respect and not treated as mere commodities. I really hope that we will see a policy come forward that will focus on valuing people, connecting our community, and ensuring that everybody is embraced for whatever it is that they contribute to ensure that our society works well and we all support each other. Because we all need each other to fulfil our various roles within the community. So we have talked about the number and I do feel that it is much more complicated than that. In terms of themes, many have also touched on the theme of skills and education. We absolutely need to focus on that. Perhaps one of the issues that we consistently see is the difficulty with which young people here find funding for post-graduate qualifications. We only, as an Island, offer support for people in a very limited number of post-graduate studies. As an Island that predominantly has an industry that focuses on a high level of professional skill, it is my view that is rather short-sighted. We need to encourage a strengthening and a broadening of skills. I know that Deputy Maçon is very passionate about that and I hope that he will consider further achieving it. So, other themes, of course there is always the balance between the environment and access to housing and the impact that people have on the environment and the consequent impact that has on the quality of life. So, rather than a citizens' panel, which Deputy Young suggested, I would like to see this Assembly work together to help to deliver balance, to focus on sustainability, and also to focus on values. Because, essentially, that is what people who elect us to represent them wish to see us do and achieve. If we work together, perhaps by forming subgroups, and genuinely being inclusive and listening and co-operating together, then, especially as we have seen so many common themes appearing this afternoon, we will be able to issue a sound policy that we will be proud of and it will help to deliver a future for Jersey that is sound and ensures that we all enjoy a good quality of life for years to come. For the moment, I will leave it at that.

2.1.13 Connétable R.A. Buchanan of St. Ouen:

It is difficult to know where to start this debate. As somebody who came to the Island in 1966 and then married a local girl, I have seen the Island grow over the years since I have been here. Frankly, why do anything? Because we have a problem. It is people like me who are still here, who have retired now, who represent quite a lot of the problem that we have. If I had not been elected to the Assembly, I would be a non-productive unit in society and essentially taking up a house but without contributing to the economy. Sadly, Jersey has a bulge of people like that. We have a bulge in the civil service who will be coming up for retirement, quite a large number of people. In the finance industry, I cannot speak for other industries because I have not worked in other industries, but in the finance industry we have the same problem. The people like me who retire have to be replaced. As an Island, we have not done particularly well in growing homegrown people to fill those gaps. If I look at my own 2 children, my daughter has stayed in the Island and gone into education and is now teaching at St. George's, but my son now works in England. So 50 per cent of our family have not helped. I am sure the story is the same elsewhere. So, as an Island, we have to make some decisions and we have to look at the industries we have. We have to decide, going forward, how we are going to support those industries because they will need people going forward. Those people have to come from somewhere and there are people coming through the schools who will fill some of those slots, but I do not see them filling all of those slots. That brings me to the second issue really. The Island has a chronic shortage of housing, for whatever reason. We know that because we have seen the

effect of it. House prices have gone up ridiculously since I have been in the Island. I bought my house for a 5-figure sum and it is now worth a very large 6-figure sum, which is ridiculous. The house price inflation in Jersey has gone through the roof. When my daughter bought a house, I had to help her do it because it would have been a struggle for her otherwise. There are lots of people in the same position. While we live in a lovely Island, people with young families need to be housed. If we cannot house them, they will probably go elsewhere. So, again, the housing issue we have to address. Sadly, it means if we wish to continue on the current course, which is to have a successful finance industry and to have successful other industries, and indeed have the support industries that support those industries, they demand people. People demand houses. So, unless we are going to radically cut back on those industries or we are only going to select a few and let them carry on, we have to make some decisions about what we do about housing. Sadly, those decisions may be painful, certainly for those people who do not want to be building in green areas. Because we have done very well filling in housing in St. Helier and elsewhere. But that is going to run out. It is not going to last for ever. There is not going to be an endless supply of places within Town that can provide housing. Indeed, the infrastructure of St. Helier is not going to carry on supporting additional people for ever. It is not fair to put that strain on St. Helier because the more people we put into Town the less desirable a place it becomes to live. So, again, we have some tough choices to make as far as housing is concerned. The final thing I will throw into the ring is this brings us back to the population problem that we have. People who retire do not contribute but they are the very people who need supporting, as those of us who are getting past retirement age quickly realise. We see our parents needing the same thing. They are going to need care and they are going to need the facilities of the new hospital. They are going to need care home support in due course. That demands people again. So I do not have any answers to the housing solution. All I know is that there is a problem and that is why we need to do something. All I have done is list the problems and I do not like doing that. I like to be able to list solutions. But I do not particularly see a solution that springs out immediately. I see a lot of tough choices in terms of which industries we want to be successful and whether they contribute enough to the Island for us to want that. I see a lot of tough choices about housing and indeed some painful ones. Because, if we are going to provide sufficient housing and it is going to be of sufficient quality to retain people, then I suspect we are going to have to look at using up some of our green areas and that will meet serious resistance from a lot of people. But, at the end of the day, if we are going to carry on having a viable society, we might just have to do that. So, I will listen to the rest of the debate with great interest. But we all know that we have to do something because we can see the demands placed on infrastructure for ourselves, the increased levels of traffic, increased queues for things, increased time to get healthcare in the Island, strains on our schools. We have a problem and frankly it is absolutely right that we have this debate because, if we do not address it soon, we will start to see the fallout. Any society that does not address problems like this, it is like business, there are only 2 ways to go, you go forward, and Jersey has been very good at going forward, or very good at dodging around inconvenient issues such as population. But, sooner or later, the consequences of us not making decisions will come home to bite us. We could well be facing the reverse problem in that, because we do not have a viable population strategy, which supports the community, we could find that the industries who provide us with our wealth will look at us and go: "We can do better elsewhere and there is a better place for us to employ people, so we will move there and we will take our business away from Jersey." That would be regrettable to say the least. So we are getting to a turning point where hard decisions have to be made. It is absolutely vital that we have this debate and I shall be listening very carefully and, hopefully, later on contributing with some thoughts of my own on how we can solve this problem. But I will leave it there and let my esteemed senatorial colleague speak now.

2.1.14 Senator L.J. Farnham:

Just a quick one. Deputy Truscott talked about population caps and that sort of concerns me slightly, the dripping tap and eventually the bath will be full. Then, if we work, we cannot cap our population because that will lead to depopulation. As soon as a population stops growing, it starts shrinking and

that brings us a whole new load of problems. We are fortunate because, unlike some other countries, much larger countries, we do not have to deal with pro-natalist or anti-natalist issues. The main levers of controlling our population are our migration controls. Perhaps, with hindsight, we could have done that differently. But we can certainly learn from it and the new migration controls, although slightly more difficult to manage, primarily or ironically, if that is a word, possibly because of Brexit and the pandemic. But I will come on to that in a minute. We can learn from that. So really our population numbers have always been, and I think will always be, to some extent driven by the levers we use for migration control. People will need to come and go. Senator Moore rightly pointed out that we see some people go because they cannot realise their personal aspirations here because they cannot get jobs that will facilitate the purchase of a family home. So they move off. But, equally, we have others that come and decide to stay. We always need that ebb and flow just to keep the potential growth under control a little bit. When we look at migration controls, I am not sure whether, if we had not introduced them from next year, as is the plan, we would have seen a slowing-down in population because of the Brexit position; our access to the E.U. for workforce has pretty much gone. Not gone, but a completely different process is required, which causes a disincentive for people wanting to come and work outside of the E.U. and for potential employers on-Island.

[15:45]

The pandemic has forced us to embrace technology in a way we would never have before, well I am not sure many of us would have ever envisaged we would be quite comfortably and effectively holding States Assembly meetings like this. These opportunities need to be grasped. Not that I do not miss being with my colleagues in the flesh. But, as a result of which, the businesses and the industries behind the technology have really been forced to ramp up their research and development and we can all benefit from it. Those things alone will help us, will put less pressure on population growth. But, to finish, the real challenge is not necessarily the growth of the population or the overall numbers, but what the population is doing. That is why we need to make sure that our vision for the community, for the economy, for our society, stays strong. Because a strong economy and an active and evolving society is the important thing. That is what Jersey has always been good at. That is where we must focus moving forward.

2.1.15 Deputy K.F. Morel:

There is just so much to say on this subject that it is very difficult to know where to start. But I will start with some of the comments that preceded me from the Constable of St. Ouen and Senator Farnham. I find it interesting because they both touched on what I think is the simple logic of the population growth conundrum. That is, as long as there is population growth, the only possible outcome of that, at some point in the future - and it could be centuries in the future, it is not tomorrow, we know that much - but the only possible outcome of continued population growth, even if it is growth of 100 people a year, is that at some point there will be no green space left in this Island. At some point there will be no woods left, there will be no fields left. There will be housing up to the beaches everywhere. Because population growth, if you do not slow it down and ultimately you bring it to a net-zero population growth position at some point in the future, as the Constable of St. Ouen said, you have to house these people who come into this Island. So the logic of population growth is ultimately complete urbanisation of the Island of Jersey. Certainly, as we stand here today, most States Members and most members of our community in Jersey would say that is not something we want to see. What we are not capable of doing very well at the moment is saying where should the population get to? I do not know whether it should remain where we are today, whether it should be maybe a limit of 150,000, maybe a limit of 200,000, maybe the limit is 500,000 people, I do not know. That is the political question that different generations of politicians will decide as time goes by. But, from my perspective, if you accept the logic, and I think it is undeniable logic, that population growth of any amount leads ultimately to the total urbanisation of Jersey, then you have to also accept that, if you do not want the total urbanisation of Jersey, there has to be a point in the

future where you have to say: "We need net-zero population growth." I also find it interesting listening to Senator Farnham and the Constable of St. Ouen, and others - and I will refer to it - I believe it is really in my mind 20th century thinking, that you need people constantly to be growing your economy. I do not accept that is correct. I accept that is 20th century thinking, that that is the way things used to be. We are in a transition period now, in my view, whereby, through various tools, we can improve productivity in businesses. We can grow economies without using more and more people all the time. On top of that, I would even suggest it is possible to move to a different economic paradigm where you are looking to create prosperity and happiness for people. You are not looking to create constant economic growth for people. I believe reaching that point is probably a bit further down the line as well. But, ultimately, it is where we would need to be in people's mindsets that they are not just constantly trying to attract more and more capital for themselves as individuals or for their families. But they are content with an ongoing level of quality of living, which, if you are to want at some point net-zero population growth, is possibly something that you have to come to accept as well. Those are the kind of very, very high-level framings of this debate from my perspective. The total urbanisation of Jersey, if you continue with population growth at any rate whatsoever, and also, around that, is this idea that you do not necessarily need a constant influx of people in order to maintain population growth. But, within that framing, you then have to look at Jersey's economy and public finances and the whole structure of our society as it stands at the moment. It is very much structured on constant population growth. Our tax system is based heavily on personal taxation. So, as we know, we have a demographic that is moving towards more people retiring, so no longer creating the economic outputs that they used to create. So, in order to make up for that loss of the larger working population as they move towards retirement, at the moment, from a public finance perspective, we need more younger people coming in, in order to maintain those public finances, in order to maintain that tax base. So, if you want to move to a net-zero population growth at some point in the future, you absolutely need to also move away from a basis of taxation, which is personal taxation, as a mainstay of taxation in the Island. That is a huge question. That is something that is not going to be decided overnight. That is something that is going to come about from conversations, from understanding our economy better. If it involves corporate taxation, as an example, and only as an example, then you would need to ask if that is going to affect businesses, Jersey's attractiveness as a place for investment and so on. Aside from that, we also have the state pension, and I apologise for the, not vulgar language, but the simplistic language, which is our state pension system is quite simply a Ponzi scheme. Everyone knows this. There is not an Islander I speak to who does not agree with that. The state pension is paying out for today's retired people from the wages earned by today's working people. So that scheme, as our retired population grows, which it is absolutely doing, you need more and more workers coming into the Island in order to pay those pensions out the other side. You cannot, within that system, have a net-zero population growth policy. Because you constantly need to be having more workers coming in to pay for those pensions. So, again, if you want to move to a point where you have net-zero population growth at some point in the future, you are going to have to completely restructure the pension system. It will have to be funded in a very different way altogether. So those are just 2 of the financial aspects of our society today, which hinder us. Do not just hinder us, they actively stop us from reducing population growth. They certainly actively stop us from moving to a net-zero population growth position. So, I have heard people talking about housing, talking about work, but without repeating what has already been said, it is my view that, while the States Assembly has said that it wants to see a full population policy by the end of this year, it is completely impossible for the Government to bring, by the end of this year, a full working population policy, which reduces population growth or moves to a net-zero population growth situation. Because the problems it would have to solve between now and the end of the year would involve the complete overhaul of the taxation system and the complete overhaul of the pension system, complete relooking at housing and so on and so forth. So, in my mind, this population policy that we have to bring forward by the end of the year should very much be focused on putting the foundation stones in place to enable us in the future to move to a net-zero population growth position. Because, at some point in the future, you are going to have to move to that position.

That point in the future could be 150 years' time there might be a population of 300,000 on this Island and it is at that point that the politicians of the day decide: "We need to move to net-zero population growth." But they would have the building blocks in place to allow that to happen and to enable that to happen. So, for me, this population policy that we need to bring out, has to be focused on those building blocks. On looking at the issues which stop us today from actively reducing population growth or moving to a net-zero population growth position, that is where we need to start. It would be impossible and it would be a fool's errand if the population policy at the end of the year were to say: "We are going to cap population at 120,000 in 10 years' time." Because we would have none of the tools in place to make that happen and to allow it to happen in a sustainable way. So I am going to leave it there for the moment. I am just going to say, because credit where credit is due, and I always try to live by that maxim, is that when I joined the Assembly I did not think of net-zero population growth as being a realistic position to take for many of the reasons that Senator Farnham just explained. But it was through conversations with Deputy Perchard that I have revised that position. Part of it is understanding the logic of population growth leads to the complete urbanisation of the Island. It is also that sense that it is only by laying down or putting the aspiration of net-zero population growth in place that you will then get, in the private sector, businesses and enterprises really fundamentally looking at the way they work and fundamentally looking at their productivity schemes and projects and really implementing that to allow that to happen. So there is a transition to take place. Personally, I am of the perspective that we need to look at and prepare for net-zero population growth. It is unlikely that I will be even alive when that net-zero population growth is realised. But by working towards it and by putting that as the ultimate goal for some decades in the future, then we will in the meantime be creating a sustainable system, which allows that to happen. I hope that makes sense. But that is where I will leave it and I hope that is of some use to Deputy Huelin and his policy board.

2.1.16 Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen:

I am pleased to follow the previous speaker because I would like to address this issue of net-zero population growth, which I think is a chimera really and a quest that is thought after as the panacea for our Island. But really we need not be terrified by population growth. We must understand that fears around the population growth can arise as a result of our perspective. We get used to an environment. We get used to the Island we have experienced. We create a view in ourselves of the Jersey with which we are comfortable. We do not have a wider perspective and I think we need to. When the French Huguenots came to the Island, they were considered by Islanders as unwelcome outsiders in many cases. Now they are valued Jersey families. When English settlers arrived after steamboat travel to the Island became a regular, reliable service, but there was hostility from the Jersey people at the time. But their ideas, their vibrancy, their industry and commerce, created the Island, which we have built upon. They integrated and they fashioned our present culture.

[16:00]

My father, now in his 90s, remembers Les Quennevais as open fields. Now I drive through Les Quennevais, I do not wistfully wish it to be restored to open fields. It is a part of my Jersey. So, all the immigrations that the Island has seen, they could be thought by Jerseymen of the time to have had the potential to spoil the Island. But we need to look with perspective. They have not spoiled the Island. Incoming population need not spoil the Island. Because all population influx, all people arriving, will contribute to the Island and become part of what the Island is now and will be. So we should not say that those population rises over recent years should not have happened. That we would be better off back, some people choose numbers of 100,000, some people would like to go back to the 1960s. No, the Island has adapted. I would like us to remain adaptable over the long term. Not shut down the Island. The previous speaker wondered aloud about the time when Jersey would become completely urbanised. But that is a view from our present perspective, what urbanisation would look like. A Jerseyman 200 or 300 years ago would never have dreamed of the urbanisation of the area between St. Helier and St. Aubin. There was not even a road between St.

Helier and St. Aubin. Now we think nothing of it. We do not find that at all appalling and a backward step. But it would have been for somebody looking at it 200 or 300 years ago. So urbanisation, no, that is just a perspective that we are applying at this time. So I do not think we should be saying we cannot sustain a population. If we do, it leads to depopulation, which spoken about, it leads to harm. It leads to the consequences that we see in many other Islands offshore of a mainland area where they are suffering in terms of young people leaving, lack of education and industry, and all the other harms. But maintaining a population, allowing proper growth, does mean that we must acknowledge we have to be active and responsive in the management of our services for a growing population. It means that Government must be harder than Governments of a territory where there are huge amounts of space and where there are extensive resources. It means we also have to be alert to particular pressures that arise in our community, where people live close together. Such as housing, and we have spoken a lot about housing today. Any Government in Jersey will need to make bold decisions and be prepared to house its population whenever they arrive and wherever they have arrived from. In the same way that decisions were taken to subsidise houses with the States Loans Housing Scheme of the past. We must recognise that with a limited supply of housing, we have to accept who gets the poor end of the deal. It is often those who have most recently arrived in the community. Those who are doing the hard graft, the jobs that other people do not want to do, and they are giving their utmost to keep the Island thriving and vibrant. They should not be treated as an underclass, as less deserving of the benefits of Island life than others who have been here for generations. Once we move to a migration policy, which individualises permits and recognises those who apply to come here and we ask them to come for, whether it is 9 months, 4 years, permanently, we recognise their value and we give them proper treatment and proper housing. We can do that because we will have accepted that they should be here. We want them here. They have a role to play. That will allow the population of the Island to operate in a cohesive way where we can all count as members of the community, whether we are income-producing or not, and whatever age or whatever background. But that does mean that Government has to be proactive and interventionist and manage these situations for the good of all that are here. So we can manage, we can be pleased to accept people into this Island and to contribute. But we must be prepared to adopt measures that in other places might be seen as overbearing. But we must be in a position to manage the population and to create a quality of life in this Island that all can enjoy.

2.1.17 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Just one observation. We are in a situation when in 10 years' time the old people who are retired and, according to many, are reaping the benefits of our social security pension scheme, in 10 years' time it is unfortunate that a lot of them will be dead or close to it. We will need younger people to replace them. They may not be able to be replaced from in this Island. Therefore, in order to continue the way of life that people are used to, they will need to be replaced with people from elsewhere. So, putting a number on population will not work. We need people here with the skills to keep our Island economically viable. We need people here and to have an open policy but controlled with work permits. This will allow us to control the overall number. It has become a matter of financial survival and this seems to be the only way that we can get out of it.

2.1.18 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour:

I was intending to speak twice and I wanted to listen to colleagues' thoughts and views and it is, as ever, what we are finding with yet another in-committee debate, it is opening and helping all of us I think, as Senator Moore said, to find some common ground. I just wanted to comment at this point on hearing certain things that prompted me to speak earlier. One of the things is something I constantly say at the moment, is that the pandemic has exposed a lot of things around the world and in communities and particularly in our community, in our Island. It has exposed a lot of good things, a lot of things that I think we always knew and maybe we could argue we take for granted. That is our community, the way we look out for each other, the way we learn from each other, the way we look back and see how far we have progressed as a community and how we respect that the world

around us has changed. Sometimes this Island has punched above its weight and sometimes it has made some excellent forward-thinking progressive decisions, as we saw yesterday. Deputy Doublet's amendment we saw yesterday. Then, in other areas, it is issues where we still have a road to go. The other thing of course about in a pandemic, in a crisis, as well as it shows up all the good things that we value and hold dear, it obviously exposes the things that we still need to get to grips with, for us to go forward and do the things that we are all touching upon today. One of the things that has come through over the last year, and I know the Deputy of St. Peter will be foot-stamping as he sits left of me usually in the Chamber, is data and the understanding of the reality that, outside of our world, and I mean that in a personal sense and a political sense, is all of the view of many Islanders that we represent in our constituencies, in our Parishes, and further afield. One thing I was very concerned about during the pandemic was the effects that this would have on people who were already struggling and working really hard to keep their heads above the water. As we are seeing, our lack of detail about what is the reality of the poverty and relative poverty that everyday folk are going through on this Island? That is why I was really pleased to bring my amendment to last year's Government Plan, which obviously I was in discussion with the Government, and I accepted their amendment to my amendment. But that is so crucial in understanding really where we need to get to grips with things to help the people that we represent on this Island. Because we need to understand. We cannot just keep pushing things away and dealing with it later in the day. This is really essential. It was the same thing this year, the coinciding of the census and the Island Plan. For me, what I could never get my head around, is the census is still, although there is room for improvement, a good way of understanding and getting data of where we are now. The order of how we go about things sometimes does not make sense. Surely, to do the census and get the data that we need will then inform the Island Plan as we go forward. The same I would say with the work that is going on with the assisted-dying conversation that we as an Island will continue to have. The citizens' jury that is put in place is bringing together people to talk and look at a very sensitive subject that will affect a lot of people and we, at some stage, will have to have a vote on. But what is really crucial is everybody has the right to be heard and we take our time to get the right decision for our Island. That is what always has to be our focus. That is what I want to see come through with today's in-committee debate. We are hearing that. We are listening to each other. That is positive. We need to see that, as Deputy Morel said earlier, with what is coming down the line. The other thing is the tone of the way that this is presented. Sometimes I think when we get into this area we can sometimes be lost in the myriad of what is going on in the world right now. There is a lot of tension, a lot of anger, there are a lot of opposing views on these things. I do not want us to be caught up in that. We have to be real, as the Deputy of St. Ouen said, of our perspective. It is so important. I just hope that is the tone. Because we have to get this right. We have to get this right. We have to include everybody and we cannot shut our ears off. Because the communication transference of all this is so important. So that is what I wanted to say at this stage. I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate and my other thoughts on what could possibly as constructive as that process later. But I just wanted to say that now.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Really just to understand something. Many people have mentioned that they would like to speak twice and it has been fascinating so far hearing everybody's views of where we are today and their vision for the future. But people are going to come back and want to say their solutions for this and how they are going to manage these tensions. So will you be breaking the debate into 2 halves or if people stop speaking now will you say that is the end of the debate?

The Bailiff:

We have not formally fixed, although you made the suggestion in R.41, Deputy, we have not formally fixed the debate to be separated into part 1 and part 2. But I am content that.

[16:15]

What I will do is I will ask if anyone wishes to speak in part 1 of the debate and if the answer to that is no, then I will ask if anyone wishes to speak in part 2 of the debate. If the answer to that is no, well then the debate is finished. If the answer to that is yes, somebody indicates a desire to speak, the debate will continue.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Thank you. I apologise to anybody if I was a bit quick off the button trying to ask that question. I just did not want the debate to end prematurely.

The Bailiff:

Indeed. So, if Members have a contribution they wish to make under part 1 of the report, so the opportunity to describe their vision for Jersey over the next 5, 10, 20 years, and our common population policy would help to achieve that aim, then if anyone would wish to speak to that, would they indicate now? Otherwise we will move on to part 2 of that debate.

2.1.19 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Just a few words before we move on. I am a bit concerned about some Members' views on the stabilisation or maintenance of population and not increasing. I fully understand the concept of complete and total urbanisation of the Island. But to me that is scaremongering a bit. I say to those Members who want to maintain a stable population that people have babies, they have children, the Island grows its population naturally. We need to think very, very carefully before we do something quite, in my view, as draconian as that.

2.1.20 Deputy J.H. Young:

Just in very, very summary. What the vision has to be is to end up with a sustainable Island, which means that we have a balance that people can live with between the economy and our environment and our community needs. We have allowed that seriously to get out of balance and we need to bring it back. I agree that trying to put numbers is not the way. But all those 3 ingredients have to be there. That means about having an equality, a much greater degree of equality in our systems and how we pay for Government. Because, otherwise, we will just encourage more and more growth just purely of people coming into the Island. We have to live within our means more and use our resources that we have and people that we have and the wonderful skills and the talent we have here. We have to do it better. So that is a real big tough challenge and it is something that I do share the doubts of Deputy Morel whether it is realistic to solve all that inside the very short timetable sought. But those are definitely there. Of course, the needs of the community are about being much more confident than certainly I am now that we can really have social care, care in the community, so that we can all meet our people's needs in the future and our education service. Those are the key elements. It is a huge challenge. But, please, there is one overall lesson, you get what you pay for. We are going to have to pay for this and there is going to be a cost and people need to be prepared to be open to changing out tax system.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on the first part of the debate? If no other Member wishes to speak on the first part of the debate, then I close that part of the debate. Does any Member wish to speak on the second part of the debate?

2.1.21 Senator T.A. Vallois:

I was hesitant to speak on the first part of the debate. Many Members iterated much of what I saw in terms of the skills and the need for the skills on the Island. My concerns come in terms of defining sustainability. This kind of goes on to part 2 where we are talking about reflecting on the different visions that were set out in the first part of this debate. For me, I have always had an issue with what that sustainability predominantly means for the Island. Anything could technically be sustainable if you are willing to pay for it and you are willing to take on some of the issues that come with that. It

is very much about the life/work balance situation. One of the things that are missing particularly in the timetable that has been referred to in the very helpful report, and I thank the Deputy of St. Peter and the Chief Minister for lodging the report to assist with this debate, but the timetable, there is no mention of bringing in children and young people's voices into this and what their next 20 years looks like and means to them. There are very mixed messages that are displayed, not just by us as politicians, but by the population as a whole, to our younger generation. You have to go off-Island in order to get the experience to work in high-level jobs to afford to live. Therefore, you are more likely to get a decent job in Jersey. Or you need to stay in Jersey and you need to do vocational skills because that will be good for you. Very, very mixed messages. We are an Island, at the end of the day, and that is going to be one of the pivotal issues that we are going to have to address in terms of how we identify the right policies and the right frameworks. One of the very good starting points is the feedback that we have had either through the performance framework that has been developed, which is the voice of the population that was brought out in 2018. We also have, and this talks to in particular the conversation that has just been had around skills and education in the Island, Members will know I am very passionate particularly about that area. We do a disservice and I do not think we invest in it enough to meet the population issues that we face and the skills issues that we are going to face. I want to mention in particular here the big education conversation and the fight for the funding that was needed for this. That does not even go far enough because we have to recognise we are a neurodiverse society. We are a diverse society. But we think very differently and we have different ways of coming from areas. There is potentially a rub up against what is growth for the Island in order for it to survive as an economy, versus what is the growth of the Island for us to have the right work/life balance so that we can enjoy our family, our friends, our environment, in the right proportionate way, against that we are required to have in terms of an income to have a house over our head, to have food in our bellies and to be part of society and a community that supports each other. Many of the policies that are referred to, particularly in the second part, which will support the vision and the population policy that ultimately comes out of this. There are going to be some extremely difficult decisions that will have to be made. Somebody mentioned it earlier about having the tap turned on and off. That is very much going to be the case, but this is going to have to be a long-term consideration in order to have that tap turning on and off and the right data to inform that tap. That is why I am appreciative of the Migration Board producing their report and doing that work. But I would like to make sure that children and young people have a voice in this timetable to feed back. Because, in 20 years' time, they will be inheriting something that we will ultimately be determining for them. It would be useful to have their feedback on this as well.

2.1.22 Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary:

First of all, can I just endorse the comments made by the Deputy of St. Martin in the first part of the debate as to population growth generally. Some 18 months ago I was in the Isle of Man at a meeting for the Crown Dependencies. As is my wont, I picked up the local paper and there were 2 familiar headlines on it, one relates to a planning application, which lots of the locals did not want, and the other was the population problem. But the population problem in the Isle of Man is that they do not have enough. It is one shared by Guernsey. We are the only Crown Dependency where, if it is a problem, we have it, and we must carefully balance whatever regulations we introduce to make sure that we do not pick a similar baton that we did some years ago with the finance industry when the word went around that Jersey was closed for business when it was not. We must be very careful as to maintaining our balance there. As to the mechanisms by which we can achieve that, or the problems that overpopulation gives rise to, again I thank those who prepared this particular paper. Two things come to mind, the first is at the time of the last election Members may recall that the Construction Council invited prospective Members to a conference as to where they were going and how they saw their needs. One of the warnings they gave was the overheating, if you like, but the excessive demands on their members. To a large extent, I suggest that the States have a part to play in this. The States should be able to monitor the number of people required on States projects, but we appear to produce them one after another without any thought to the number of people we will be

obliged to bring into the Island to carry out those projects. There needs to be better management on that side. I apologise to those involved if that is already in place, but I suggest perhaps not enough. The other aspect, which is a relatively small one in the context of things, but again I went to the Jersey Farming Conference, it was the year before last, where the Minister for the Environment quite rightly brought up the potential water shortage and introduced the possibility of water catchment tanks. I would like to see that advanced. I do not see why there should not be legislation introduced whereby new properties have that facility. I lived in a property once with it there. Whereby incentives are given to existing properties to introduce them. They are just 2 small measures I suggest, which might be thought through.

2.1.23 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Just very quickly on the ideas side of things, possibly some terrible ideas, but just a few I would like to throw in there at a very practical level. One came up in conversation with the Deputy of St. Peter during lockdown, so maybe it is a fevered lockdown idea, who knows? But from the perspective of productivity and trying to increase productivity within businesses, I had thought that it may be an idea to tie to some extent the application for a licence for someone outside the Island to come work in a business to the delivery of a productivity plan for that business. Thereby, businesses with no productivity plans and none in the offing would not be able to access workers from outside the Island. The idea being that, if you really do need this person to work in your business, then you must have a productivity plan that will show us how you are going to decrease the need for people in your business over time. One idea. Another idea just on the housing situation has come from a parishioner and this parishioner is a couple who would like to retire and are in a house that is larger than they need. But, at the moment, it does not make sense the way the housing market works for them to sell their house and downsize immediately.

[16:30]

They would not get very much for that. They asked if there were any schemes within the government whereby I know this happens in France, not at a government level, but whereby they could sell the house today with 10 or 15-year or lifetime enjoyment of the house with the government having bought that house, then able to put it into housing stock once they leave in 10 or 15 years' time to go to somewhere smaller. The government would then have housing stock coming online. So it is a difficult one for government to enter into, but it is still an interesting idea, helping people downsize by giving them the funds they need to then go out and find somewhere else. I would be happy to speak to other people in greater detail about that. But, again, tied to housing, is this idea that we need to use the land we have in Jersey in the already-built-up area to the best possible extent and to use it as efficiently as possible. So I do feel, and I was discussing this with another Deputy earlier today, we need to take stock properly of the unused houses in Jersey; those that are standing there empty. It would take some effort. But it is not enough for us just to assume that they are going to be put back into use at some time soon. We essentially need to create an inventory of unused houses in Jersey, understand the reasons why they are not used, and where those reasons are not understandable. They could be waiting for an estate to be settled or something like this. But where they are just unused, perhaps for capital appreciation, then there needs to be a mechanism for the Government to force them back into use for housing. Because, as such a small Island, it makes no sense to accept that there are possibly I think by the last count 3,000 - Senator Mézec would know better than me - unused properties in Jersey. That is just too many. That is 3,000 families who could be using those premises. Thank you, Senator Mézec, for confirming that. So they are just 3 ideas, possibly completely off the wall and barmy ideas, but as this is the ideas section of the debate I thought I would throw them out there as things that are worth possibly mulling over. I will leave it at that and I hope someone else does decide to continue the debate.

2.1.24 Senator S.Y. Mézec:

I just want to follow on from Deputy Morel, and since this is meant to be the ideas section of the debate just to throw some things out here and try and connect them to what I said about mistakes we

have made in the past that I spoke about in the first part of this debate. We do I think have to accept that if we do not use our resources adequately then that can put strain on whatever population policy we do adopt. It is important that we make sure that we get the best use of what we have in the Island to mitigate what we may or may not want to achieve with a population policy, and housing is quite clearly one of the most important aspects of that. If we are going to leave our housing system completely unaltered and ignore it when it comes to deciding population policy and potentially having more people moving into the Island to live then we can end up exacerbating things and have a negative impact on the standard of living. So what Deputy Morel mentioned there about empty properties is really, really important. At the last census which was now a decade and probably a few days ago is obviously out of date and we will find out the new figures for how many empty properties there are in the Island but at the last count it was 3,000. In that 3,000 I am sure that a very, very good proportion of them were probably empty for perfectly reasonable reasons at the time, but even if you got just a proportion of those homes back on the market or back with families living in them you would alleviate some of the strain being put in other parts of the market and a potential further need to develop more and end up having all sorts of horrible debates and arguments over which parts of the Island they will end up getting built in or which fields we will have to lose and all of those debates we would prefer not to be having. So if we are going to be serious about dealing with that issue then we are going to have to put things on the table and say if you are serious you are going to have to do this, and if you are not prepared to do this do not pretend you are serious. So let us tax empty properties and let us put some sort of financial penalty in place where if you are somebody who is hoarding properties that you are not capable of looking after or managing properly that there is a very strong incentive for you to dispose of those properties and not continue to do that. If there are certain investors who are upset by that because they were hoarding properties to speculate on them and make a bigger profit, tough luck to them. We will need the courage to send out those messages and say to some people who benefit very handsomely from the status quo: "We are very sorry but in the interests of the whole Island and the macroeconomic picture we are trying to deliver here certain decisions will have to be made that are not in your interest." That will, when it comes to housing, largely be investors because we have over many years turned what is an absolutely basic need for people into something that is a commodity to make money out of. So since this is the ideas section let us tax empty properties in some form or another, provide that clear disincentive for hoarding properties or not using them properly, and hopefully end up with more families living in them, whether they are buying them when they come on to the market or if not then at least renting it in some other way. We should also look properly at the recommendations that are going to be published at some point, the Chief Minister said by the end of the month; I will believe that when I see it but hopefully it is right. The recommendations that will come from the Housing Policy Development Board which are going to propose bringing out a fairer and more balanced housing market that supports those who are never going to be the big players in the market as investors but people who are simply looking after somewhere to live that will meet their needs and that they can afford. That may well mean in some instances saying to those who deliver housing: "Sorry but you cannot do what you like here, you are going to have to incorporate into your development, or whatever it is you are doing, something that we consider to be in the interests of the whole Island." That may mean saying to developers when they are building large amounts of properties that a significant proportion of them have got to be for first-time buyers or for submarket rent in some form or another, and if they are not prepared to do that then we do not give them planning permission. If they hoard land that they do not seek to get planning permission on then we put some sort of penalty on them for it to incentivise better use of our land. Some people might think that is quite a radical thing to do but I want to ask them if they are those who will criticise ideas like that for being too radical, what is your proposal instead? Because if it is that we do nothing then you are not being constructive and not being realistic about trying to tackle the problems that Jersey needs to if we are to then go on and have a sustainable population policy in one form or another. So those are broadly 2 ideas just to contribute at this stage: taxing empty properties and requiring developers to provide a proportion of the homes that they develop for affordable housing in one form or another, and putting penalties in place for those who

hoard land and do not seek to get planning permission when they should be or get planning permission and then wait years and years and years before attempting to do anything out of it so they can make maximum profit out of it when there are people who are desperate for homes to live in. So those are just some ideas at this point and if anyone is shrieking in horror at those suggestions I challenge them here and now to come up with something better.

2.1.25 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I speak after the last 2 or 3 speakers and a lot of the things I was going to say were covered there. But there are a couple of things I would say, and perhaps this is an idea that we can enact very simply. Every time the word “property” is used why do we not translate the word “home” into that? I have said this before and I will say it again, because when we talk about the homes market, if you want to call it that, we are talking about exactly that; a basis for your life is the home that you live in and unless you have the rights and you have security in that home life becomes very difficult. It is perhaps the most unnerving thing to be facing insecurity in your home and that is something we need to address. We need to address that in particular for young people in this Island otherwise we will have a talent drain from this Island that would be very difficult to repair and would be very difficult to build up again. We need to address that for young people and there are so many young people who have educated themselves so well in many different ways - and I will talk a little about education in a second - but they are not on-Island at the moment, they are using their skills elsewhere. One of the reasons is it is simply unaffordable for them to come back and live here and have any form of standard of living and that has to be addressed. That is an integral part of the population debate so that any talent that we have remains here and can be used to the best of its ability. I also would like to say that we need to end this forced dichotomy between the academic and the vocational educational world. They are not a separation. Many skills, many occupations, many professions are a combination of the academic and the vocational and medicine is a prime example of that. You need to know your academia but you also know how to actually treat a human being. That forced dichotomy is reflected in our education system and I would suggest we need to move further away from the Anglo-American nature of our education system and more towards a much wider worldview, which is more about education in a broader sense. That will give us the type of individual skills and education that will serve our community very well. It will also increase our awareness of our place in the world. Whenever we talk about population we have to be very careful that we do not just move towards this insular view because it is not a threat to have diversity in our community, it is a value and it gives us all a greater understanding of where we are. I would like to see a rent stabilisation, I would like to see that affordable house’s rents are reduced so that people are not giving up such a large amount of their income each month, even on supposable affordable accommodation, or being trapped in the cycle of needing income support even though they are working full time, all the hours under the sun. That cannot be sustainable in any sense, and that is sustainable in terms of economic terms and in terms of social existence. I wonder whether we need to look at the notion of a universal basic income so that when people do want to retrain they can do that and, therefore, we look at the value of that person to our society and as they retrain realise that they will give something back to our society in the long term, and this notion that you will not stay in one career throughout your lives I think is very important. Most of us, if not all of us, in this Assembly have certainly changed careers significantly to take on this role, for example. I think it was Deputy Johnson, or it may have been someone else, who spoke about flexibility earlier. Yes, you are right; this cannot simply be a numbers game and I would urge that one of the actions taken is that a flexible approach is taken and not just simplistic quotas because they do not work. Finally I would say that this is about more than just numbers; this is about providing actions of the type that have been mentioned by the last couple of speakers and actions on things like education that would enable us to have the sort of society that we want to build, that enables us to have the flexibility needed to maintain that society, and enables us to respond to future changes that we face.

[16:45]

One of those, it has to be said - and we do not shy away from it, not ignore it or not deny it - is the effects of climate change on the rest of the world and particularly on small island communities. We have to take that into account when we look at all of our policies into the future. It will be perhaps the singularly most damaging thing in the future that we all face. We have to not just mitigate but act to make change and lead the world in that change if we can.

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

There have been some great speeches and I just wanted to reinforce, without going into too much detail, what a couple of the previous speakers have said. I wanted to echo first of all what Senator Vallois said about involving children in this process. I heartily agree with that sentiment because children have a lot more invested in this than us because they are going to live the longest and they will be here feeling the effects, so I really want to reinforce that. There has been quite a lot of talk about growth and I think Senator Mézec mentioned it first, and I think also Deputy Morel made some important points about why are we always talking about striving for constant growth and we should be measuring other things. That has really resonated with me, and when I turned to the report - which is great by the way - and I love all the data in there, I have really enjoyed looking at all the facts and figures in there, so I thank the Deputy who presented that. But what did concern me is, building on what Deputy Morel was saying about it, that we should be measuring happiness. I want that to be something that is picked up by the Deputy of St. Peter when he looks back on this debate. Because it can be done, other jurisdictions do it and that should be considered alongside some of the things that are mentioned at the end of the report. While data is really important, I am a little bit disappointed that there is only one paragraph on some of the qualitative factors. I am pleased it is in there though and just to refer to them, it says: "Other factors are harder to measure but no less important." It lists: "Feelings of community, fairness and equality, the impacts to people of their loss of open fields and green spaces, the impacts upon the environment and ecology and real and psychological concerns about the pressures on services, such as schools, roads and hospitals." I do not want those things to be an afterthought. I would like those things to move right to the top of the agenda when we are talking about population and about what people need and what people want. Because the word "population", that means it is people, is it not? It is a group of people and people are human beings. That is what we need to go back to, is what do human beings need for a good life? I could start quoting philosophy here but I just hope that that will be taken on board, that we do not take too much of a numbers-based approach when we are creating these strategies. We need to consider the qualitative factors and bump them up the agenda a little bit. I think we are getting more used to doing things like that and some of the processes that we have in place, like a Child Rights Impact Assessment, I am hoping that that will be an absolute given that children's rights will be considered right from the beginning. But I also think that there are other factors that need to be taken into account. I think it was the last sitting I raised a concept around gender-sensitive policy formation and gender mainstreaming, which is when we are forming policy we should be thinking about we have a policy under formation, how it will impact, potentially, in a different way on different genders. That is something that needs to be taken into account as well. In terms of the system that we are developing for Child Rights Impact Assessments, there are precedents in other jurisdictions; I think it might be Wales. Somewhere in the U.K. has something called a public sector equality duty. We do not have that duty in law in Jersey but I do not see why we should not take that best practice and maybe apply it to this, which is possibly the most important policy area that we can work on as an Assembly. I would like the Deputy of St. Peter to consider that model of a public sector equality duty and applying that method to policy formation around a population policy. I think that was just about all I had to say. No, sorry, I have got one more point I wanted to make. I am not sure if anybody has mentioned this already but in terms of increased growth, and there is a model in this report. I will see if I can find it and find what page it was on, which was, I think, trying to illustrate growth and here we go: "Example of relationship between government policy areas and sustainable population." It has in there increased productivity as being something that is necessary for a sustainable population and sustainable development. I just want to challenge that notion of increased

productivity as being more people on an island doing more and more work; more, more, more. Productivity does not necessarily mean more people and it does not necessarily mean more work in terms of volume of hours worked. We can increase productivity in innovative ways. One of the ways that I think we should be looking at is changing the structure of our working week. I have mentioned this before and other Members have as well, that we need to look at a 4-day working week for Jersey. I am not sure that is something that is going to come from the private sector. I think it needs to come from the public sector because some of the evidence shows that moving to a 4-day working week at least maintains productivity but sometimes increases productivity. If we think about what Islanders might do with that extra day, I think it would have a doubly-positive impact. Because that extra time will often be used for pursuits that have positive health impacts, which means we would save tax money on our health service. But also the extra time can and would probably be spent on care and, again, that is something that we do not measure in terms of the impact on our economy. We do not know the contribution to our economy that people in caring roles, unpaid caring roles make, so how can we fully assess how that interacts with our ageing population and the care that will be needed there and the money that will be needed to fund that care? There is a little bit of we need more data and we need to measure things a bit better. But also I just think being a bit more innovative and looking at solutions like that. Those are just some things, a few ideas, some things that I would like to consider and a few kind of ways of looking at things that I would like to be prioritised.

2.1.27 Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just listening further to other Members, just came into my head, something I mentioned a while ago, I believe, and I believe it was the previous Minister for Health and Social Services. I am not sure whether it would be viable and what the viability of it would look like but we have the benefit of the things like Commonwealth Parliamentary Associations, the British-Irish Council, which has been mentioned in terms of data within the report that has been provided. Whether we have sought to partner with countries in fields such as education and health, to share and develop our educators and our health professionals, in particular, with the experience, knowledge and improvements that are needed in the services going forward, and I say that because it is very much becoming specialised areas. Being an island you do not have the opportunity to share that experience with others, as in the U.K. local authorities or as in the States, other states. An opportunity there, and this is just an idea and something to throw out there for consideration, when we are talking about population policies, yes, something like a secondment. But, again, taking into account, and I think it was Deputy Ward that was talking about a lot of our younger generations go away and they go to university and they work in specific skill sets. They may not come back because it is too expensive for them to live here. There are a lot of generations that are deciding: do I buy a house or do I have a family? Can I afford both? Can I not afford both? That, unfortunately, comes from a younger generation, my generation and younger in the Island who have had that conversation with themselves. Plenty of my friends have raised this repeatedly over the years. I wonder whether there is an opportunity here with regards to enabling some form of a secondment to give that opportunity for people to have a different experience of a skillset within a small island, which they may not have anywhere else, which may help with considering what our population policy may look like. With regards to Deputy Doublet's very good speech, she refers to the well-being and whether people are happy. There is a better life index. We now have this Jersey performance framework, I think we need to utilise that information and that data to give us that rich idea of what is the quality the public are looking for for our Island and how that drives us moving forward. That moves me on to, I mentioned before about the big education conversation and the work around schools. One of the things that came out of that was the concern that there was a lack of choice at school, depending on what catchment you were in, depending on whether you went to a fee-paying school or not, the choice for children to determine or young people to determine their future prospects in the economy, whether they want to stay here or not and it is absolutely their right to be able to go and live somewhere else and not come back and if they choose to come back that is great. But the choice is really important for them to live that fulfilling and that well-being part of their lives, to feel a sense of achievement and also the fact that

they are giving back for what they have achieved over their time and their life, and that is really important. I am just thinking around Deputy Morel's ideas when he was talking about business and the skills and those areas. I believe it was mentioned, I think it might have been the Economic Oversight Group, about some form of skills audit. I know Skills Jersey do a lot of work around this but there is a partnership between both the Government and business around skills and training and upskilling. I am not sure whether that skills order has fully taken place or whether it will take place. But I think it is crucial to this conversation around our population policy and what that looks like and what that means. I think there is also an opportunity - just another idea to throw out there - is the ability for generations to learn and adapt and be resilient from the older generations, who have retired or moved on out of their professions, who will be able to pass on their skills in some way. I have to say from my experience of working in the States over 12 years learning from many people of different age groups has been extremely beneficial in terms of upskilling my own thinking in the way that I work. I think that is crucial to anything we want to learn because sometimes there are just things that are useful and I think there are resilience lessons that we can learn, if we are going to have whatever the population policy looks like. If we end up with a reduction of people coming into the Island and we know that from a variety of conversations around things like climate change and the effects on the environment, the larger the populations are the more effect it will have on those areas.

[17:00]

If we were to have a reduction in population I think it is really crucial us as a community are able to work well together and understand the importance of us all being different and learning from each other in a productive way to make the most for each other, the Island as a whole. I think that is everything that I wanted to say, so I will leave it at that.

The Bailiff:

I just wanted to inform Members I am operating a priority for first-time speakers, second priority for second-time speakers and then a third priority for third-time speakers, which is why, Deputy of St. Martin, it may appear you have dropped off the list but you have not, it is just there are other first and second-time speakers ahead of you.

2.1.28 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

A lot has been said about education and we do have some very good schools here and education has been a priority for a lot and a lot of youngsters have gone away re their education. When they apply for a position that becomes vacant in the Island, they are passed over for people from other jurisdictions. A lot has also been said about housing; housing is not the only problem because when the position that becomes vacant is given to someone from outside of the Island, accommodation is found for them. Why can we not do that for locals who are applying for a job to return to their Island, who has educated them, who has paid for a lot of their bits and pieces? I just think it is a shame that locals are being passed over. We are bringing people from other jurisdictions to this Island, we are taking great care of them, we are giving them all sorts and yet we have locals who could do the jobs and fill the positions.

2.1.29 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Just a few disjointed thoughts about what has been said, apparently we have started not allowing sales of apartments to anybody but locals, which I think is a good step. I do wonder, has anyone ... sorry, shut up, I am sorry.

The Bailiff:

I am sure there are frustrations but are you able to switch your phone off?

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

That is just the phone ...

The Bailiff:

Shut up is not generally thought to be a parliamentary term, Senator, either. If there is any way you can switch off your phone.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I have done, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I just wonder if anyone has done any work on whether the schemes to convert hotels to apartments are converting them for step-down by sort of reducing size for elder couples or whether they are for immigrants. We have mentioned education. I have been involved with this programme to try and teach youngsters how to use computer coding, which has been scuppered by education officials and we have lost 2 or 3 years. The local civil servants are dismissing useful ideas and we need more imaginative career staff too, instead of recommending females to go off and do primary school. I am not decrying it, it is needed but we need more imagination by our careers staff. Productivity, basically we need to look at the systems we have got, not computer systems but the way we work. Are we properly encouraging levels of management to communicate, manager to front line staff, as well as horizontally among the staff? We need to be a bit more imaginative about these things. I have been through, I do not know, 3 or 4 different sort of career streams and it is a question of just adapting to this and using your imagination. As I say, I have been really quite upset at the way we have lost time on the computer systems. We will not look properly at encouraging levels of management to communicate vertically as well as horizontally. We need to start at home to do these sort of things, not just say we must get it from overseas. We have got some very good people and some very good staff locally and we need to just give them a chance to flourish.

2.1.30 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Yes, and I would not disagree with anything Deputy Doublet or Senator Vallois have said about we must consult the young. Whatever we do or decide today will have much more effect on the under-30s than it will have the over-30s and it will take some time to kick in. I wanted to speak because as well we are supposed to come up with some solutions. It was a comment by the Constable of St. Ouen who basically said if he had not have come into the Assembly he would have been put out to pasture. I would like to remind many we do not have a retirement age. We have an age where you can get your pension but we do have discrimination against age at the moment. I am not sure employers have got that quite right yet. I am not sure that utilising the wealth of the experience of older people, who want to carry on working, I am not forcing anybody, I think there must be much more flexibility. If you want to work an extra 5 years but you want to do then 4 days, 3 days, 2 days and at the same time you are training people coming in because you also have the experience; I think that would be a fantastic idea. The law was only passed a few years ago but people keep saying: "Pension age, I have got to go." No, you have not got to go. If you are capable of doing your job and you want to stay, please, have that conversation with your employer. A lot has been spoken about housing and I know Andium are doing a fantastic job and other social providers and even private providers. But are we concentrating so much on the box, the house, not building the communities, especially for older people who might have had a marriage breakdown or lost their partner? We need to have a community much more involved and that does not need to be all of one's design or one age either because people flourish with different people around. Because we are Jersey we have lots of people come here to work, marry, but their grandparents are in a different country and we also have grandparents here whose older children have gone to live in a different country and they do not have children. But, again, much wealth that could be passed on. Many years ago, and I think it was the Deputy of Trinity, Deputy Pryke, and Deputy Hilton when they were assisting at

Housing and Planning, they went off to see some fantastic things from, I think, Rowntree and I sent them somewhere, the Metropolitan Housing Association, which had done something fantastic for the community. You would not believe in a 24-storey housing block but they were thinking outside the box. It had about a 5-year waiting list then because it was just so sought after; communal areas, all different ages, people who wanted to live alone who would normally find it hard. I hope I am giving a few solutions; just we need to think a bit more agile. If we want to start restricting population, we absolutely need to respect and listen to every person in our population, whatever age, and if they have a skill we need to be able to utilise that skill and let them work the hours they want. There is flexible working but, again, I go back to, please, do not always look for someone to come in and do not always think that you are past your sell-by date at a certain age because certainly absolutely not and that is why we have age discrimination across the board.

2.1.31 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I just wanted to say that any population migration policies are going to have to be a mixture of input from all across the different sides of Council of Ministers, especially so from the Minister for the Environment or in the old days Planning and Environment. Planning is an interesting word because some people may consider the planning part of Minister for Planning to be there because it is the department that deals with plans. But I have always thought about it as a department that looks forward to the future and plans where things will go and how things will happen. That is a vital thing and a vital role in this population debate because housing, as we know, is going to be part of that debate and where we build houses is very much part of that. The Minister for Planning is a vital and key role. I was prompted to speak by Senator Mézec and while I do not necessarily share his ideas 100 per cent, he does have a good point in some areas and that is around the ability of some people to gain approvals for planning applications and just sit on them. When I became Minister for Planning back in 2014 I was amazed to find that we had on the books at that time over 1,000 units of accommodation which had been approved but were not being built out. In order to try to ease that sort of thing, I reduced the time from 5 years to 3 years, at which point approvals had to be renewed. Because I was trying to, at that time, do a better job of planning for the future. There is no point in granting approvals for people to do any sorts of things if they have no intention of building them out. Because we give ourselves a false impression, we allow us to think that we are providing them for the future, providing homes, providing accommodation, providing whatever. But of course we only come to provide those units if they are built. I had one person came to see me while I was Minister saying he was very unhappy with an approval that he had been given for social and affordable housing and he wanted open-market housing and he said he would just refuse to build them. I, in my wisdom, maybe probably not in my wisdom at the time, said that if he did not want to build them out I would have great pleasure in withdrawing the approval, so he would have nothing. That was probably going well beyond my ability at the time but of course if that gentleman had waited 3 years and had not built he would have had to renew. At that time there is a possibility he may not have gained a renewed approval. But the point I am trying to make is this, and I think there is a place to be ... we could certainly look at a change in the planning laws to allow us to say when we have given approval that that work is undertaken. A good proportion of that work is undertaken after a certain period of time because I am aware that you only need to dig a foundation trench on a site to show that you have got underway. I thank Senator Mézec for prompting my memory. But it is a good idea and maybe somebody should be looking at as part of the delivery of homes for this increased population to live in and means by making sure that actual approvals are built out.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Does any other Member wish to speak in the debate? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon the Deputy of St. Peter to sum up.

2.1.32 The Deputy of St. Peter:

Thank you to absolutely everybody for their contributions. It has been fascinating and I thank everybody for the thought they have put into it and they are really, really great contributions. There

is so much there it makes the job even harder really, how to break all this one down and make sense out of it but I really appreciate it, thank you.

[17:15]

As I said at the beginning and in the report, we are going to do a content analysis of this one, to go through the themes and document and return them back to everybody in the Assembly, so we can really understand the focuses and the reoccurring themes and the priorities that people have brought, both as the challenges and also as the solutions. I have got pages and pages of notes and themes and I could risk summarising them but then I might miss out some of the others that are equally important, then I will be challenged for not including with the right level but I will try a bit. As Deputy Ward quite correctly said “homes”; Deputy Ward would like this changed in the main picture. It is more than the main picture, it is a fundamental difference but I know he would like my use of the word. Young, old, unused, the young talent drain, how we support them. Education, lifelong learning ... we have not put enough emphasis on young people’s voices and I will take a metaphorical slap on the wrist for that one and make sure that it is very much enhanced in the plan. It is there but it needs more focus. Thank you, Deputy Pamplin; data. Some concerns that we will not have the census data on time for the end of the year; that is a genuine concern. Then equality and how we value each other, work/life balance. I will mention the productivity plan, I think Deputy Doublet requested some clarification on that. Productivity is not just throwing more people at a problem in order to solve it, it is very much improving the productivity of the individuals, so fewer can produce more by the use of technology and artificial intelligence, adopting the new world. That dovetails back to education, career changes, lifelong learning; it is all a very big challenge. I am not going to waffle on, it is nearly 5.30 p.m. It has been a long day. I just thank you all very much. Check your inbox for the report that comes out and give me one little look around, no. All I will say is thank you, Sir, for allocating time for this very important debate and I appreciate everybody’s contribution. Thank you.

ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. That concludes the in-committee debate and Public Business for this meeting. I invite presumably the deputy chair of P.P.C., Senator Vallois, to propose the arrangement of public business for future meetings. Senator.

3. Senator T.A. Vallois (Vice-Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

I am just getting the information up in front of me right now. There have been 3 additional lodgings since the Consolidated Order Paper. We have an amendment to the Draft States of Jersey Police Force Law, Draft Amendment of the Standing Orders and we also have States of Jersey Development Company: Appointment of non-Executive Director. The 2 propositions in the amendment have all been listed for the next meeting on 20th April. Considering the number of items that are listed for the next meeting, there is a likelihood of the debate going on for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for that period of time. Otherwise, if there is nothing else for anybody to change or add, I suggest that is the order of business and the time allocated for the next sitting.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Senator. Does any Member have anything to say about arrangements for future business? If no Member has anything to say, I will take this as a standing vote adopting the arrangements for future business. Very well, those arrangements are adopted and the Assembly stands adjourned until 20th April. Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:19]