

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 21st OCTOBER 2025

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER.....	8
1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor	8
1.2 Mr. M. Temple K.C. appointed Deputy Bailiff.....	8
APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS.....	8
2.1 Resignation of Deputy B.B.de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South from the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.....	8
QUESTIONS.....	8
3. Written Questions.....	8
3.1 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the purchase of the former Gas Place Site (WQ.358/2025):.....	9
3.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the provision of 1% of overall Government revenue expenditure to the arts, culture and heritage sector (WQ.359/2025):.....	9
3.3 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for the Environment regarding the development of an evidence-based Energy Strategy (WQ.360/2025):.....	10
3.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Housing regarding support schemes for under 25s wishing to rent or purchase accommodation (WQ.361/2025):	11
3.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding items of expenditure which are now funded by the agreed 1% of revenue for Arts, Culture and Heritage (WQ.362/2025):	12
3.6 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the ferry contract with DFDS (WQ.363/2025):.....	13
3.7 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding the Carbon Neutral Roadmap (WQ.364/2025):.....	15
3.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding High Value Residents (WQ.365/2025):.....	15
3.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding the Health Insurance Fund (WQ.366/2025):.....	16
3.10 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Interest Deductions for Landlords as referenced on page 37 of the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 (WQ.367/2025):.....	17
3.11 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the Fuel Duty Replacement Policy, as referenced on page 37 of the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 (WQ.368/2025):.....	18

3.12 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding liquid waste charging (WQ.369/2025):.....	18
3.13 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding a new 5G phone mast at Castle Quay (WQ.370/2025):	19
3.14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding potential improvements to the road and Railway Walk crossing at Rue de la Sergente (WQ.371/2025):	19
3.15 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding Non-Disclosure Agreements (WQ.372/2025):.....	21
3.16 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding the use of glyphosate in Jersey (WQ.373/2025):.....	22
3.17 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding GP guidelines in Jersey (WQ.374/2025):	22
3.18 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the School Street Scheme pilot put in place at Trinity School (WQ.375/2025):	23
3.19 Deputy L.M.C Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Social Security regarding households eligible for, but not claiming, Income Support (WQ. 376/2025):	24
3.20 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding the Government’s policy on migration rate (WQ.377/2025):.....	25
3.21 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the Carbon Neutral Roadmap target for the Island to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (WQ.378/2025):	25
3.22 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding births and deaths registered in Jersey during 2025 (WQ.379/2025):	26
3.23 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the Planning Obligation Agreement (POA) with Jersey Sports Academy (Strive) (WQ.380/2025):.....	26
3.24 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the Planning Obligation Agreement (POA) with Jersey Sports Academy (Strive) (WQ.381/2025):.....	27
3.25 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding sustainable catch limits for Jersey’s fish and shellfish stocks (WQ.382/2025):.....	28
3.26 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the teaching of Jërriais in schools (WQ.383/2025):	29
3.27 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Social Security regarding Income Support (WQ.384/2025):	29
3.28 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding doctors (WQ.385/2025):.....	30
3.29 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the illegal operation by unregulated drivers of receiving payment for offering lifts (WQ.386/2025):.....	31
3.30 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding Nude Food Development at La Pulente (WQ.387/2025):	31
3.31 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Eastern Cycle Corridor (WQ. 388/2025):.....	32
3.32 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding forecasting of pupil places (WQ.389/2025):	33
3.33 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding of updated terms and conditions for teachers and teaching assistants following their last pay award (WQ. 390/2025):.....	34

4. Oral Questions	35
4.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Social Security regarding advice received from the Social Security Fund actuaries in relation to the reduction in the grant to the fund (OQ.231/2025):	36
Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):.....	36
4.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:	36
4.1.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:.....	36
4.1.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:.....	36
4.1.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:	36
4.1.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....	37
4.1.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:.....	38
4.1.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune:	38
4.1.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:	38
4.1.9 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:	38
4.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:.....	38
4.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Chief Minister regarding the cost of living to ‘Middle Jersey’ (OQ.236/2025):	39
Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):.....	39
4.2.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:	39
4.2.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	40
4.2.3 Deputy J. Renouf:	40
4.2.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:	40
4.2.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....	41
4.2.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:.....	42
4.2.7 Deputy M. Tadier:.....	42
4.2.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:	43
4.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Safer Routes to School works on Bagatelle Road (OQ.229/2025):.....	43
Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):.....	43
4.3.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....	43
4.3.2 Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:.....	44
4.3.3 The Connétable of St. Saviour:.....	44
4.3.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:	44
4.3.5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:	44
4.3.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:.....	44
4.3.7 Deputy M. Tadier:.....	45
4.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding visitor accommodation at La Folie (OQ.227/2025):	46
Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):	46
4.4.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:.....	46
4.4.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	47
4.4.3 Deputy J. Renouf:	47
4.4.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis:.....	47
4.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding free GP appointments for children (OQ.224/2025):	48

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):.....	48
4.5.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:	48
4.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:.....	48
4.5.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:	49
4.6 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding a written policy setting out the manner in which the Code of Conduct for Elected Members would be enforced (OQ.228/2025):	49
Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):	49
4.6.1 Deputy M.R. Scott:	49
4.7 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding a paid-for article in the Jersey Evening Post on 27th September 2025 (OQ.226/2025):	50
Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):.....	50
4.7.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:	50
4.7.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	50
4.7.3 Deputy J. Renouf:	51
4.7.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:.....	51
4.7.5 Deputy M. Tadier:.....	52
4.7.6 Deputy D.J. Warr:	52
4.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for External Relations regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Finance Action Plan (OQ.239/2025):	53
Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Assistant Minister for External Relations - rapporteur):	53
4.8.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:	53
4.9 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the addition of a ‘flat-rate card’ for freight to the tender process for ferry freight (OQ.237/2025):	53
Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):	53
4.9.1 Deputy M. Tadier:.....	54
4.9.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	54
4.9.3 Deputy J. Renouf:	54
4.9.4 Deputy M. Tadier:.....	55
4.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the Chief Executive’s comments of the “precarious” position of the Government finances (OQ233/2025):	56
Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):.....	56
4.10.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:	57
4.10.2 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:	58
4.10.3 Deputy K.L. Moore:	58
4.10.4 Deputy J. Renouf:.....	58
4.10.5 Deputy J. Renouf:.....	59
4.10.6 Deputy K.M. Wilson:	59
4.11 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Community Use Monitoring Programme (OQ.232/2025):	59
Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):	60

4.11.1	Deputy J. Renouf:.....	60
4.11.2	Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:.....	61
4.11.3	Deputy A.F. Curtis:	62
4.11.4	Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:	62
4.11.5	Deputy H.L. Jeune:.....	62
4.11.6	Deputy J. Renouf:.....	62
4.12	Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding pay transparency in job advertisements (OQ.225/2025):	63
	Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):.....	63
4.13	Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the reasoning for the introduction of the ‘flat-rate card’ for freight (OQ.234/2025):	63
	Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):	63
4.13.1	Deputy K.M. Wilson:	63
4.13.2	Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:.....	64
4.13.3	Deputy J. Renouf:.....	64
4.13.4	Deputy K.M. Wilson:	64
4.14	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the flat-rate freight-pricing requirement (OQ. 230/2025):... 	65
	Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):.....	65
4.14.1	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....	66
4.15	Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the pedestrian footpath between Mont de la Pulente and Rue de la Sergente (OQ.238/2025):.....	66
	Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):.....	66
4.15.1	Deputy M. Tadier:	66
4.15.2	Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:.....	67
4.15.3	Deputy J. Renouf:.....	67
4.15.4	Deputy M. Tadier:	67
4.16	Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the total cost of purchasing the Jersey Gas site from Andium Homes, building the proposed new Town Primary School on the site, demolishing Springfield School and Le Bas Centre and creating pocket parks on these sites, and delivering the proposed North of St. Helier Youth Centre (OQ.235/2025):.....	67
	Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):.....	68
4.16.1	Deputy D.J. Warr:	68
4.16.2	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:.....	68
4.16.3	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....	69
4.17	Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding the potential allocation of a quota for fishing of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (OQ.240/2025):	69
	Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):	69
4.17.1	Deputy H.L. Jeune:.....	69
4.17.2	Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:	69
4.17.3	Deputy H.L. Jeune:.....	70

5.	Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs .	70
5.1	Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:	70
	Deputy M.R. Le Hégarat of St. Helier North (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs): ...	70
5.1.1	Deputy H.L. Jeune:	70
5.2	Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North:	71
5.2.1	Deputy S.M. Ahier:	71
5.3	Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:	71
5.3.1	Deputy P.M. Bailhache:	71
5.4	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:	72
5.4.1	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:	72
5.5	Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:	72
5.5.1	Deputy H.M. Miles:	72
5.6	Connétable R.D. Johnson of St. Mary:	72
5.7	Deputy J. Renouf:	73
5.7.1	Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	73
6.	Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Social Security	73
6.1	Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	73
	Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):	73
6.1.1	Deputy J. Renouf:	73
6.2	Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:	74
6.2.1	Deputy H.M. Miles:	74
6.3	Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:	74
6.4	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:	74
6.4.1	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:	75
6.5	Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:	75
6.5.1	Deputy K.L. Moore:	75
6.6	Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:	75
6.6.1	Deputy A.F. Curtis:	76
6.7	Deputy J. Renouf:	76
6.7.1	Deputy J. Renouf:	76
6.8	Deputy K.L. Moore:	77
7.	Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister	77
7.1	Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:	77
	Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):	77
7.1.1	Deputy J. Renouf:	78
7.2	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:	78
7.2.1	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:	78
7.3	Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:	79
7.3.1	Deputy A.F. Curtis:	79
7.4	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:	79
7.4.1	Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:	79
7.5	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:	80
7.5.1	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:	80
7.6	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:	81
7.6.1	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:	81
7.7	Deputy A.F. Curtis:	82
7.7.1	Deputy A.F. Curtis:	82
7.8	Deputy J. Renouf:	82

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED	83
LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY	Error! Bookmark not defined.

- 8. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will make a statement regarding an independent review into children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (S.E.N.D.).**Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 8.1 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning):.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.2 Deputy H.M. Miles:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.3 Deputy H.M. Miles:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.4 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.5 Deputy C.D. Curtis:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.6 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.7 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.8 Deputy J. Renouf:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.9 Deputy J. Renouf:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.10 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.11 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.12 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.13 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.14 Deputy M. Tadier:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.15 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 8.1.16 Deputy D.J. Warr:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

PUBLIC BUSINESS.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

- 9. Proposed use of former Jersey Gas site: request for reconsideration (P.45/2025) .Error!**
Bookmark not defined.
- 9.1 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.2 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.5 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.6 Deputy C.D. Curtis:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.7 Deputy K.L. Moore:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.8 Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.11 Deputy D.J. Warr:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.12 The Connétable of St. John:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.13 Deputy H.L. Jeune:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.14 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.15 Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.16 Deputy K.F. Morel:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 9.1.17 The Connétable of St. Helier:.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

ADJOURNMENT.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

[9:30]

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

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Could I raise the défaut on Deputy Morel, please, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to raise the défaut? The défaut is raised on Deputy Morel.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Deputy Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

On behalf of all Members, I would like to welcome His Excellency to the Chamber this morning.

[Approbation]

1.2 Mr. M. Temple K.C. appointed Deputy Bailiff

Members will be aware that as a result of my appointment to the office of Bailiff, a vacancy arose in the office of Deputy Bailiff. A process for appointing into that post was agreed with the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. That process involved a public advertisement of the vacancy, 2 written exercises and a formal interview following a series of consultations. The selection panel was co-chaired by the former Bailiff, Sir Timothy Le Cocq, and Christopher Stephenson, Chair of the Appointments Commission. The panel included Ms. Clare Montgomery, King's Counsel, the senior judge of the Jersey Court of Appeal, Jurat Kim Averty, and Mr. John Le Fondré, former Chief Minister. I am pleased to announce that the successful applicant was Mark Temple, King's Counsel **[Approbation]**, the present Attorney General, and His Majesty the King has graciously accepted the recommendation that he should be appointed the next Deputy Bailiff of Jersey, and he will take office in the new year.

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

2.1 Resignation of Deputy B.B.de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South from the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Under F, Members are advised that in accordance with Standing Order 137(2)(b), I have received written notice from Deputy Porée indicating her wish to resign from the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Deputy Catherine Curtis, do you wish to deal with reappointment on another occasion to your panel?

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

On another occasion, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS

3. Written Questions

3.1 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the purchase of the former Gas Place Site (WQ.358/2025):

Question

Further to the purchase of the former Gas Place Site for a nominal sum of £1 from Andium Homes Limited, as referenced on page 59 of the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026 to 2029](#), will the Minister state –

- (a) the justification for agreeing a reduction of £1.5 million to the return paid by Andium Homes Limited over the next 10 years to reflect an increase in value of the site; and
- (b) what savings, if any, have been (or will be) made to accommodate the £1.5 million shortfall in the return?

Answer

- a) The proposed reduction in the return from Andium Homes Limited reflects a pragmatic approach to enable the acquisition of the former Gas Place site without delaying other priority capital projects. The decision to forego an up-front payment ensures that financial capacity is preserved, allowing the transaction to proceed efficiently.

To ensure that Andium can continue to deliver its strategic business plan, the time value of money of the future payments has been taken into account to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the revised payment structure over the 10-year period.

- b) The reduction to the return was built into the financial forecasts. The process of balancing the Budget involved a range of measures to address multiple financial pressures. As such, no specific savings are allocated solely to offset this reduction.

3.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the provision of 1% of overall Government revenue expenditure to the arts, culture and heritage sector (WQ.359/2025):

Question

In relation to the Government funding of 1% of its overall revenue expenditure to the arts, culture and heritage sector, will the Minister –

- (a) provide a list of organisations and services that will receive such funding for the period 2025 to 2028, including the amounts allocated to each organisation and service in each year;
- (b) explain how inflation allocations for “pay and non-pay” as set out on page 47 of the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026-2029](#) have been applied to each organisation and service receiving funding;
- (c) advise what assessments, if any, have been made to inform funding decisions for these organisations and services, what officer advice was received and what consultation with recipients was undertaken; and
- (d) undertake to publish the proposed amounts allocated to each organisation and service over the period 2026 to 2029?

Answer

Further to the answer to WQ.362/2025, the 1% for Culture, Arts and Heritage relates to several funding streams across different departments. The answer to this question therefore relates only to those areas within the portfolio of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development.

a), b) & c) Arm's Length Bodies and partner organisations are currently in the process of finalising their 2026 business plans for review by Ministers. Until this process has concluded, no final allocations have been made for 2026 or future years.

The Deputy will further be aware of Government grants for projects or organisations that support the objectives of the Arts Strategy, Music Strategy and Heritage Strategy. These funds are distributed in funding rounds during the year based on applications received and evaluated. It is therefore not possible to confirm which groups will receive funding ahead of the 2026 application process commencing in Q1.

c) Yes, the Government has recently published its first Delivery Update for Arts, Culture and Heritage, covering the year 2024. Future delivery updates will be published for each year of the forthcoming Budget.

3.3 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North of the Minister for the Environment regarding the development of an evidence-based Energy Strategy (WQ.360/2025):

Question

Further to the Assembly's adoption of 'Evidence-Based Energy Strategy' ([P.11/2025](#)), will the Minister inform the Assembly what progress has been made to date in the development of an evidence-based Energy Strategy, and advise what consideration has been given to the potential role of an offshore wind farm within that strategy?

Answer

In adopting the proposition from Deputy Jeune in April 2025 (P.11/2025), the States Assembly requested the Council of Ministers to develop and, before 31st December 2026, start implementing an evidence based energy strategy that sets out Jersey's long-term energy requirements and balances the need for affordability, safety, security, a market that delivers competitive outcomes and carbon neutrality of the energy sector in Jersey.

Work to date that contributes to the strategy's development includes: publication of the Energy Trends report (previously produced by Statistics Jersey), responding to the C&AG's review of energy infrastructure resilience, consideration of JCRA Market Study recommendations, continued delivery of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, and exploration of offshore wind potential.

In addition, officers are gathering evidence for the strategy, including data on long term trends and have commenced stakeholder engagement. In this regard, I invited energy suppliers to share initial views in early September, with broader engagement planned in the coming months.

As directed by the Assembly agreement of P.82/2023, the investigation of offshore wind has progressed in advance of work on an energy strategy and I remain committed to sharing progress on offshore wind with the Assembly before the end of this year. Work on offshore wind will be incorporated into the energy strategy in due course.

3.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Housing regarding support schemes for under 25s wishing to rent or purchase accommodation (WQ.361/2025):

Question

Will the Minister detail the Government support schemes that exist for Islanders under the age of 25 who wish to rent or purchase accommodation and explain how, if at all, the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026 to 2029](#) would change the availability of such schemes; and will he further explain how and why this support differs from that available for those aged 25 and over (including any scheme for which under 25s are ineligible)?

Answer

The Government currently provides a range of support schemes for Islanders under the age of 25 who wish to rent or purchase a home, though eligibility depends on individual circumstances.

Islanders aged 18 and over can access social housing through the Affordable Housing Gateway if they are a household with children or they have needs that require support via the Partnership Pathway. However, single people or couples without children are only eligible from the age of 25.

This restriction reflects a longstanding policy of prioritising access to social housing based on greatest need. Historically, limited housing stock, particularly one-bedroom homes, meant that government had to focus resources on families, people at risk of homelessness, and those with health or welfare needs. Younger Islanders without dependents were considered more likely to access private rental accommodation or remain in the family home.

It is also the case that age eligibility for social housing aligns with that of income support, being based on the same principles.

I recognise that this assumption is increasingly being challenged by the reality of housing affordability pressures facing younger Islanders. In response, the age threshold for households without children has been progressively lowered from 50 to 25 in recent years.

These policies continue to evolve, and it is my intention to reduce the age threshold to Islanders under the age of 25. Crucially, this expansion of eligibility is only possible with increased housing supply. The worst outcome would be to make promises to young people that cannot be delivered.

For those seeking to purchase a home, schemes such as First Step and Andium Homebuy are open to eligible Islanders under 25, offering pathways to home ownership for those who might otherwise struggle to afford to buy a home.

Whilst the Proposed Budget 2026 to 2029 does not introduce new housing schemes specifically for under 25s, the Government is committed to the delivery of the *Investing in Jersey* programme, which places housing at its heart, and will support the improved access and affordability for younger Islanders.

3.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding items of expenditure which are now funded by the agreed 1% of revenue fir Arts, Culture and Heritage (WQ.362/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide details of all items of expenditure which are now funded by the agreed 1% of revenue for Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH), beyond those previously provided for prior to the adoption of [the Budget \(Government Plan\) 2025-2028](#); and will he further confirm whether the overall sum spent on ACH still amounts to 1% of Revenue Spending if these additional items are excluded, and provide the relevant calculation?

Answer

In line with established practice, the 2025 Budget included revenue expenditure on Arts, Heritage and Culture (AHC) comprising:

- AHC Grants (within the Economy Department)
- Jèrriais
- Liberation Day and other civic events.

Following the debate of P.69/2024, the Council of Ministers lodged the 27th Amendment to the Budget 2025-2028, to reinstate the commitment to maintain funding for AHC at 1% of overall States Revenue Expenditure. As part of this amendment, COM noted that *“the debate of P.69/2024 included several examples of government support for AHC outside of the expenditure currently included, and government will review spending across Government to ensure that the total expenditure on arts, heritage and culture is captured when considering the 1%.”*

Following the completion of this review, the following additional elements were identified as relevant spending on AHC, as set out in the Budget 2026 (Page 47). It should be noted that these areas represent existing funding already being spent on AHC and have not impacted on the funding for the items previously included.

A summary of the budgets in the proposed Budget 2026-2029 is attached below:

	2026	2027	2028	2029
AHC Support and Grants	10,842	11,060	11,303	11,303
Jerriais	635	635	635	635
Liberation Day and other civic Events	200	200	200	200
Subtotal (Existing)	11,677	11,895	12,138	12,138
Community Compass	391	394	394	394
Public libraries	1,666	1,666	1,666	1,666
Jersey Music Service	1,243	1,243	1,243	1,243
Total	14,977	15,198	15,441	15,441

The total of the subset of AHC expenditure previously used is slightly less than 1% of revenue expenditure but when all spend on AHC is included, this demonstrates spend in excess of that target – 1.2% in 2026. All of these calculations exclude the substantial capital expenditure on AHC in recent years, including spend on both Elizabeth Castle and the Jersey Opera House.

It is further noted that the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development has published a report on the delivery of AHC initiatives for 2024, which provides further detail on outcomes and impact across the sector.

3.6 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the ferry contract with DFDS (WQ.363/2025):

Question

In relation to the ferry contract with DFDS, will the Chief Minister –

- (a) provide a timeline of the discussions which took place within the Council of Ministers;
- (b) detail his involvement in the decision-making process at all points of the process, including at what point he had access to the decision-making documentation; and the concession agreement;
- (c) advise which members of the Council of Ministers had access to the decision-making documentation; and the concession agreement, and state when the concession agreement was first discussed with the Council of Ministers;
- (d) state the number of briefings which took place with the Council of Ministers prior to the award of the contract and which Ministers were present at each briefing;
- (e) advise what actions he or his predecessors undertook, if any, to liaise with the States of Guernsey regarding the tender, or the outcome of the tender; and
- (f) advise which Assistant Ministers, if any, were involved in the decision-making process?

Answer

- a) The ferry tender process commenced in May 2024. The Council of Ministers considered the matter at the following meetings:

4th June 2024

28th October 2024

30th October 2024

1st November 2024

3rd December 2024 - *Appointment of DFDS as preferred bidder*

Following this, the Council of Ministers continued to receive regular updates, including on:

7th January 2025

28th January 2025

11th February 2025

4th March 2025

- b) The Chief Minister chaired the Council of Ministers for each of the meetings listed above. Following the appointment of the preferred bidder on 3rd December 2024 the Chief Minister received a copy of the Concession Agreement on 23rd December 2024.
- c) All Ministers and Assistant Ministers had access to appropriate papers/presentations to support the decision-making process. The Concession Agreement work was first discussed by the Council of Ministers on 3rd December 2024.

The Concession Agreement is a legal document that formalises the outcome of discussions with the operator in line with their tender bid. In addition to unanimously agreeing to appoint DFDS based on their tender bid, the Council of Ministers agreed that the consequential contract work, that is the Concession Agreement to enshrine the tender bid as approved by COM, should commence immediately and conclude before the end of the year.

The agreement was subsequently signed on behalf of the Government of Jersey by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, together with Harbourmaster, on 31st December 2024.

- d) The Part A minutes of the Council of Ministers meetings are published and include full attendance lists. These minutes, along with meeting agendas, are available on the Government of Jersey website.
- e) Government of Jersey Ministers liaised with counterparts in the States of Guernsey on numerous occasions over an extended period dating back to 2021 to discuss options for a new long-term ferry agreement and whether to proceed to a joint tender process. These discussions spanned the terms of office of three of Jersey's Chief Ministers:
 - Senator John Le Fondré
 - Deputy Kristina Moore
 - Deputy Lyndon Farnham

All three Chief Ministers entered into discussions and correspondence with their Guernsey counterparts. Discussions continued until the States of Guernsey made a decision to award a contract for Guernsey-only services.

- f) Assistant Ministers attended Council of Ministers meetings and contributed to discussions. However, they do not vote unless deputising for a Minister who is absent. Their attendance and participation are recorded in the published Part A minutes, which include full attendance lists and are available on the Government of Jersey website.

3.7 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding the Carbon Neutral Roadmap (WQ.364/2025):

Question

Following the adoption of the [Carbon Neutral Roadmap](#) (CNR) by the States Assembly in 2022, will the Chief Minister advise whether –

- (a) it is his Government’s policy to support the target for the Island to reach net-zero emissions by 2050;
- (b) he or the Council of Ministers has any concerns about the affordability of the transition to net-zero; and
- (c) it his assessment that the target is achievable prior to 2050 and, if not, why not?

Answer

- (a) It remains the policy of this Government to support the target for Jersey to reach net zero emissions by 2050, in line with the Carbon Neutral Roadmap adopted by the States Assembly in 2022. This target aligns with international commitments, including those of the United Kingdom and other comparable jurisdictions, and reflects our shared responsibility to address the global climate emergency while safeguarding Jersey’s environmental and economic interests.
- (b) The Council of Ministers recognises that the transition to net zero must be managed responsibly to ensure that it remains both affordable and fair. This means balancing ambition with fiscal prudence, supporting innovation and decarbonisation while protecting households and businesses from disproportionate costs.

Achieving net zero before 2050 would depend on several factors, including the pace of technological development, availability of low-carbon infrastructure, and the scale of behavioural and economic change required. While the 2050 target remains the most realistic and deliverable timeframe at present, the Government will keep progress under review. The priority is to make progress towards decarbonisation ensuring that Jersey plays its part in global efforts while maintaining a resilient and prosperous Island economy.

3.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding High Value Residents (WQ.365/2025):

Question

In relation to High Value Residents, will the Minister state for each of the last five years how much personal income tax they contributed under the 20 per cent income tax threshold and how much they contributed above the personal income tax threshold at 1 per cent?

Answer

The ‘personal income tax threshold’ is taken to mean the prescribed limit in the Income Tax (Prescribed Limit and Rate) (Jersey) Regulations 2013.

Information is provided for the fourth version of the HVR tax regime that commenced in 2018. HVRs under this regime pay tax at 20% up to the prescribed limit, and at 1% on the excess. The prescribed limit was increased from £725,000 to £850,000 from 2023.

Year of assessment	Tax paid at 20% (£m)	Tax paid at 1% (£m)
2019	2.2	0.4
2020	4.2	0.6
2021	7.3	1.4
2022	9.7	1.6
2023	11.8	5.0

Data for 2024 will not be available until after Q1 2026.

3.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding the Health Insurance Fund (WQ.366/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) whether there are any plans to reduce expenditure from the Health Insurance Fund and, if not, why not; and
- (b) whether a need for Social Security contributions to rise is anticipated to address any depletion of the Fund’s value and, if so, what the timeframe is for any such increase to be implemented?

Answer

- (a) There are no projects currently being delivered or planned with the specific objective to reduce spending from the Health Insurance Fund. The Fund currently enables the provision of various benefits, services and initiatives, including free prescription medicines and vaccines, £50.28 contributed to reduce the cost of each GP appointment, free GP appointments for children and students, free medical dressings and free ancillaries to support people who have to monitor glucose levels. These initiatives can achieve savings across the wider health economy by supporting access to care and early intervention.

The proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 offers assurance that the current role of the Health Insurance Fund in supporting a range of primary care services will be maintained. The current position is set out in the 2026-2029 Budget as follows:

“The Minister for Health and Social Services is continuing to review the Island’s health and care costs, with options for the future funding of our whole health and care system being developed in discussion with the Council of Ministers. These options will include possible

reform of the Health Insurance Fund. Whilst the Fund provides ring fenced funding for primary care services, the ring fencing also introduces barriers which can act against the best interests of patients and can create disincentives to the effective use of public money. In the meantime, the current role of the Health Insurance Fund in subsidising the cost of specific primary care services will be maintained”

- (b) As noted above, the proposed Budget draws attention to the pressures on the Fund and wider health funding and notes that change is needed to provide sustainable funding. A full range of options in respect of sustainable funding options is being led by the Minister for Health and Social Services, in collaboration with the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Treasury and Resources, with options being prepared for consideration by the incoming Government next year.

3.10 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Interest Deductions for Landlords as referenced on page 37 of the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 (WQ.367/2025):

Question

In relation to Interest Deductions for Landlords, as referenced on page 37 of the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026-2029](#), will the Minister publish details of the 2025 public consultation carried out in relation to removing the ability to claim deductions for interest paid in respect of residential properties in Jersey that are rented out, and outline what actions, if any are being considered?

Answer

A summary of the responses to the interest consultation is available on gov.je. Options included in the consultation were:

Option 1 – retain in full

Interest remains fully deductible against income from letting properties for all properties and taxpayers. There is no change to the current system.

Option 2 – remove entirely

Interest is no longer an allowable expense against rental income from residential properties from 2027. Interest would remain deductible from income from commercial properties.

Option 3 – restrict

A restriction is introduced so that only a portion of interest paid is deductible. This could take the form of a maximum monetary or percentage deduction.

Option 4 – phased basis

Either option 2 or option 3 could be done gradually rather than all at once.

As stated in the summary, the adopted proposition requires Ministers to consider the timing and cumulative impact on the housing market of removing interest relief.

Ministers will continue to discuss the matter, considering this wider impact alongside the responses to the consultation. Any proposed changes to legislation would be highlighted in Budget 2027.

3.11 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the Fuel Duty Replacement Policy, as referenced on page 37 of the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 (WQ.368/2025):

Question

In relation to the Fuel Duty Replacement Policy, as referenced on page 37 of the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026-2029](#), will the Minister advise what work, if any, has been carried out on establishing how the lost funding will be replaced, for example through vehicle ownership charges, road user charges or other measures?

Answer

It has been long acknowledged that alternative charges will be needed to make up the funding lost from declining fuel duty, as Islanders switch to more sustainable forms of transport.

Considerable work was undertaken in 2024, during which time three broad options were developed in-line with the ‘polluter pays’ principle: a vehicle ownership charge, a road user charge, and a hybrid option.

Ministers decided to pause work later in 2024 on the basis that the data showed that fuel duty receipts were in steady decline only. The work undertaken to-date has not been lost and remains relevant to future decisions on the Fuel Duty Replacement Policy (FDRP).

In 2025, government economists analysed the latest fuel duty data. The analysis did not suggest any significant shifts in the pattern of fuel consumption. On that basis, Ministers decided to maintain the pause on the FDRP.

Fuel consumption will continue to be monitored. There will be a further review of fuel duty receipts in 2026 to inform future decisions.

3.12 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding liquid waste charging (WQ.369/2025):

Question

In relation to the estimate of £10 million to be raised through liquid waste charging in 2028, as referenced on page 39 of the [Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026-2029](#), will the Minister advise how this estimate was reached and whether domestic and commercial premises were included in the consideration?

Answer

The £10 million figure was developed from the principle of funding the required investment in liquid waste infrastructure. £10 million is an average amount required to deliver the liquid waste strategy and so was adopted as the target level of income to be raised.

There are a number of different ways in which this level of income could be raised. No decision has yet been made on the mix of users that will be included within the charge. The Department for Infrastructure and Environment is leading work to determine the fairest and most effective approach to raising the necessary funds amongst the approximately 50,000 premises with liquid waste connections.

It is likely that the model adopted will also support other important environmental objectives, including promoting the efficient use of scarce resources. This could include a link to water usage as is common in many other jurisdictions.

3.13 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for the Environment regarding a new 5G phone mast at Castle Quay (WQ.370/2025):

Question

Further to the installation of a new 5G phone mast at Castle Quay, will the Minister advise what work, if any, was undertaken to ensure the mast meets the [RF EMF GUIDELINES 2020](#), published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection?

Answer

There are two parts to the answer, which I hope will reassure the Deputy as to how seriously the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) are considered.

Firstly, through the planning application process, when permission for a phone mast is granted, a condition is included which stipulates that within 3 months following substantial completion of the development, a post-commissioning test demonstrating that the development is being operated strictly in accordance with the approved plans and the ICNIRP guideline requirements, approved with the permission, is submitted to and approved by the Chief Officer. Thereafter, the equipment shall only be operated within the ICNIRP guidelines.

The second way in which the safety of phone masts is considered is by the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA). The JCRA actively monitors mobile phone masts in Jersey and records this detail on their website. [Mobile network masts | JCRA](#) this includes the results of emissions testing which can be found on their dedicated webpage at [JCRA Mast Audit | Mast Audit for Jersey](#)

3.14 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding potential improvements to the road and Railway Walk crossing at Rue de la Sergente (WQ.371/2025):

Question

Further to his answer during [Oral Questions Without Notice on 30th September 2025](#), regarding potential improvements to the road and Railway Walk crossing at Rue de La Sergente, will the Minister state –

- (a) the number of meetings or other communications regarding this site that have taken place in 2025;
- (b) the dates of the most recent meetings between officers; between officers and the Minister; and between officers and landowners (or their representatives); and
- (c) what actions, if any, are currently underway or planned to progress road improvements in this area?

Answer

It should be noted that not every activity regarding the progress of this matter has been formally recorded. Nevertheless, there has been a significant ongoing effort by the Department to progress this matter since 2021 (see Further Note below).

(a) Meetings or other communications in 2025

i	Between Officer and Minister - 1 site visit, 1 briefing
ii	Between Officers (I&E Transport Section, Jersey Property Holdings (JPH), Planning and LOD) - 5 meetings (MS Teams), 20 calls, 27 emails
iii	Between LOD and Landowner Legal Representative - 4 emails from LOD to Legal Representative (Landowner 1) – follow up to progress purchase
iv	Between I&E Transport Section and Landowners: - Landowner 1: 1 phone call – follow up to progress purchase - Landowner 2: 3 phones calls, 1 email – updated public proposal

(b) Dates of the most recent meetings

i	Between Officer and Minister Briefing on 30 th January 2025 – update on conveyancing, land purchase options and negotiations
ii	Between Officers (I&E Transport Section, JPH, Planning and LOD) - Meetings / Calls (MS Teams) to seek to implement footpath scheme (section 1) under Licence with Landowner 1 – during August
iii	Between LOD and Landowner Legal Representative - email from LOD to Legal Representative (Landowner 1) – follow up to progress purchase - 10th July
iv	Between I&E Transport Section and Land Owners:

- Landowner 1: 1 phone call - follow up to progress purchase - 19 th June
- Landowner 2: 1 email – updated public proposal – 1 st May (included an invitation to meet to discuss), phone call 6 th May - to discuss proposal - awaiting response

(c) Actions

The Department for Infrastructure and Environment remains committed to delivering a continuous footway along Rue de La Sergente (Phase 1) and subsequently enhancing the accessibility and safety of the Railway Track crossing (Phase 2). The project is currently pending the conclusion of land purchase agreements with Land Owners 1 and 2. Efforts to secure these agreements are ongoing.

Further Note

The Department, with the support of JPH and LOD, has applied significant focus in progressing negotiations since 2021, including the securing of planning approval in September 2022 for the formation of a new footway and adjoining granite screen wall (a key element of the provisional land purchase agreement) along with relevant budget setting for delivery in 2023/24. However, detailed conveyancing revealed significant complexities that have resulted in difficulties in reaching final agreement.

3.15 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding Non-Disclosure Agreements (WQ.372/2025):

Question

Will the Chair state, for each of the last 10 years, the number of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) approved by the States Employment Board and the number which involved cases of sexual misconduct or harassment?

Answer

The table below presents the number of Non-Disclosure Agreements signed by the Government, over the past seven years in relation to staff exiting the organisation, as reported in the Annual Report and Accounts.

The Government commenced using sexual harassment as a distinct category in Case Management records in 2024 when this requirement was introduced in UK legislation. There have been no Non-Disclosure Agreements signed for cases involving sexual misconduct or harassment since this began.

Year	No. of agreements
2024	22
2023	23
2022	15
2021	19
2020	18
2019	14
2018	28

2017	Not available
2016	Not available
2015	Not available

There is no central record of Non-Disclosure Agreements prior to 2017, which is when the HR Case Management Team was established.

3.16 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding the use of glyphosate in Jersey (WQ.373/2025):

Question

Further to the recent publication of the [Global Glyphosate Study](#) by the Ramazani Institute, which indicated that glyphosate may cause multiple types of cancer even at doses currently considered safe by regulators, will the Minister review and consider making changes to the use of glyphosate in Jersey; and if not, why not?

Answer

In November 2023, the European Commission adopted Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2660, renewing the approval of glyphosate for an additional 10 years. This decision followed comprehensive and rigorous scientific risk assessments, which are legally required for all pesticide active ingredients. For glyphosate, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its peer-reviewed conclusions in July 2023. As with previous evaluations, the review found no evidence that glyphosate poses harmful effects to human or animal health, nor any unacceptable risks to the environment.

Although the U.K. now operates an independent pesticide approval process following Brexit, it aligned with the E.U.'s 2023 decision. As a result, glyphosate remains authorised for use in the U.K. However, the U.K. follows a different schedule for routine reassessments of pesticide active substances. The current reassessment of glyphosate is ongoing, and while its approval is set to expire on 15 December 2026, renewal is widely anticipated

Jersey lacks the in-house expertise and infrastructure to independently assess the toxicology and epidemiology of pesticides. Consequently, it relies on the evaluations conducted by expert regulatory bodies in the E.U. and U.K. Since both currently approve glyphosate and authorise glyphosate-based products, Jersey continues to follow their lead.

It is important to note, however, that pesticide approvals are not permanent. They may be amended or revoked if new scientific evidence emerges that challenges previous safety conclusions. Should the findings of the Ramazzini Institute study be submitted to regulatory authorities, they will be reviewed and considered at the E.U., U.K. and ultimately Jersey levels.

3.17 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding GP guidelines in Jersey (WQ.374/2025):

Question

Further to the introduction of [“Jess’s Rule”](#) in the UK, which encourages GPs to “reflect, review and rethink” when a patient presents three times with the same symptoms (particularly if those symptoms unexpectedly persist, escalate, or remain unexplained), will the Minister advise whether current GP guidelines in Jersey will be reviewed to include a similar approach and, if not, why not; and will he also explain what measures and resources, if any, it is anticipated would be required to support GPs and the wider healthcare system if such a protocol were adopted locally?

Answer

Communications were cascaded to all GPs on the day this new patient safety initiative was adopted by the NHS. The principles of Reflect, Review and Rethink that underly Jess’s rule are embedded within current GP training, and local contemporary practice strongly reflects and aligns with the values of reflection, re-evaluation and rethinking. The regulated continuous professional development that all local GPs undertake demonstrates a strong commitment to this reflective practice. That said, we are in a unique position here in Jersey, Jersey has a different primary care system compared to the UK. We are fortunate that for most patients they still have that close working partnership with their “usual” GP. Equally these GPs have been trained both in the UK and in Jersey to follow the fundamental process outlined in Jess’s law. Feedback from GPs and anecdotal examples show that largely this is already a principle they follow. This continuity of care improves patient’s health, many have trusted relationships with their GP, who knows their medical history and can provide personalised care. Evidence for standards in primary care both for clinical conditions and operational practice are collected annually and this reflects high quality evidence-based care.

We do however have work to do to streamline pathways for primary care to refer to secondary care so that patients receive rapid and accurate diagnosis. In collaboration with clinicians from Primary Care and Secondary Care, Health Care Jersey continues to develop these pathways facilitating improved communication and strengthening collaboration regarding the management of investigations and assessment available within the hospital.

In essence, highlighting and promoting this reflective practice, encourages clinicians to continually reassess their decisions and approaches enhancing patient care, maintaining this culture remains a central priority within our primary care workforce.

3.18 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the School Street Scheme pilot put in place at Trinity School (WQ.375/2025):

Question

In relation to the [School Street Scheme](#) pilot put in place at Trinity School from September 2024 to July 2025 to help families and children walk and cycle to school safely, will the Minister advise –

- (a) what public feedback was received and when the feedback will be published and communicated to residents;
- (b) what adjustments, if any, will be made to the pilot following feedback; and
- (c) the expected timeline for the implementation of any such changes?”

Answer

Trinity Primary School is a busy parish school with year-round activity, including term-time classes, before and after school clubs, and holiday programmes. Ensuring safe access to the school throughout

the day, along with suitable waiting facilities for bus users, is essential to support safe routes to school and promote active travel.

Overall, the pilot scheme has been successful in meeting these objectives. While there is scope for refinement, it has largely served its intended purpose.

(a) The consultation report for the scheme has been completed, and its key findings have been presented to the Minister. The department is currently processing and formatting the data for publication. The final report will be made available on the department's website within the next month.

Feedback was collected from staff, parents, and members of the public. The main themes identified include:

- Broad support for a 20mph zone outside the school.
- Strong support for improved crossing facilities, particularly from parents and staff.
- Mixed views on enhanced bus stop facilities, with most respondents not being regular bus users.
- Support for improved lighting outside the school.
- Some dissatisfaction with the 20mph zone between the showground and Trinity Church.

(b) The department is preparing a design brief for a permanent layout, which will be submitted for ministerial approval. The brief will prioritise the safety of school children and the promotion of active travel, in line with States' policy.

(c) The works will then be incorporated into the department's forward work programme. Implementation of the final scheme will depend on available funding, departmental budget allocations, and resources.

3.19 Deputy L.M.C Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Social Security regarding households eligible for, but not claiming, Income Support (WQ. 376/2025):

Question

Will the Minister state –

- (a) the number of households eligible for, but not claiming, Income Support;
- (b) the number of households which have not been resident for 5 years but would otherwise be eligible for Income Support; and
- (c) the number of households which own one property used as the main residence, but which would otherwise be eligible for Income Support if they rented property?

Answer

The Government does not hold household composition, tenure, income and capital data on all Jersey households and so it is not possible to provide the numbers requested in the three parts of this question.

The Minister is keen to ensure that all individuals are aware of the benefits that they could be entitled to, therefore the Employment, Social Security and Housing Department runs regular campaigns and provides advice and guidance on the support available through Income Support and other benefits. Campaigns include adverts, social media posts and articles and are designed to encourage people who are not claiming benefits to check their eligibility and make an application. Information is provided to a wide range of stakeholder groups who are also encouraged to promote benefits to their clients. Individuals can check their eligibility using an online checker or by booking an appointment, phoning or dropping into Union Street.

While most means tested benefits include a 5 year residency requirement, Registered Employee Support Payments have been available for the past two years to low-income workers who do not meet residency requirements for Income Support. There have been 247 payments this year. The Minister has also initiated additional support to individuals with under 5 years residency who are the victim of domestic abuse. A 13-week period of financial support is available to anyone, regardless of residency, on recommendation from an approved community organisation. Longer term support can also be provided to individuals with at least 3 years' residency or to a parent and child household with at least one year's residency.

3.20 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding the Government's policy on migration rate (WQ.377/2025):

Question

Will the Chief Minister advise whether it is his Government's policy to advocate a positive, zero, or negative net inward migration rate to sustain the economy?

Answer

The Council of Ministers' policy is to advocate for a small positive net inward migration rate in the working age population, which alongside ongoing support to improve productivity will help sustain our economy and protect tax revenues.

The Council of Ministers intends to publish its Common Population Policy Annual Report 2025 at the end of the year.

3.21 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the Carbon Neutral Roadmap target for the Island to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (WQ.378/2025):

Question

In relation to the Carbon Neutral Roadmap (CNR) target for the Island to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, will the Minister advise how this will be funded in light of the current pressures on public finances and whether any recent assessment has been undertaken of the affordability of the transition?

Answer

The 13th Common Strategic Policy priority of this Council of Ministers, as approved by the States Assembly, is to 'Meet the Island's commitments to address the climate emergency through the Carbon Neutral Roadmap'.

The Climate Emergency fund was established in 2019 with an initial transfer of £5m from the consolidated fund, with agreed ongoing income from a portion of fuel duty and vehicle emissions duty.

The policies in Phase 1 of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap 2022-2025 are being delivered from the balance in the Climate Emergency Fund (including transfers to the fund in 2026). It is agreed that 2026 will be a continuation year, with delivery continuing within the existing funding envelope of the Climate Emergency Fund.

Budget 2026 proposes an increase in vehicle emissions duty, with additional income from that going into the Climate Emergency Fund.

The Carbon Neutral Roadmap, as well as previous Government Plans and Budget 2026, recognise that the current income streams going into the Climate Emergency Fund will be insufficient to implement all the policies required to meet our 2050 net zero ambitions at this time. If policy levers such as regulation are used in isolation, then it may be possible to meet the 2050 target within the current funding envelope, but we would be putting the cost onto Islanders which would be contrary to the agreed Just Transition principle.

As set out in the Budget 2026:

Carbon Neutral Roadmap Net Zero Financing Strategy

It is accepted that current income streams will be insufficient to fund all the necessary policies to achieve our net zero targets and it is expected that further income streams will need to be added to the fund. Based on previous estimates of a £300 million requirement, this would equate to approximately £11 million a year over the next 25 years. Some of this will be delivered by the existing revenue ring-fenced to the Climate Emergency Fund each year.

The net zero financing strategy (NZFS) will set out how the Government expects to raise the money it needs to successfully achieve Jersey's net zero transition. The first phase will address the projected expenditure profile for the second CNR delivery period from 2027-2030.

It is intended that new polluter pays measures, such as the previously proposed fuel duty replacement policy, will be progressed to generate additional revenue for the Climate Emergency Fund.

The next delivery period 2027-2030 will consider how to best use the continued income going into the Climate Emergency Fund to make the most progress possible, in line with the principle of a Just Transition, whilst exploring other funding opportunities.

3.22 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding births and deaths registered in Jersey during 2025 (WQ.379/2025):

Question

Will the Minister state the total number of births and deaths registered in Jersey during 2025 to date?

Answer

Up to and including Monday 13th October 2025 the Superintendent Registrar has registered:

- 577 births
- 687 deaths

3.23 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the Planning Obligation Agreement (POA) with Jersey Sports Academy (Strive) (WQ.380/2025):

Question

Further to [Written Question 348/2025](#) regarding the [Planning Obligation Agreement](#) (POA) with the Jersey Sports Academy (Strive), will the Minister state what steps, if any, he has taken –

- (a) to request updates from the Jersey Sports Academy to the Community Use Monitoring Programme;
- (a) to investigate how many of the 4,044 hours per year that were offered by the Jersey Sports Academy to schools and sports organisations were taken up between its opening in June 2021 and September 2024 (and will he advise whether the full hours were offered for each year); and
- (b) or is planning to take, to put in place arrangements to pursue the Owner of the POA in order for them to fulfil their monitoring requirements of the Community Use Monitoring Programme going forward?

Answer

- a) Figures have been provided by Strive by year (as noted in the answer to question b), showing usage by schools and sports organisations since the facility opened in 2021. 2025 figures will be requested at year end. Officers will review monitoring/reporting with the organisation to ensure timely data is made available through appropriate channels.
- b) Further to WQ.348/2025, Officers have now worked with Strive to undertake a more detailed analysis of the data, incorporating participant numbers to enable a more comprehensive assessment of actual usage.

Usage has been calculated below by multiplying the number of hours accessed by the number of students or athletes participating via the Jersey Sports Academy.

2021: 5,404 hours (facility opened 31/5/2021)

2022: 16,888 hours

2023: 21,872 hours

2024: 17,796 hours

c) Enforcement of planning obligations are enforceable by the Chief Officer of Infrastructure and Environment Department¹. As noted above, the take up rate to date remains well in excess of the 75% minimum required by the POA before remedial action is required.

3.24 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the Planning Obligation Agreement (POA) with Jersey Sports Academy (Strive) (WQ.381/2025):

Question

Further to Written Question 348/2025 regarding the Planning Obligation Agreement (POA) with the Jersey Sports Academy (Strive), and his position as party to that POA, will the Minister detail –

- (a) what steps, if any, he has taken to investigate how many of the 4,044 hours per year that were offered by the Jersey Sports Academy to schools and sports organisations were taken up between its opening in June 2021 and September 2024;
- (b) whether he has received regular reports detailing the monitoring of these hours, as outlined in the POA, and if not, why not; and

¹ the person appointed from time to time as the chief executive officer (or equivalent) of the administration of the States department responsible for planning and building in accordance with Article 1 of the Law;

(c) if these reports have not been received from the Owner of the POA, what measures, if any, have been taken to create arrangements to pursue the Owner in order that the monitoring requirements for the Community Use Monitoring Programme are upheld going forward?

Answer

- (a) The Minister has not carried out an investigation and notes that the take up rate is 86.7% as confirmed by Written Question 348/2025, well in excess of the 75% minimum required by the POA before remedial action is required.
- (b) Formal reports have not been received by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning or his department since the Jersey Sports Academy (JSA), operating as Strive ("the Owner"), opened in 2021. In 2016, the then Minister for Education was one of 3 parties to the agreement, along with the then Minister for EDTSC and the Chief Officer of the then Department for the Environment. Ad-hoc updates are provided to the Department for the Economy as required and Strive maintain an ongoing relationship directly with Jersey Sport and with Island schools, sports and community groups, in relation to use of the facility during available hours.
- (c) The covenants, restrictions and requirements imposed upon the Owner under the POA create planning obligations pursuant to Article 25 of the Law and are enforceable by the Chief Officer² against the Owner.

3.25 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding sustainable catch limits for Jersey's fish and shellfish stocks (WQ.382/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what work, if any, is either underway or planned regarding the establishment of sustainable catch limits for Jersey's fish and shellfish stocks; and will he provide a timetable for any such work?

Answer

Sustainable fisheries management is one of the core objectives of the Marine Resources Section, and one that is endorsed through the Marine Spatial Plan.

Research work both directly on fish stocks and on wider habitat and environmental factors has been ongoing for several years. Jersey is proud to hold, in partnership with Normandy, a Marine Stewardship Council Sustainability certification on its lobster fishery. The Marine Resources team are working alongside the University of Bangor to develop a stock assessment for scallops and then other key stocks.

All of this takes research, field time and funding. The objectives is to build to a 3-year rolling cycle where stocks can be assessed on a regular basis and new emerging stocks added in as they are learned about more fully.

My objective for Jersey is an environmentally sustainable fishery exploited by an economically sustainable fleet. The Marine Protected Area network of the Marine Spatial Plan will deliver further change on top of the stock assessments but will bring a more stable ecological base for the fishing industry to work off.

² the person appointed from time to time as the chief executive officer (or equivalent) of the administration of the States department responsible for planning and building in accordance with Article 1 of the Law; against the Owner.

The Marine Resources Section Annual Report that gives a good summary of the current position on stocks, the ongoing work to manage them and the research work that supports the understanding of them.

3.26 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the teaching of Jèrriais in schools (WQ.383/2025):

Question

Will the Minister state –

- (a) the total budget allocated to the teaching of Jèrriais in schools;
- (b) whether the budget is ring-fenced specifically for the teaching of Jèrriais;
- (c) the number of teachers of Jèrriais currently in post;
- (d) when and how any new Jèrriais teachers are to be recruited to provide a timely succession; and
- (e) why no funding by his department was provided for the recent education theatre production of La Carpéleuse Hardi Affanmée?

Answer

- (a) The total budget allocated to Jèrriais in CYPES for 2025 is £647,500, this covers all the activities of the team, including but not limited to teaching in schools. Teaching staff costs are £440,732.
- (b) The budget is not ring-fenced for the teaching of Jèrriais; the team leader is required to produce a programme of activities designed to teach and promote awareness of Jèrriais; teaching in schools is the largest element of the work but not the sole activity;
- (c) There are currently five teachers of Jèrriais in post.
- (d) There are no immediate plans to recruit further teachers of Jèrriais. The focus for succession is on an offer which enables growth in learning the language and a curriculum which has sufficient language content to enable staged development through language learning benchmarks.
- (e) The cost of the production was not budgeted as a planned expenditure. Funding was provided by the Don Balleine Trust.

3.27 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Social Security regarding Income Support (WQ.384/2025):

Question

Will the Minister –

- (a) provide a table detailing all the support schemes and funding (either directly from Government budgets or from organisations in receipt of Government grants) that exist for Islanders who are in receipt of Income Support (or who would otherwise be eligible but who have less than 5 years residency) to include (but not be limited to) free school meals, pupil premium, assistance with childcare costs and healthy start vouchers; and
- (b) will she state, in relation to each different scheme or funding provision, the number of Islanders who benefitted and the expenditure for each of the last 3 years?

Answer

(a) The Employment, Social Security and Housing Department provides details of Income Support households to other departments to support eligibility for the following schemes:

- Health Access Scheme
- Free school meals
- Pupil Premium
- Healthy Start vouchers
- Low carbon heating incentive

Eligible Income Support households also receive the Christmas Bonus and Cold Weather payments under Income Support legislation.

The main Income Support scheme includes a childcare component, and support with childcare costs (which includes nursery care, after school and wraparound care and holiday clubs run by registered childcare providers) is included in the overall calculation of the weekly Income Support payment. Income Support families receive support through the NEF childcare scheme in the same way as other parents.

States Members will be aware that additional funding is proposed in the 2026 Budget to provide a new Back to School bonus for low-income families. The exact eligibility criteria will be published next year.

In addition, other departments and organisations may use Income Support eligibility as a route to subsidised services, by directly asking benefit recipients to give evidence of their status.

(b) Given the range of different schemes and departments involved, it has not proved possible to collate this information in the time available. The information will be collated and circulated to all States Members as soon as possible.

3.28 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding doctors (WQ.385/2025):

Question

Will the Minister state –

- (a) the number of consultants, foundation stage and staff-grade doctors, associate specialists and clinical fellows who are currently employed by his department on locum, bank, or agency contracts;
- (b) the percentage that each category identified makes up of all staff; and
- (c) whether, in order to address the issue of temporary staff, there have been any changes in policy in the last 5 years in relation to the types of employment contract issued to staff?

Answer

(a) & (b)

Category	HCI Employees	Locum / Bank / Agency	% Locum / Bank / Agency of total HCI Staff
Associate Specialist	20	2	10.00%
Clinical Fellow	34	5	14.71%
Consultant	107	33	30.84%
Foundation Year	40	0	0.00%
Special Registrar	11	0	0.00%
Staff Grade	61	11	18.03%
Grand Total	273	51	18.68%

(c) In 2025, medical contracts of employment were reviewed; HCI are now in the process of re-establishing bank- only contracts for doctors who are not substantively employed in the department

3.29 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the illegal operation by unregulated drivers of receiving payment for offering lifts (WQ.386/2025):

Question

Further to the response to Oral Question 192/2025 in relation to the illegal operation by unregulated drivers of receiving payment for offering lifts, will the Minister provide details of the safeguarding messages and advice issued by the States of Jersey Police about the risks associated with these services, including the dates of any such messaging and the location of any publications?

Answer

If the States of Jersey Police are advised of a driver offering lifts for reward outside what could be considered a contribution to cover the costs of the journey, and the driver can be identified, they will be sent an advice letter and warned that their actions may be unlawful. A record of the warning is attached to the vehicle's registration details so that if it is stopped by officers, they can assess if any offences are being committed.

Members will be aware that the most recent investigation and prosecution of a driver allegedly offering lifts for reward resulted in an acquittal bringing into the question the adequacy of law and associated regulation.

As we approach the season of festive parties and work events the States of Jersey Police will be reminding Islanders to make responsible choices when it comes to getting home at the end of the evening.

3.30 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding Nude Food Development at La Pulente (WQ.387/2025):

Question

Further to the response to Written Question 273/2025 regarding the Nude Food Development at La Pulente, will the Minister –

(a) advise the outcome of the discussions with the property owner and the investigations into technical and legal issues behind potential resolutions to ensure public access to the toilet facilities;

- (b) detail what actions, if any, have been taken to enable the public toilets to be opened; and
- (c) state whether the contractual obligation of the owner to open the toilets is enforceable and, if not, why not?"

Answer

- (a) As a result of discussions, the property owner is now actively engaging with their insurance provider to clarify the requirements for obtaining public liability insurance that would be needed to operate the toilets.
- (b) Constructive discussions have taken place involving Jersey Property Holdings (“JPH”) and other relevant parties and representatives. Modifications to the plumbing and electrical systems have been identified which the owner asserts must be addressed before the facility can be opened to the public.
- (c) Efforts continue to be made to ensure the toilets within the permanent structure are opened to the public. As of 18th August 2025, the owner installed a portable toilet which has been available for public use and is regularly serviced. JPH are awaiting advice on whether the owner's contractual obligations have been discharged.

3.31 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Eastern Cycle Corridor (WQ. 388/2025):

Question

In relation to the Eastern Cycle Corridor, will the Minister –
state the current balance of funds allocated to the scheme;
advise the total amount of funding received by the scheme to date; and
provide a list of all projects that have received funding from this scheme, including the amount each project received?

Answer

(a) & (b)

This is not within the vires of the Minister for Infrastructure, and thus I am unable to account for this. Planning Obligation Agreements (POAs) allocated to the Eastern Cycle Network would be accounted for by the Scheduled Authority, which is the Minister for the Environment. The Minister for the Environment will be in contact with the Deputy separately in this regard.

(c)

Funding for schemes from the Eastern Cycle Network can only be applied for by the Minister for Infrastructure (from the Minister for Environment) once they have been constructed and assessed as compliant with the scheme. Projects that have been approved to received POA contributions towards their costs and have been fully accounted for are:

Grouville Common Cycle Path	£683,834.52
Grouville Traffic Calming	£32,751.36
ECR – Checkers to Vardon	£10,000
ECR – La Rocquier Shared Path	£171,469.92
St Clements Cycle Route	£79,320.61

ECR Surfacing path common	£2,940.96
Old Harbour Feasibility	£119,095.02
Wellcome Slip Zebra Crossing	£97,239.43
Grouville School Parking	£111,257.38
Ville es Renaud Modified Scheme	£159,465.08
French Harbour Construction	£29,441.97
English Harbour Construction	£239,542.52
French Harbour RS Construct	£733,457.94
Grouville Cycle Surfacing	£1,535.94

These amount to £2,471,352.65, including other funds committed by the Minister for Infrastructure.

Works that are in the process of being developed or completed by Infrastructure and are in the approval process for Eastern Cycle Network POA contributions, subject to approval (and have yet to be accounted for) include Grouville path upgrades adjacent to the Harry Vardon statue; Hill Street Contra flow Cycle Lane; Samares Way Finding Scheme; and various junction improvement schemes once completed.

Direct provision and a financial contribution by the developer, through a planning application POA, created the section of the network that passes through Le Squez Phase 4, Samares Nurseries and the Former De La Mare Florist Site.

3.32 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding forecasting of pupil places (WQ.389/2025):

Question

Will the Minister advise what forecasting, if any, has been carried out to identify the number of pupil places that will be needed over the next 5 to 10 years (across all areas of education) and, if such forecasting has been undertaken, will he –

- (a) outline the forecasts and explain how they were determined;
- (b) detail any capital plans identified to accommodate these forecasts, stating which of any such plans are currently funded and underway;
- (c) explain what plans are in place, if any, to implement further investment against the forecasts, providing (where possible) the timeframe and the proposed sum of funding for all such investment; and
- (d) advise whether any potential efficiencies have been identified in the educational estate and, if so, what those efficiencies are and the financial saving it is estimated they would deliver?

Answer

(a) Every year, officers in CYPES calculate predicted pupil numbers based on:

- Current pupil numbers, as recorded in the termly pupil census
- Birth numbers to anticipate future school-age cohorts
- Pupil migration, based on observed changes in the pupil census
- Pupil addresses to identify geographic distribution and catchment trends

- Pupil trends across setting types (e.g. GoJ fee-paying, GoJ non-fee paying, special schools and private settings)

These figures are cross-referenced with population projections prepared by Statistics Jersey. We are currently refreshing the forecasting model now that the autumn census has been completed.

In 2024/25 we had 14,762 pupils in Nursery to Year 13. This is predicted to reduce to 13,669 in 2029/30 and 12,451 in 2034/35.

The projections are felt to be generous as we employ a rolling trend which softens the impact of recent reduction in births, while protecting against future fluctuations.

(b) Gas Place (includes La Passerelle primary), Rouge Bouillion, Mont à l'Abbé

Pupil numbers indicate that we need additional places in special schools, investing in Mont à l'Abbé and La Passerelle primary as part of Gas Place and La Passerelle Secondary School (January 2026).

Whilst the forecasts indicate that overall pupil numbers are declining, this is against a backdrop of a continuing significant increase of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), which creates pressures for additional space and facilities.

The department regularly review the school estate and have identified several settings where the facilities don't adequately meet the needs or expectations and as such, we are requesting some investment in Gas Place and changes to Rouge Bouillion in the near future. These developments will enable inadequate school buildings to be repurposed.

(c) Details of the sums and phasing of future capital investment in the school estate are contained in the proposed budget 2026-29.

(d) We are currently exploring all possible opportunities based on the change in demographics for efficiencies and have a working group and project board set up to ensure appropriate oversight and governance of this work.

3.33 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding of updated terms and conditions for teachers and teaching assistants following their last pay award (WQ. 390/2025):

Question

Will the Minister provide an update in relation to the ongoing work stream regarding the finalisation of updated terms and conditions for teachers and teaching assistants following their last pay award and will he advise what progress has been made in the following areas –

- disparities between the same role in different schools;
- disparities for teachers supporting children with special educational needs;
- pay progression, career progress, and role development; and
- will he publish his timetable for completing all negotiations and updates?

Answer

(a) (b) (c)

Teachers

The Teachers' Terms and Conditions Review meetings continue, with regular meetings since 1st May 2025, following earlier work completed between November 2023 and July 2024. The earlier meetings resulted in the decision to prioritise recommendations regarding core hours of work for teachers. Accordingly, the draft Budget 2026-2029 includes £1.8 million of revenue growth to improve teacher's terms and conditions through the introduction of additional Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.

It should be noted that union colleagues were universal in their support for maintaining parity between job roles in different schools with no differentiation between different types of schools or provision. Work continues on Supplementary Allowances (additional payments for roles of further responsibility in schools) to assess the allocation of allowance points and to gain consistency across roles and schools.

In addition, work already drafted to clarify career progress and role development will be incorporated into the final documentation at the close of the work stream.

There are further meetings scheduled during the Autumn term.

Teaching Assistants

In 2025, a new Education Support Staff Framework was introduced in response to a long-standing need to formally recognise, professionalise, and support the vital contribution of support staff across schools and services.

The Framework establishes a structured and transparent system that provides clear job titles, defined standards of practice, and accessible pathways for professional development and career progression.

Following a period of extensive engagement, detailed data analysis, and formal consultation, over 800 education support staff were successfully mapped into the new structure.

Key outcomes include:

- A clear and consistent role structure with new, professionalised job titles.
- Agreed standards outlining what support staff can expect from the Department—and what is expected of them.
- A cultural shift that positions education support staff as integral to learner outcomes and whole-school success.
- Access to fully funded training opportunities, such as CACHE Levels 2 and 3, delivered by Highlands College.

Ultimately, the Framework represents a significant step forward in achieving greater professional recognition, career clarity, and inclusivity for education support staff—ensuring they are valued not only for the roles they perform, but for the profound difference they make every day in the lives of children and young people.

The new Framework was formally implemented on 1 September 2025.

4. Oral Questions

The Deputy Bailiff:

There are 17 questions, which means approximately 8 minutes to be allowed for questions.

4.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Social Security regarding advice received from the Social Security Fund actuaries in relation to the reduction in the grant to the fund (OQ.231/2025):

Further to her comments to the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel during the Quarterly Hearing on 24th September 2025, will the Minister provide details of the advice she has received from the Social Security Fund actuaries regarding the reduction in the grant to the Fund?

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):

Yes, I can confirm that the letter that I received from the actuaries was published on Gov.je yesterday, and a link was sent to all States Members. In addition to the letter published yesterday, I will be providing additional information to Members in the next few weeks on the long-term impact of the proposed temporary reduction in the grant over the next 4 years.

[9:45]

4.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Speaking to the Health and Social Security Panel on the same day, the Minister told the panel that the advice she received from the actuaries was the basis of her confidence that reducing the grants of the Social Security Fund was not going to damage the long-term solvency of the Fund. Can she say what part of the letter from the actuaries gave her this confidence?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

When I looked at the tables provided by the actuaries and the impact on the Fund over time, I noted that there was very minimal impact in the next few years shown over the next 4 years. I was conscious that what we did not have within that letter was actuarial advice regarding just the temporary reduction. What the advice relates to is a more permanent reduction. That is why I have requested that additional letter. But I am confident that the proposed temporary reductions will have a minimal impact on the long-term sustainability of the Fund. I have received officer advice as well to that effect, but I have asked for that further independent advice to give Members further assurance ahead of the Budget debate.

4.1.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Will the Minister advise whether, in requesting an update from the actuaries on the funding, any request was given to them about changing or altering the investment return that the Fund is due to produce over the time period?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As usual with asking for advice from actuaries, we did ask for a number of scenarios. Those scenarios included population differences as well as differences in possible returns from investments as well.

4.1.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Was the base case requested by the Minister and her officers to understand the impact of the Fund with no change to the actuarial modelling proposals, A.K.A. (as known as) no change to the investment return to that that was previously used to forecast the performance of the Fund?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, we of course always need to compare to base cases. We also asked for an adjustment on the actual figures within the Fund at the end of 2024 as well.

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

The Fund is a contributory one, as the Minister knows, set up on the basis of a third, a third, a third contributions from employees, employers and the States. The wise decisions of the Minister's

predecessors puts the funds today in a very robust form. Those, however, is a separate fund for the purposes of contributory benefits and pensions and I would have thought that the first and proper decision, if surplus funds are available, are to at least consult with the receivers of benefits and the future recipients for what they wish to do with effectively what is their partnership funds of it. I wonder whether the Minister would explain in the event of this good position being on the Fund, which is to be welcomed, what alternative considerations were given to either improve benefits or relieve contributions at present?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I gave a lot of consideration to intergenerational fairness. As Members will see from the charts produced within the actuaries' report, the Fund is very secure for the pensioners of today. When making decisions and when providing challenge to Treasury colleagues and in discussions with Council of Ministers, I did consider intergenerational fairness. The things that we are funding in this Budget are very much about that and future receivers of pensions. Things like ensuring that our residential childcare settings are suitable and fit for purpose. Things like ensuring that our emergency services are well-funded and well-run. And things like ensuring that our teachers have good terms and conditions ongoing. We need to remember as well that additional funding in the Budget is provided for childcare. We need to ensure that the Social Security Fund is fit for purpose for the future. The only way that we can do that is ensuring that we have a working population into the future as well.

4.1.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Minister explained a number of very valid matters, which are in the past and in the historic situation of the Fund, are matters which have been dealt with out of general taxation. My question related to the options of the Fund recipients themselves. She is talking about the ecosystem of which the Fund operates, but the Fund is a contributory fund and has not been interfered with like other funds, which is a matter of great celebration in Jersey. She talks about the intergenerational funds in the future but what about the contributors now? I recall, for example, the mini-Budget that was introduced in the first time of this Government, approved by this Assembly, that relieved employees of their obligation to place money into the Fund. There is a cost-of-living crisis and is it not appropriate to at least publish, and would she agree to publish, what options she had in relation to what to do with the surplus fund? For example, was consideration given to relieving the current contributors paying into the Fund without any problem of compromising future pensions and their future pensions? Was consideration like that given, that is what I am asking?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The measure in the current Budget is a short-term measure. Yes, we did, of course, consider the current contributors to the Fund, which is the working-age population of the Island. What we know is that one great burden on the cost of living for our working-age population is things like paying for childcare. That is why we have provided very targeted measures within this Budget. Of course we do have an election coming up. I stood on a manifesto that had very clear policies in relation to contributions and taxation, and I think that that will be an election matter in the coming year.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I asked whether the Minister would publish her alternative options.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, did you respond to that part of the question?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

We looked at what was available with the contributions that we have and what we would be putting in. We did not consider any other alternatives in relation to cutting contributions. That would have been inappropriate and would have had a far more longer-term reach and impact on the Fund.

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

Coming back to the Minister's answer of Deputy Curtis, the predictions undertaken by the actuary that are outlined in the letter are based on an instruction from the Government to increase the expected rate of return on investments by 1 per cent. What advice did the Minister receive on this changed assumption about investment returns and on what basis did the Minister issue this instruction?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

We know that the investments have outperformed expectations for several years, so it is on the basis of prior returns to the Fund and advice of our investment experts as well in Treasury.

4.1.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Did the Minister consider what assumptions other pension funds are making at the moment about expected rate of returns over the next few years, and why did she not ask the actuaries for their advice on what future return to set rather than from the past?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I would anticipate that that kind of information would be part of the advice that we will receive from actuaries in the next year. In addition to the planned actuarial review, I will also be commissioning the actuaries to undertake further work so that we can ensure that our Social Security Fund remains fit for purpose and does what it needs to do for future generations of the Island without putting too much burden on the taxpayer.

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

Could the Minister explain to the Assembly if the predicted 1 per cent is not realised what are the impacts of that? What happens to the Fund?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course, pension funds are very long-term investments and I am sure that we all know from our own pension funds that when you are planning over a long-term investment, then you plan over the longer term returns on the fund. It may well be that in some years the investment returns are not as high as other years, but over the long-term investment period that does balance out.

4.1.9 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

The Minister mentioned that she is seeking further advice from the actuaries. Could she commit to sharing that advice as it is given with the relevant Scrutiny Panels and, if appropriate, with the Assembly, please?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I would hope that my Scrutiny chair does know that I share advice with them on a free basis, and confidential when I have to. I think that Scrutiny and the role of this Assembly in decision-making is incredibly important. I took a lot of convincing that this was the right thing to do. I expect the right level of scrutiny from this Chamber and I, of course, will provide them with the information that they need to make their own decision when we come to the Budget debate.

4.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:

I am grateful to the Minister and Government for publishing that letter, but the letter makes clear that the only reason that the fund looks in rude health is because the Government has instructed the actuaries to consider the matter only with a 1 per cent increase in investment returns. Had they not

put that assumption in, the investment returns would have looked very much worse. The actuaries suggested at point 15 in their letter that the wisdom of the Government's instruction to increase the rate could be assessed by the actuaries if the Government wished. Has the Minister taken up this offer and if not, why not?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

At the moment that has not been taken up but, of course, as I said in my previous answer, we will be asking the actuaries to undertake their planned review and also be asking for that additional piece of work to do to give the public of Jersey and this Assembly the confidence that we are taking the right steps into the future.

4.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Chief Minister regarding the cost of living to 'Middle Jersey' (OQ.236/2025):

Will the Chief Minister detail what support, if any, is being provided or offered to households considered to be "middle Jersey" to assist with the cost of living and if no support is being provided or offered, why not; and will he further advise how this group are considered when policy decisions are made regarding the cost of living?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

Let us start by saying I think Members will know that the increases in cost of living are not unique to Jersey; that is something we are seeing globally, particularly in the west, due to geopolitical challenges. Of course, we import about 95 per cent of what we consume, so we are at the mercy of other economies sometimes. However, there are levers we can pull to help reduce the impact of cost of living on Islanders. Those have included, in line with our Corporate Strategic Policy, a reduction in the cost of G.P. (general practitioner) appointments, the hot school meals are now available in every state school, government fees and charges, we have a policy to keep those as low as possible. We have a cap at 2.5 per cent and quite often charges are put up below that. In addition to the forthcoming Budget, the forthcoming Budget proposes increased tax thresholds with the income thresholds rising to £21,250 before people pay tax. Importantly, as mentioned by the Minister for Social Security, one of the big challenges the Island has been facing is that of childcare. We are proposing in the Budget up to 15 hours of new free childcare fully funded for 2 to 3 year-olds to give every child the best start. This proposal would invest £4 million into childcare for 2 to 3 year-olds, creating an opportunity to families to save up to £6,000 a year in childcare costs.

4.2.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I think that we understand very well the profiles of lower earners in the Island, and we have an income support system to provide for those Islanders. Could the Chief Minister outline, aside from the individual topic-based things he has outlined, what systematic work is being done to understand, for example, families who have a mortgage on one property that they own and are working full-time hours and have children, the struggles that families like that might be facing who are outside of the perhaps income support requirements?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

There is no, as such, clear definition of what the Deputy means by "middle Jersey". I think we know what she means but we manage. We tend to target support for Islanders. We have general policies that help all Islanders. For example, I mentioned the childcare support because that is universal; it is not means-tested. That is one example of where we are helping all Islanders.

[10:00]

I think you could argue that the introduction or the move to a living wage will help more Islanders, those outside of the lower income support measures, because the impact of a minimum or a living wage increases wage levels across, right through the pay scales. We manage that and we work on

that based on our policy and strategy that has always been to target the support of more of those people on lower income. But as I have explained, we are introducing more universal support packages moving forward. But there is no clear definition of ... well, I am not sure what the Deputy means by “middle Jersey”. Perhaps that is something we need to look to establish if we want to get more details for the Deputy.

4.2.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Government is, in its Budget, reducing contributions to the Social Security Fund by a quarter of billion pounds with measures to spending to help Islanders. Did the Chief Minister consider options such as time-limited cuts to tax or social security contributions, which would not have been a long-term drain on the fund; and if not why not?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Because we have allowed this Assembly, previous Governments have allowed, the cost of running the public sector to grow exponentially we needed to make a decision about how we invest taxpayers’ money. The Government has decided to invest a bit less of that money in pension reserves and put more of that money, as the Minister for Social Security explained in a previous answer, into supporting Islanders. For example, the provision of much-needed housing for looking after children, and, of course, increases and improvements to the Health budget, and health we provide for Islanders. If you start reducing social security contributions, that has a long-term impact, and once you start reducing them, they are much harder to bring them back up again. The argument is the same if we were to increase pensions. The long-term impact of that is far greater than what we are proposing. We are proposing a short-term reduction in the taxpayer contribution to the reserve funds. Bearing in mind we are still proposing to put in £184 million during the course of this Budget and forecast, which is a lot more than has gone in from the public, from the taxpayer in the last 5 years. What we are actually doing is reinstating the contributions to the Pension Reserve Fund, and increasing what is going into them.

4.2.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

Perhaps I was not clear. What I was suggesting was as a cost-of-living measure. Did the Government consider taking short-term, say 2-year, cuts in contributory benefits or taxes, which would not have had a long-term effect because they would have been short term? Can the Chief Minister confirm whether that was considered and if not, why not?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I thought I explained that in the opening part of the question, but sorry if I was not clear. No, we did not seriously consider that because, as I have explained, we have to finally balance the books at the moment, given the increase in the cost of running the public sector. Now this Assembly in the Budget might decide they do not want to, they want to put even more money into the Reserve Fund, in which case we will have to look at what we spend taxes and the money we save on. That will mean a significant reduction in some services or not introducing a new service; for example, the £4 million for childcare, the money we need to build new children’s homes, the increase in the Health budget to provide better health for Islanders. That is a legitimate debate for the Assembly, but this Government has decided, for the reasons explained numerous times in Scrutiny and here in the Assembly, that we think it is better use of taxpayers’ money now to invest in the current needs of Islanders, while still keeping the Social Security Reserve in a very strong position.

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

The Chief Minister has been in this Assembly as long as I have, albeit with some absences. He will recall many discussions about the need to find monies for improving public services, improving services at the same time as delivering efficiencies. In the committees and Governments that I have been with him, would he agree that the cost of living is not just about reducing ... albeit the previous

questioner asked some pertinent questions about reducing the contribution to social security, but does his Government also not continue to agree that a relentless focus on driving down domestic cost of living is important, and was he concerned to hear the comments of the retailers when they said that as a result of the flat rate card all of the groceries in Jersey were going up?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think there were a number of questions in there. Of course we remain concerned about the cost of living in Jersey. We have done all along, and I remember the Deputy's frustrations when he was the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the limited impact we could have on the cost of living because we control ... we do not have monetary policy, we have fiscal policy. So we are limited. In relation to the flat rate card, let me just explain that while that might see a very small increase in the cost of freight in the short term, I believe that will bring benefits to freight because it will introduce more competition in the freight-forwarding process moving forward. Right now, where we have only one freight-forwarding operator delivering the vast majority of our freight, any increases, for example, the difference between what Condor paid and a new flat rate card, can be passed straight through to the retailers. But we want to see more competition in food retail. The Deputy knows we want to bring food prices down, that is perhaps where we need to be looking. Freight-forwarding costs, food retail costs for competition. I would also remind Members that out of the 2 bidders in the tender process for the ferry service, both of them put forward flat rates there. So, whichever ferry operator we would have chosen we would have seen an increase to the flat rate.

4.2.5 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

My constituents in St. Saviour, and I think it is also across the Island, are getting tired of hearing about jam tomorrow. They wanted to see action during the course of this Assembly and they have not. When they hear that grocery prices are going up, because that is what the retailers all of them said when they appeared for the Scrutiny Panel, they linked that directly towards the flat rate card. Is he saying he is not concerned by the comments that the retailers advanced on oath at a public Scrutiny hearing that their grocery prices were going up as a result of the flat rate card? Was he not concerned?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I take exception to the accusation of talking about jam tomorrow from the author of the jam tomorrow phrase used in this Assembly, and the times when I go back to the Deputy's time in office when we had promises that never materialised and we saw rises in the cost of living, significant rises in the cost of living, through his time in office. But of course we know that was not all of his fault because at that time as well we were subject to rises in cost of living from factors outside of our control. This Government has done more in the last 18 months to bear down on the cost of living and to support Islanders with assistance than previous Governments have. That is something we continue to do and hopefully the Assembly will continue to support that. The economic advice we have received in relation to the increase to the flat rate, will have a minimal impact on the cost of food. We are seeing huge increases to the cost of food. Just look across the U.K. (United Kingdom) and how the major multiples are seeing major ... you speak to people. I have friends and family that live in the U.K. and they talk about significant increases to the cost of food. It is something that is going on right across the world, and it is beyond our control. We do not like it and we will do everything we can to help bear down on that. But our choices are limited.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Point of order, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I ask, the Chief Minister in his answer made a number of suggestions of policies that I may have been involved in, which I do not recognise, and facts. Do I have any recourse in order to ask the Chief Minister to withdraw such comments? Someone has to take the insult, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

It is just parliamentary discussion and debate, nothing unusual what the Chief Minister ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It sounded insulting, Sir.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

It was not meant to be insulting, Sir. I am just trying to make a point. If the Deputy cannot take it he should not dish it out.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There is no point of order. Chief Minister, I have dealt with the point. I have dealt with the point.

4.2.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

There has been a suggestion that the flat rate card is contributing excessively to the cost-of-living crisis in Jersey. Whatever the facts of that are, and we may get to them at some point, would the Minister state whether he is dogmatic about the continuation of the flat rate card or would he be open to suggesting that the DFDS do not have to charge a flat rate for freight to allow for more dynamic pricing and more flexibility in the charging of freight for that company?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

As I said before, we like to be flexible, but I honestly think that a flat rate will work in the best interests moving forward. It is going to provide some very small inflation in the short term, but that should quickly level out. But, of course, I will say everything is possible. We can negotiate any aspect of the contract at any time. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and his team can do that with the ferry operator, and that is an option on the table. If we were to see an ongoing problem or continue challenges, if we fail to see more competition in the freight-forwarding market, then that might be a time to look at renegotiating that to try and drive costs down. But right now, I think we need to stick to our guns on that and support more competition in the markets. We have to remember that when there was a dynamic rate, the main freight forwarder were paying less than half of what new entrants into the market would have to pay for shipping rates. That just eliminated all competition.

4.2.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Chief Minister accept that economics might state that if there is very little traffic, let us say going on a Tuesday and Thursday, it might be normal for a company to incentivise more traffic, more freight, going on those days by offering a discount? Currently, it is not possible for DFDS to offer discounts when there might be light freight days. Is that something that the Minister would consider, especially if there is evidence that a non-flat-rate card might actually produce better benefits for the consumer, ultimately, than a flat-rate card?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I will have to pass that one over to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development in due course, but I am not sure that it would because we have to remember that our ferry service has to be financially sustainable. [Approbation] Thank you, Minister.

Deputy M. Tadier:

At least one person agrees with you, Chief Minister.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am grateful for the Minister's support on that. We remember that our previous ferry operator, Condor Ferries, because of various private equity purchases and sales ended up in severe financial difficulty. What we have here now is a partnership with a large global organisation that we believe will be much more financially secure and sustainable moving forward. I think it is important we bear that in mind, given the lifeline nature of the services they provide.

4.2.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Chief Minister for his answers. I can see that this current Government, as with the previous Government, is taking the cost-of-living challenges seriously and attempting to tackle them. As the Chief Minister mentioned, much of it is beyond our control, but does he agree that where we target our support is within our control? Would he agree that a piece of work is necessary to understand and define the needs of middle Jersey so that our policies and legislation can be targeted properly? Could he consider initiating this before the end of this term of office so that it can be completed early in the next term to inform the policy making of the next Assembly?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think the short answer to that is yes, insofar as I can ask the Cost of Living Strategy Group to put that on their agenda for the next meeting and consider that. The first thing we need to do is have a definition of exactly what middle Jersey is because we are a small, I think, and united community. We tend to look at the Islanders, we try to do the best for all Islanders, but we can certainly look at that. I think I speak on behalf of all Ministers, I wish we could do more to bear down on the cost of living, and we will do everything we can to play our part in minimising the impact for all Islanders.

[10:15]

4.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Safer Routes to School works on Bagatelle Road (OQ.229/2025):

Will the Minister advise which head of expenditure in the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 will be utilised to fund the Safer Routes to School works on Bagatelle Road; and what the total cost of this project is estimated to be?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. It is important that we all take the necessary action to enhance road safety in the Island. The Safer Routes to School programme has been partially funded from the Car Park Trading Fund, which is allocated to support road safety and sustainable transport initiatives. As such, it forms part of the normal revenue head of expenditure of the Infrastructure Department. This is supplemented by money from the Climate Emergency Fund, where schemes meet its criteria, as well as planning obligation agreement funding. Bagatelle Road is a multi-year programme of linked schemes at various stages of development. This year we have spent £570,000, including £300,000 from the Climate Emergency Fund, on a scheme development and construction, and this includes internal staff cost recharges. The value of the full remaining programme is estimated to be £2.3 million. This is currently unfunded and outside of the scale of funding that can be provided from the return to the Car Park Trading Fund. To be able to continue, an additional budget would need to be provided through the Government capital programme.

4.3.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am grateful for the Minister to explain to the representatives of St. Saviour that the cost is £2.3 million. I was previously advised that it might be £1.3 million. Given the importance of this improvement for the safety of children and parents and visitors to St Saviour's School, and the

proposed generous donation of land not in the States ownership in order to deal with this, would the Minister give any indication of when the school may see this, at least elements of the most important safety considerations, actually advanced? Is he saying that there is no prospect of it next year?

The Connétable of St. John:

I am not saying that at all. In fact, I am actively working with the Constable and the Education Department. We recently met at Grainville where we allocated parking for the school to use. We continue to work. The £1.3 million the Deputy refers to, I think, is for the St. Saviour's School field path, as it is referred to. Next year, we plan to do some enabling works. We have done extensive consultation this year, and we would hope to carry out works in 2027 and 2028.

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

I thank the Minister for the 20 spaces allocated to St. Saviour School in the top end of Grainville. It is very helpful. As the Minister is well aware, most of the Island schools are in St. Saviour and, in particular, Bagatelle Road and the surrounding area. Will the Minister agree to reprioritise his budget for this year in order for this scaled-down project of an extra pathway opposite St. Saviour School to go ahead?

The Connétable of St. John:

We have done extensive work in the Parish of St. Saviour on traffic safety and road safety. This year we have spent significant funds opposite the Girls' College with a crossing. We continue to do that work. We are continuing to do the planning and we are going to carry out the works as soon as we practically can; the significant work planned for next year, including the enabling works.

4.3.3 The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I would be grateful if we could have a meeting with the Minister, myself as Constable, and St. Saviour Deputies to get the full updates on what is happening in the Parish.

The Connétable of St. John:

I would be happy to do that. The Constable will be aware that officers have tried to get on to the October Roads Committee agenda but have been unsuccessful, but I am available to meet with the Constable and the Deputies whenever.

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

Could the Minister please outline what work could have been carried out or would have been carried out were the requested funding put into the Budget, please, in the St. Saviour School Action Plan?

The Connétable of St. John:

Members will be aware that for some of the work we will require planning permission. We have a whole process to go through. For next year, the enabling works and the detailed planning is the work that we will be undertaking to ensure that we can carry out works in 2027 and 2028.

4.3.5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Is it fair to say that the work is still going to happen, but it is just taking a little bit longer?

The Connétable of St. John:

It is about priority, and we will be looking to do some further work at the southern end of Bagatelle Road in 2026 as part of the Les Varines scheme. We will continue to work the planning. I estimate we will be investing around £500,000 in road safety initiatives in and around the St. Saviour's area.

4.3.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Is any budget being put aside for the Safer Routes to School initiative to focus on green lanes, as many children use green lanes on the way to school, especially to safeguard against any excess speeding on those routes, which may be dangerous to children?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Green lanes are essential, not only for cyclists but also for people walking. We have got a scheme that we believe would see considerable safety improvements in the Parish of St. Saviour. So far, unfortunately, the Roads Committee are unsupportive of making a road which is currently 2-way, a no-through road, but we will continue progressing.

4.3.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Minister give consideration to making sure that green lanes do become greener, so perhaps restricting certain lanes to residents only, perhaps even to bicycles, horses, pedestrians and, dare I say, electric vehicle, which of course can also speed but at least do not have any emissions.

The Connétable of St. John:

The Deputy will be aware that all of the green lanes are Parish by-roads and do not come under my Ministry. I am pleased to confirm that we have changed the design of the signs for green lanes, which reflect the Guernsey sign, which has a person walking, a person cycling and a person riding a horse, to try and bring that ambience to those green lanes.

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

Would the Minister accept that while on the one hand the road improvements, which he cites, taking up most of the time that he has answered the questions about schools, because as the Constable rightly says most schools are in St. Saviour and so all the works are absolutely necessary, but would the Minister understand why representatives of St. Saviour and the Constable and the municipal authorities feel very strongly about this Bagatelle Road improvement for the primary school? It is dangerous, it has been a problem for a long time. The work of the Parish has ensured that there is actually a solution there. I am not quite sure what the communication is because my Constable was actually looking rather unclear when you were saying that other things were being communicated with the Parish. Perhaps he would agree that it might be appropriate for all of the elected representatives to be able to support, with our Constable, the Minister in his decision-making so he is under no illusion that this is a very important and prioritised matter for our constituents.?

The Connétable of St. John:

As I said at the outset, road safety is vital that we all take seriously. This morning I was interviewed about road safety in St. Peter's, where people are ignoring signs for direction and speed. It is under all of our responsibilities to support those initiatives and do what we can. I have personally met with the Roads Committee of St. Saviour, who were not receptive to the ideas that we put forward to make it easier for people to commute to and from Bagatelle. Unfortunately, we are not able to get on to the October Roads Committee agenda. We are working with St. Saviour and Grouville to make it connectable. I will continue to pursue that, and I am more than happy, as I said earlier, to meet with the Constable and Deputies. I reiterate that, following a meeting with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, myself and the Constable, we allocated 20 parking spaces to ease the congestion.

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

May I raise the défaut on Deputy Moore?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to raise the défaut on Deputy Moore? The défaut is raised.

4.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding visitor accommodation at La Folie (OQ.227/2025):

Following the comments made by the chief executive officer of Ports of Jersey to the Public Accounts Committee on 15th October 2025, that the request to explore visitor accommodation at La Folie came from the Ports Policy Ministerial Group. Will the Minister, as P.P.M.G. chair, advise how this request originated and whether all members of the P.P.M.G. agreed to pursue this use for the site?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

I thank the Deputy for his question. The P.P.M.G., the Ports Policy Ministerial Group, made the request of Ports of Jersey Limited to explore visitor accommodation options for the La Folie site at its meeting of 23rd June 2023. The minutes from that meeting record that approval was given by the group, which was attended by the then Chief Minister, Minister for Treasury and Resources, Minister for Infrastructure and myself as the group's chair. Since then, the P.P.M.G., instituted again under the current Chief Minister, has received regular updates from Ports of Jersey on the project's progress. It has remained the group's shared position that the La Folie site should be developed as hotel accommodation to breathe new life to that area of St. Helier, a much-loved and valued historic building, and to invigorate Jersey's visitor economy.

4.4.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I hope that the Minister can, in my supplementary, address where this originated. For the avoidance of doubt, will the Minister be able to advise whether he, his officers or any of those members listed, had discussions with any hotel providers about the La Folie site prior to issuing this request to Ports to explore the use, and if so, will he detail the substance of these discussions?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Prior to the meeting of P.P.M.G., I had already met with the former Chief Minister and the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to discuss the La Folie site and its potential use as either a headquarters for the sea cadets or a hotel. Having engaged the former Minister for Justice and Home Affairs on the site's use, the request was made of Ports of Jersey Limited to proceed with scoping options for hotel accommodation. This position is consistent with the Port's policy framework, which confirms the Government's support for the redevelopment of Jersey's harbour estates and in a way that incorporates opportunities to develop visitor accommodation and to protect its cultural and historic characteristics. I think it is really important to understand that ... this is all going back a couple years, but from my perspective the intention was to have development done as quickly as possible. Obviously many Islanders have seen La Folie and many Islanders complain about the La Folie site remaining undeveloped. I know from my perspective one of the reasons for thinking that hotel accommodation would be a good use was because obviously it is already a listed building and so maintaining the pub as a pub or as a restaurant in some way is a good idea, because that fits with that listing. In theory, a commercial use would lead to a faster development as opposed to just constant stagnation and non-development of that site.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If I could, I thank the Minister, but could he address the substance of my question, which was whether any discussions with hotel providers or groups took place by any Ministers or officers?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes that was part of the question that was asked.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

None to my knowledge. I do remember when I was a member of Scrutiny in 2018, possibly 2019, having a discussion with somebody who was part of a portfolio of people who had their own plans for the site. That was long before I was a Minister but what that did do was help me understand that there was the potential viability for it as a site but there were never any formal discussions that I am aware of.

4.4.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Is the Minister aware of the planning framework for this site, as described in the St. Helier Urban Character Appraisal, which would limit buildings to 3 stories? Does he believe that a planning application for visitor accommodation should fit within the parameters of this policy?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As I understand planning policy, it is there to be used as a guide. I do not ask that any application necessarily fit within that. That is why we have the planning officer and Planning Committee and planning appeal system. So if somebody wishes to present an application which is outside of those policies, that is their choice, but they obviously know that there is a higher risk of it not being accepted as a result. But that to me is the planning framework. I think we get into something of a mess as an Island when we insist on only developments that are not commercially viable be presented to planning. I have a lot of criticism of the current Bridging Island Plan, precisely because I feel it is unrealistic in its limitations that it places on development in Jersey.

4.4.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

Has the Minister looked at the brief that the Ports have produced for the site, which, if the sums are done, suggests that the square meterage that they want to achieve and the rooms they want to achieve and the square meterage of the site, they would have to build a building possibly 6 or 7 stories high?

[10:30]

Does he not think that it is beholden on government organisations to have some respect for things such as the St. Helier Urban Character Appraisal and planning policies to protect listed buildings and places, including their setting?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will go back to my previous answer. I think any applicant can provide any application they wish. The whole point of having a planning system, which the Deputy used to be Minister for Planning, and he will understand that the system is there precisely to weigh up applications against policy and decide whether or not to go ahead. I think - I will say it again - this Assembly has slowed development in all sorts of areas by insisting that the applications from States-owned entities fit within certain parameters before they even go forward. I think there has to be the potential where those parameters are seen as not being commercially viable, that an application can go forward from a States-owned entity which is outside those parameters, but then that is for the planning system to decide. That is why we have the planning system; and it is a strong planning system, from officer to committee to independent appeal and decision by the Minister. So I think it is entirely to be left to the planning system to decide whether any application is appropriate or not. It is not for me or any other Member of the Assembly to decide that unilaterally.

4.4.4 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Minister might have read the countless amounts of public commentary that do not feel that the proposed use aligns with this. Will he ensure that, while conversations are ongoing, the public's views are taken into account as to the future use. In saying that, the Minister highlighted the Port's policy framework is there to respect cultural and historic uses of the harbour, and so I ask him to pursue this because I think a lot of users of the harbour and the public do not think that the proposed use aligns necessarily with the Port's policy framework's ambition of protecting the historic users.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have got to admit I do not necessarily agree with the Deputy. I think a harbour has to primarily be a functional harbour. I think preserving a harbour purely because of the fact that it is old means that it is very difficult to develop that harbour for economic use of the Island. The harbour is one of our most important economic facilities in this Island. To stop development in the harbour because of wanting to maintain the way it looked 200 years ago is a really dangerous place for Jersey to be. But that is just an opinion that I have. The point being that it is not my opinion that matters. It is not the Deputy's opinion that matters. It is the opinion of the planning officer, followed by the Planning Committee, followed by an independent planning officer and then, potentially, appealed by the Minister. The planning system, which the Deputy knows incredibly well, possibly better than anybody else in this Assembly, is there to take into account the public opinions. The public's opinions will be presented in consultation with regard to any planning application that comes forward. That is the place where the public opinion will be weighed against policy, against the application; that is why we have a planning system. This Chamber is not the planning system and should not be the planning system. It is the officer, committee and then the appeal beyond that. That is the planning system, and I leave it to them to decide and they will take into account public opinion.

4.5 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding free GP appointments for children (OQ.224/2025):

Will the Minister advise whether any consideration has been given to amending the scheme of free G.P. appointments for children to a means-tested model, targeted at supporting children in lower-income households?

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):

The short answer is no. The longer answer is that I would encourage the Deputy to look at my party manifesto, which is absolutely clear on my position around access to primary healthcare. I was incredibly proud when Deputy Alves was able to bring a proposition to this Assembly, and the Assembly accepted it, which made G.P. appointments free for all children and that should continue.

4.5.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Obviously with the Health Insurance Fund with a sum value of £101 million forecast to go down to about £72 million in 4 years' time, what actions is the Minister going to take to try and curtail the extent of expenditure?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

When it comes to expenditure it is important to consider that across the whole health service. Things like free G.P. appointments to children does relieve potential pressures on things like the Emergency Department. Because worried parents can check issues with G.P.s without fear of not being able to afford an appointment. As I have said time and time again in Scrutiny, I am working closely with the Minister for Health and Social Services. The Minister for Health and Social Services has a far-reaching piece of work around health budgets and health funding. It is really important that we see primary care as part of that.

4.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister speak to the advantages of not means-testing for young children when it comes to G.P. visits? Does she agree that those advantages might include that means-testing itself can be quite an expensive and complicated process but also that children generally themselves do not have independent wealth or income and, therefore, children should not necessarily be expected to pay for their own G.P. visits?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, I am always very mindful that children and young adults do not have independent income necessarily, and of course that is why we extended the G.P. access to full-time students as well in acknowledgement of that. I think we need to be very careful when we talk about means-testing. Just a few moments ago the Chief Minister was asked about cost-of-living pressures on middle-income earners. Such a means test on G.P. visits for children would absolutely hit possibly those middle-income earners that the Assembly is so concerned about. This is a very real factor in relation to cost of living. People should not be afraid to go to their G.P. People should seek as early intervention as possible and that will lead to further savings in the long run, both in terms of quality of life for people but also in savings in the secondary care sector.

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

The previous question covered most of what I wanted to ask. But does the Minister agree that children's human rights cannot and should not be means-tested?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, absolutely I agree with that.

4.6 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding a written policy setting out the manner in which the Code of Conduct for Elected Members would be enforced (OQ.228/2025):

Will the chair advise whether the P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) has produced a written policy setting out the manner in which the Code of Conduct for elected Members will be enforced to ensure fair and consistent treatment of Members and consideration of mitigating factors and, if not, why not?

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

The Privileges and Procedures Committee has not produced such a written policy. The Deputy is aware that P.P.C. is working on amendments to the Code of Conduct. An earlier proposition was withdrawn in order to make changes and the committee will return with a revised proposition in due course. As with the previous version, however, the revised code will be accompanied by guidance that is intended to help everyone, including Members, understand how the code works and how it is administered. There is otherwise already clarity regarding the process for complaints, and the Commissioner for Standards has published a report outlining her approach to her responsibilities. Both the commissioner and P.P.C. must follow the provisions laid out in the Commissioner for Standards Law and in Standing Orders. The code and those provisions provide for the fair and consistent treatment of Members. Any mitigating factors presented by Members in respect of the code are considered by P.P.C., and I have no doubt by the commissioner as well.

4.6.1 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Will this guidance extend to the handling of complaints by the P.P.C.? For example, I have one Islander who contacted me regarding the communication regarding a Member's conduct that he sent to the former chair, on which he has heard nothing, not even a suggestion that he should contact the Commissioner for Standards directly. Will such guidance or a policy be provided so that there is some transparency so that States Members and the public can know whether the P.P.C.'s values are in line with their own?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Guidance for policy will certainly be included in the Code of Conduct. I understand that the Member has made a contribution to P.P.C. where she has made suggestions for changes to that policy, which

will be brought before the end of this term; I am confident of that. As regards reporting to the commissioner, it is all members of the public's right to report any allegations or possible breaches of the Code of Conduct to the commissioner. I will most certainly advise members of the public and Members to do such.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Just a point, I do not believe the chair answered my question which was about an actual policy regarding the handling of complaints.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Chair, did you cover that about complaints?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes, Sir. If any complaints are received by the P.P.C. they will be brought up by the P.P.C. at their general meetings.

4.7 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding a paid-for article in the Jersey Evening Post on 27th September 2025 (OQ.226/2025):

In relation to the school meals sponsored content article published in the *Jersey Evening Post* on 27th September 2025, will the Chief Minister advise if this article was sponsored by Government and, if it was, explain why, state the cost to publish the article and advise which department paid for the publication?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

The sponsored content was placed as part of a campaign in order to raise awareness among parents of the school meals programme and, therefore, ensure that as many primary school children as possible can benefit from having a hot and nutritious school meal at lunchtime. The article was part of a wider campaign to keep the public informed about progress, the progress of the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) priorities and upcoming developments. That included video interviews and other content that was also shared through the social medial channels of all Island media and the Government's social media channel. The total cost of that was £897. That was paid for from the communications budget, which is part of the Cabinet Office.

4.7.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

What is the budget allocation for providing sponsored content to the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* in 2025-2026? If you do not have that number to hand maybe you could let me have that. Is there a danger that sponsored content is seen by the public as propagandaa ahead of the next election?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, I would hope not. The idea is, and clearly it is important when we do advertorials or whatever you want to call them, it is clearly labelled sponsored content, which it was in this case. It is absolutely clear, top of the page that this was sponsored content. It is important we do that from time to time. We cannot always get the stories and the information out as part of the news stories because some of it we deem to be important that parents and children know about might not be considered newsworthy. That is why I think sponsored content is sometimes important. I do not know what the exact budget is. It is not a lot, it is part of the communications budget, but I am happy to let the Deputy look at that and let the Deputy have that figure.

4.7.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I hope the Chief Minister does accept that there would be legitimate worries about the potential for sponsored content becoming political propagandaa. Could he, therefore, advise, what guidelines are

in place to ensure that we do not get sponsored content that advises the public on the great work that the Chief Minister has been doing over the last 2 years and the Government's work to be the best Government that the Island has ever had?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I thank the Deputy for his compliment. I am not sure we deserve them just yet; we have got more work to do of course. I think sponsored content is something that is used very rarely, very occasionally when it is felt we need to get important messages across. The Government advertises and spends a lot of money on advertising. It is for roadworks to notices and to other important aspects. I think the school meals programme, something started by Deputy Renouf's Government or the Government that he was part of, so I have to share the credit with them for that. It is so important to the development of our children that we felt on this occasion some sponsored content would help get the message across. I do not think anybody can mistake some sponsored content promoting the benefits of school meals with propaganda. I think that is quite ridiculous to assume that. But I do take on board the broader principle, which is why it is not used very often but only used where we think it is necessary and for the right reasons.

[10:45]

Deputy J. Renouf:

Sir, I did ask what the guidelines were. The substance of my question was what the guidelines are to prevent political propaganda.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you did. Any guidelines governing the use of this?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure I have seen any guidelines that specifically state the word "propaganda". But I can certainly ask Communications to look at that. The guidelines I have seen have all been very sensible, proper and appropriate and work generally well. I think our communications, especially across the Government, social media channels and the advertising and advertorial work we do has been beneficial to the public in sharing information.

4.7.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I, therefore, ask what advice the Chief Minister took in relation to this piece of sponsored content and its appropriateness to check whether it met the criteria?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I did not have any advice on it. This was something that the Communications Department carried out, I presume with working closely with the Education Department. I think it was a good advertorial, I think it was important and I fully supported it. I do not have sight of every single advert, every single decision that is made along those lines. But I would like to reassure Members that our communications work, I think, is very carefully considered by the team and something I fully support.

4.7.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

What does it come to when the Government has to pay the local newspaper to put out Government propaganda, especially when they used to do it for free? Is the real issue here not about Government but about oversight of the media? Would the Chief Minister listen to the legitimate concerns? Would he also answer the question about who is it that writes the sponsored content? Could he confirm whether the sponsored content is written in-house by his own officers, by government officers and then put to print or is it journalists for hire that we are seeing here working, effectively, on behalf of Government being paid for by the taxpayer?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure who wrote the article. It all depends, I think sometimes articles like that could be provided by the purchaser of advertising. Sometimes it can be written by the supplier of the advertising. We all know that media - and I think we have very good media here - and the community aspect of what is covered in our media is second to none. I do not always agree with some of the news content; some of the headlines are a bit misleading. But the media over here are legitimate businesses and can run on the fact that they work on the back of their revenues from membership providing access to the news and advertising. I do not think there is anything wrong with the Government. As it has done for many, many years, you can go back a long time, where we gave exclusivity to the media on notices. I think those days have passed now. But I think the media play an important part of working with the Government in sharing certain types of information. I have not seen any part of that related to any form of propaganda whatsoever. I suppose you could make that accusation to any business advertising with the media, and any big advertisers might not be criticised by the news because they are spending money on advertising. I can assure the Members that does not apply to the Government.

4.7.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Chief Minister undertake to give wider consideration to the appropriateness of the Government using advertorials, as they might be called? Where on the one hand of course Government are free to write letters to the *J.E.P.* or any media, which they do without paying. They can take out adverts which they do, paying for but when there is a Comms Unit which is employed by Government, there is an expectation, I think, from the taxpayer and from the public that the blurring of lines should not take place. Would the Minister give consideration to what the policy should be of any government, not just his, when it comes to the use of sponsored content which may be written by otherwise independent journalists?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I want to reiterate I do not believe there has been any blurring of lines. I would not support any blurring of lines. I will ask the Communications Department to remind Ministers there is a policy on that. I am happy to reassure Members of the position. It is a valid point raised by the questioner and varied Deputies, and we will continue to make sure that if we do use advertising or advertorial we will do it in a proper way, so it does not impinge upon the freedom of the media.

4.7.6 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I just want to make one point to the Chief Minister, there is a very big difference between business providing advertorial and governments providing advertorial. Businesses do it and everybody knows what businesses are about and that is their emphasis. Government, this is a wider communication thing. I do not see this parallel between what businesses do and what governments do. To come on to my final question is, how many other pages have been sponsored, does the Chief Minister understand? Are there any more plans to provide any more sponsored content in the *Jersey Evening Post*?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Just dealing with it, I hear what the Deputy says about business and I was not trying to make a comparison between government and businesses. But businesses are sometimes part of the news for various reasons. There could be a time when a business has done something wrong but because they are a big advertiser you can say, hold on a minute, why are the media not being ... but I have never seen any evidence of that. I think our media are free and fair and rightly firm where they have to be. I do not know how many advertorials we have done in the past. I have not seen very many and I do not know how many we have got planned for the future, if we have got any planned for the future, but I will certainly ask the question.

4.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for External Relations regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Finance Action Plan (OQ.239/2025):

Will the Minister provide an update on the implementation of the Sustainable Finance Action Plan and advise whether the current timetable for delivery by 2027 remains on track and whether sufficient resources are in place to ensure the effective delivery of this plan?

Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Assistant Minister for External Relations - rapporteur):

I thank the Deputy for her question. A significant amount of work has been undertaken since the launch of the Sustainable Finance Action Plan in November 2024. From a Government perspective 50 per cent of the actions have already been completed, which include a review of new products, industry upskilling, fiduciary duties, such as raising awareness of the compatibility between fiduciary duties and sustainable investments, anti-greenwashing measures and sustainability of risk management; 40 per cent of the actions are being implemented on a business-as-usual basis, which include international engagement by External Relations and Financial Services officers, monitoring of market access issues, environmental crime prevention and jurisdictional data-gathering; 10 per cent of the actions are currently under review, including inclusion of mandatory corporate sustainability disclosures for businesses. We believe the plan remains on track and sufficiently resourced, as the results and achievements have shown.

4.8.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Given the importance of sustainable finance to Jersey's international reputation, does the Minister intend to publish an updated delivery plan or progress report so that stakeholders can assess how implementation is proceeded against the original commitments? I note the Minister has mentioned this already in her answer, but could it be done in a report and is this being planned?

Deputy M. E. Millar:

I do not know the answer to that. The plan has been delivered. We have clearly done a lot of work. I am not sure there will be benefit in then producing a report, but that is something I will ask the Minister about.

4.9 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the addition of a 'flat-rate card' for freight to the tender process for ferry freight (OQ.237/2025):

Will the Minister state at what point the condition for a flat-rate card for freight was added to the tender process? What risk assessment of this policy, if any, was carried out, whether its introduction was supported by other members of the Council of Ministers?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

The aspiration, as distinct from the word "condition", used in the Deputy's question, for a flat-rate card in any new concession agreement was set out in a joint Jersey/Guernsey invitation to tender and followed through in the Jersey-only invitation to tender. This was not a policy. However, as previously explained to the Deputy in a panel hearing, there is no economic logic for an exclusive operator of the most important part of the supply chain, the ferry service, to offer discounted rates in favour of any one freight-forwarding firm and thereby endangering the most important part of the supply chain through development of an uninvestable situation. The inclusion of a flat-rate card

within the final DFDS bid was welcomed by the Council of Ministers and approved as part of the selection of DFDS as the preferred bidder; that approval by the Council of Ministers.

4.9.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

We have heard that nobody asked for the flat-rate card that DFDS now have in place. Could the Minister confirm whether or not DFDS would have been granted the tender if they had not included a flat rate within their bid?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is not a question I can answer because it is an entirely hypothetical question. DFDS did include a flat rate in their bid and they were chosen for many reasons, other than the flat rate. It is not possible because they did not supply one that did not have the flat rate.

4.9.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The Minister has defended the flat-rate card on many occasions by saying that it encourages competition in the freight market. Has the department conducted any analysis to determine whether the size of Jersey's market is big enough to support competition in the freight market?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not think such analysis is likely to be a very easy analysis to undertake. What I will say is that of the cost of delivering goods to the shelves in your shops and the supermarkets in Jersey, first of all, that cost is just 7 per cent of the cost of goods on your shelf. A £10 item that you buy today, 70 pence is the cost of distribution. Of that 70 pence, 60 per cent is the freight-forwarder's cost; 35 per cent is the ferry cost. Of that £10 just 24 pence is the cost of the ferry, 3.5 pence or thereabouts is Port's dues and the vast majority of that 70 pence is the freight-forwarder's cost. As I have just stated, the ferry service is the single most important part of the supply chain and cost pressures and the pressure to reduce costs were being pushed by the freight-forwarders who take the majority of the money from distribution. Their desire to reduce costs were being pushed on to Condor, the previous ferry service provider. As a result, we were provided with a ferry service that could not invest in new ferries, and I am sad to say that reporting recently has also suggested that there is a lack of safety as a result of that as well. That is why by removing the pressure to reduce costs from the ferry service and putting that pressure via competition into the largest part, the 60 per cent of the cost of distribution, which is where the freight forwarders are, that is the appropriate place to have competition and to have cost reductions. It is not appropriate to have cost reduction being placed on to the ferry provider because then we end up with the situation we had, which was a ferry service that could not be invested in and the ferry service that may well have been operating in ways that were unsafe.

4.9.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

I am grateful to the Minister for his answer, which is very interesting. However, it still leaves unanswered the question of whether or not Jersey's freight market can support multiple operators. The Minister said he did not think it was possible to analyse this. But surely given that the flat-rate card has become such an integral part of the contract, this would be a very important objective. Otherwise there is a risk that in trying to encourage competition in the freight-delivery market, which the Minister says is important, is chasing an impossible dream.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I find it fascinating that Deputies in this Assembly and others in this Assembly are very, very interested in protecting the freight-forwarding part of the market, which takes the vast majority of the cost of distribution and is not an area of potential failure and injury to the supply chain, in the same way that the ferry service is a single point of failure and potential injury to the supply chain. It

is vital that Jersey protects its ferry services. It is not so vital that Jersey protects any one company in the freight-forwarding market.

[11:00]

We have seen over the past few years how the freight-forwarding market has pushed other operators out and a dominant supplier has come through. I do not know what the subjects are but we do know that there is currently an investigation into practices in the freight-forwarding market, I believe, by the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority). It will be interesting to see what that comes out with. But I would say to the Deputy that the companies that take the majority of the cost of distribution, the 60 per cent of the cost of distribution, which goes to those companies or that main company in the freight-forwarding market, is not as important as the 35 per cent that is used for the ferry service. The ferry service is vital. Any one freight-forwarding company is not vital in the same way that the ferry service is. Jersey needs to protect its ferry service and it needs to make sure that its ferry service can be invested in to get new ferries. The previous ferry service could not invest in new ferries. We know this because twice we asked for propositions from the previous provider of ferry services to Jersey that included investment in new ferries. Twice we received propositions that did not include investment in new ferries because it was not possible for that ferry provider to invest in new ferries. I, and I believe this Assembly, should be very, very clear; the ferry service needs to be protected. Competition and cost reduction is appropriate in the 60 per cent of the cost of distribution which is used by the freight-forwarders and taken by the freight-forwarders. It is not appropriate in the 35 per cent that is used and pays for the ferry service, which is the single point of failure in our supply chain. This Assembly and any Government needs to protect that ferry service.

4.9.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I put for my final supplementary the statement given to our panel by the chief executive of Sandpiper? He said that: "The people who bring most product to the Island are the food retailers. In the past we have benefited from volume discounts as a result of that. That is absolutely common business practice; it works in every single business across the world. The reality is that one single measure of the flat-rate card has created additional costs on food in Jersey. That was completely unnecessary and I reject the idea that we need a flat-rate card to make a competitive market." Could the Minister state, first of all, did he consult with any of the retailers about the economics of this and the potential impact it would have on them? Could he tell us why he thinks the chief executive in his statement there is wrong?

The Deputy Bailiff:

The second part of your question is not in order because under Standing Order 10: "A question shall not ask whether any statement in the media or made by any individual who is not a Member of the States is accurate." But the first part is in order.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could I rephrase ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

You can rephrase it, certainly.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It was not in the media, Sir. It was a statement that was made to our panel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But I will simply ask: does he agree that it is common business practice across the world for volume discounts to be applied? It is basic economics and that this one single measure may have had the unintended consequence of pushing up food prices in Jersey.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The chief executive of Sandpiper and indeed the chief executive of any supermarket in Jersey, their job is to protect the profits of their business. Those profits in the past were perhaps indirectly and perhaps unintentionally being protected by the beating down of the cost of the ferry service. That beating down of the cost of the ferry service resulted in what now appears to be, potentially, an unsafe service but definitely an uninvestable service. It is not my job to protect the profits of the supermarkets. We know that supermarkets in Jersey are very profitable. We do not get the benefit of seeing their books. We do not get the benefit of seeing what profit they make. But what we do see now with the new situation with the concession agreement, is we know exactly how much money is being made by the ferry service and we know exactly how much money needs to be made in order for that ferry service to invest in new ferries. That is the situation we now have. We have competition taking place in the freight-forwarding market. The dominant player in that market, I have no doubt, is very upset that their domination is open to competition now. But that is the appropriate place for competition. The appropriate place for competition is not in the ferry providers' part of it because we end up with an unsafe and an uninvestable ferry service. That is why there is a flat-rate card; it is to protect the ferry service. The supermarkets need to compete among themselves. We know that supermarket business models rely on reducing supplier costs. The ferry service is one of their suppliers but they cannot reduce the cost of the ferry service because we need a safe and investable ferry service.

4.10 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the Chief Executive's comments of the "precarious" position of the Government finances (OQ233/2025):

Further to the comments made by the chief executive in the Public Accounts Committee hearing on 8th October 2025 regarding the "precarious" position of Government finances, will the Chief Minister advise whether that is also his assessment and in what ways he considers that the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029 will improve the financial position of the Island?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

I think not by taking a step back and when we first came into Government it became apparent, although we had known for some time that the cost of running the public sector had grown exponentially. I would describe the situation as finely balanced. We have done a significant amount of work to understand that and to put the facts on the table and that is why we introduced policies to curb growth. I think the second thing that confronted us was the reality that we had used most, if not all, of our cyclical reserves to deal with the pandemic and its aftermath. There was very little left in the tank, as it were, to move forward with our cyclical reserves. The third thing we realised is that we had come to depend more and more on the financial centre, the financial services to support growth and public finances. We thought it was urgent that we take a deep look in how to underpin the growth and competitiveness of that sector and that work is going on now. Once we can see both sides of the P. and M, (preservation and maintenance), the money going in and money going out, we had to have and introduce effective policy responses to deal with that, and that is what we have attempted to do with the Budget, which is finally balanced. Because having rightly reused our reserves to get through the pandemic, we have found that we are not going to be able to rebuild them as quickly as we would have liked to have done. Of course we recognise that there is a need to act on this. We intend to streamline the Government further, trim current spending near as a public

sector, re-divert money to front line services in areas where we think we need it most, such as Fire and Rescue, Children's Services, Health and Education. We intend taking a longer-term approach to investment to boost the economy. We intend to make sure with the work we do on competitiveness that our financial services sector can continue to grow into the future.

4.10.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Thank you to the Chief Minister for his explanation. But could I also ask whether he would consider that over the last 2 years, having carried forward a number of rising public sector pay costs and persistent overspends, that this is also a product of some of the choices his Government has made over the last 2 years, which does continue to include a growing reliance on reserves to paper over the cracks? Can he explain how Islanders can have confidence that the Budget will restore stability when many of the pressures identified have yet to be resolved?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, the Deputy is quite right. The last 2 Budgets have been of the construction of the current Government, of the choices of the current Government and, ultimately, we have been able to persuade the Assembly the right way and I hope we can do that with this forthcoming Budget. When we came into power we inherited a teachers' strike, which if it was not sorted could have cost a lot more in the long term than it did to put that right. That was relatively straightforward because I said before that the previous Government and the teachers' unions have come very close but not managed to resolve it. At the same time we took a deep look at the public sector and how public sector pay growth until that time nearly all sectors had been well below the cost of living. The 3-year pay deal that was agreed was cost of living plus 1 per cent, which brought them back into line with cost of living. I thought that was important. We needed a stable public sector to deliver the policies we are delivering now. Of course part of the policy we are delivering is to streamline that public sector. We have reduced headcount. We have curbed the growth in expenditure. The growth in 2024 was about 6.5 per cent and the growth in public expenditure that is proposed in the Budget is about 5.25 per cent. It is not a lot but we have curbed the growth and we are beginning to point that back in the right direction. But I would reiterate that there are going to be a lot of challenges ahead to continue to balance the books and provide the public with the services that we all want them to have. Moving forward, this Assembly and future Governments will have a large task to keep the books balanced. It is vitally important we balance the books. Of course the law does not allow us not to balance the books. But I would also point to other measures we have introduced, such as the Investing in Jersey programme, which is part of that, will ring-fence the capital spend. I mention that because by ring-fencing the capital ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Answer has now been almost 2 minutes, Chief Minister.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, Sir. Thank you. Sorry, I do apologise.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Sir, could I raise a point of clarification, please?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Sorry, I just wanted the Chief Minister to explain about confidence and I do not believe he has been able to address that particular issue.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Sorry, Sir, I did run out of time. I do apologise but if I could do it now, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Very briefly.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I hope we can maintain the public's confidence and build the confidence. It is challenging for the States Assembly to do that but we will do everything in our power to build public confidence. I think we can do that by providing safe and stable finances, and that is what this Budget intends to do.

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

Given his service as Deputy Chief Minister in the period from 2018 to 2022, which saw a notable increase in public expenditure, could the now Chief Minister outline why he was surprised by the position of the public finances when he assumed this office?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Very quickly. Not even quite halfway in to the last term we got hit by the pandemic. My role as Minister for Economic Development, I was completely involved in that and finding solutions to keep the economy running and protect people's jobs, which I think the Assembly and previous Government and this Assembly could all approve of that, did relatively well. We knew then that the cost to our reserves would be significant but they had to be taken. Prior to that, I think, going back we started to see restructuring of the public sector with something called OneGov. I think by the time we came out of the pandemic it was clear that the OneGov work, combined with the additional resources taken on to deal with the pandemic, had stuck in place. They stayed there, 2022 through 2023 and into 2024, and that is why we started to work to reverse some of that position. I take full responsibility. We are all in the Government, Deputy Moore and myself, from, I think, 2011 right up until the current time, and this Assembly and previous Governments up until about 2016-2017; then we have allowed the public sector to grow and I do not think we have realised it. But that is something we have pulled back on.

4.10.3 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I would like to correct the Deputy, I only served in a Government with him from 2014 to 2018; a time when he had considerably different views to those he holds now on some key matters. Does the Deputy regret his time as Deputy Chief Minister?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am not sure that is really connected to the question, is it?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Apologies, in terms of the impact that that had on public expenditure?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

It is tempting to answer that with another question but I am not going to. I am going to say I did not regret my time as Chief Minister. I regret the circumstances that we had to deal with. I have always felt very proud and privileged to do this role to the very best of my ability in that.

[11:15]

And I believe every Member should always continue to do that. No, I do not regret it and I have always been proud to be a part of this Assembly.

4.10.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

Despite this Government's efforts to bear down on costs, the Government is having to retrospectively take another £50 million from the Social Security grant to bail out this year's Budget. How confident is the Chief Minister that next year's Budget will not also fall into deficit?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am as confident as we all can be, given the very careful forecast that had been produced by Treasury and financial advisers for us. We look forward to receiving the Fiscal Policy Panel's report on the proposed Budget. But this Assembly will try and forecast things as closely and accurate as we can but must always be prepared to be versatile when we need to. We cannot guarantee economic growth at the levels we have had over previous years. We have to work hard for that. But I am confident that we will meet those targets.

4.10.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Does the Chief Minister have even the tiniest hint of worry that he is relying on the grant of the Social Security Fund to bail out current expenditure for the previous for this current year?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

In this role I think life is a constant worry and concern but that is balanced by confidence, and confidence in the way the Assembly and the Government manage the Island. I do not have any doubts about that because I strongly believe, as does this Government, it is the right thing to do. The argument I think here is going to be about, does this Assembly want to put £180 million of taxpayers' money into the reserve during the course of this Budget and financial planning or does it want to put more money in? We have heard from the forecast we have had that the fund is in very good health. We could continue it to grow. It has got 7 or 8 years' reserve, we could build it to 9 or 10 years' reserve if we wanted to. This Government is determined that it would be in the public's best interests to put in about £184 million and then increase expenditure in areas that we really need to do, such as Children's Services, Fire and Rescue Services, Health, among other things. Of course it will be up to the Assembly to decide. Members might decide to bring amendments to the Budget and we would welcome amendments, constructive amendments, and look forward to discussing with Members what they might like to do, but that is our position.

4.10.6 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

The Fiscal Policy Panel has raised some concerns about the structural deficit in relation to the public finances. Would the Chief Minister agree that using reserves and funds to balance the books may provide short-term relief but does not address the underlying structural deficit issues? Can he explain what the Government is doing to address the underlying structural deficit?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I would argue that we are not using reserves. It is being portrayed quite wrongly, in my opinion, that we are plundering funds and taking money out. We are not taking money out, we are putting less money in. Okay, we are still putting significant amounts of money in but we are putting less money in. We are also putting money, £240 million I think, as part of this plan into the Strategic Reserve; that has been conveniently forgotten. This is a Budget that puts over £400 million during the plan into the reserves, and we think that is appropriate. We would like to have more money to put into the reserves but, as I explained earlier in the answer, we are having to finally balance the books at the moment because we used all of our cyclical reserves up during the COVID period. It is going to take longer to rebuild the economy and to regrow those reserves, as was originally anticipated.

4.11 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Community Use Monitoring Programme (OQ.232/2025):

Further to Written Question 348/2025, will the Minister explain why the reporting requirements regarding the Community Use Monitoring Programme, as set out in the Planning Obligation Agreement and entered into by his department, have not been enforced? What investigations, if any, have been undertaken into non-compliance with the P.O.A. (Planning Obligation Agreement) and what steps, if any, have been taken to ensure compliance with the P.O.A. going forward?

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):

Under Articles 25 and 40 of the Planning and Building Law, which is the chief officer who enters into planning obligations and also determines if there has been a breach of development controls and whether it is expedient to pursue action. I, therefore, asked my chief officer within the Regulation Directorate for the facts into this case. The Directorate reports it does not routinely monitor compliance with all obligations contained within P.O.A.s, other than monitoring financial contributions that are due to be paid at appropriate trigger points and distributing funds to appropriate projects when proof of delivery has been obtained. There is a general expectation that developers will comply with their contractual obligations, as stipulated in the obligations registered with the Royal Court. In instances of non-compliance being brought to the attention of the Regulation Directorate, the planning compliance team will investigate and consider, in association with law advisers, whether legal proceedings are appropriate to secure compliance with the terms of a P.O.A. In this instance the compliance team have not previously registered an investigation regarding non-compliance with the Strive P.O.A. and as such there has been no compliance investigation.

4.11.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I appreciate that it is for the chief officers to investigate but I have been asking questions about this now for some weeks, and I am surprised that there have been no actions taken as yet. The Planning Law requires these to be enforced. What message is it sending to the public that Planning Obligation Agreements entered into in the Royal Court can be so easily ignored?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

In this particular instance the Planning Obligation Agreement required a few things. The first thing it says: “Requires the owner to undertake a monitoring programme and provide updates to the chief officer, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development.” Also, if the take-up use by the community drops below 75 per cent of the offer, the owner must take steps to improve the take-up. In Written Question 348, which the Deputy refers to, it is clear that formal reports on the take-up had not been received, however, *ad hoc* updates are provided to the Department of the Economy. Whether that complies with undertaking a monitoring programme in providing updates I do not know. But further to that it was also confirmed in that same Written Answer that of the 4,044 hours that had to be offered, 3,500 hours were taken up, which represented 86 per cent of the take-up, which did not fall below the 75 per cent of which the owner should take steps to improve that. I can only add to that, Written Question 381 on the same subject from the same Deputy, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning said that: “Strive have an active and collaborative relationship with Jersey Sport and with Island schools, sports and community groups in relation to the use of this facility.” I can only further add if there are concerns about the way the community use is being delivered we do have mechanisms, but to date no such concerns have been brought to my attention. However, if the Deputy is doing that maybe the investigation should be or could be opened.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister there was lots of crackling during your answer and I was worrying who was distracting you. It is just it might be you are distracting yourself. It might be a phone in your pocket. I do not know if you have got a phone in your pocket but there is some crackling during your answer, obviously you have not got a phone.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am not aware of any crackling from my pocket, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

If it is not you and then ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It might be my nervousness and the paper rattling in the microphone.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You have got a theory, have you?

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

It sounds like the microphone itself, it is internal by the sounds of it, not electrical.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Is it?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, we might give you a swap.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am happy to talk from this microphone if it sounds better, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, it does sound better. Thank you very much, Minister. Yes, 2 questions, then we will go to the final supplementary.

4.11.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

The Minister highlights the numbers provided in Written Questions 348 and 381. But I think that the core that Deputy Renouf is trying to get to is the transparency. Given that the numbers provided represent a different perspective of the operating model, notably that while circa 3,500 time slots have been used, the take-up in 2024 was only 17,800 student hours against a predicted 107,000 student hours in the P.O.A. This is all technical that the Minister will find later. The core question is: will the Minister commit to ensuring that robust thorough publication is there so those who may be community groups, who may not know the full position of the operation can then obviously decide whether they need to pursue different use of the site, as in different use of the time-slot hours?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I appreciate that some of the statistics may have been a bit confusing and certainly some of the information on the original Written Question was confusing to me. I had to go back and ask for further clarification. It is important, I think, that everybody knows what has been written in the Planning Obligation Agreement and that everybody is very clear. I will go back to the department and ask for further clarification on that and make sure that both sides completely understand what is required and whether that information has been received. As for other planning obligations, I think I need to be very careful about how much resource I commit to this. I would stress obligations are registered in the Royal Court and I think there is an obligation there on the applicant, the developer, to comply with those, rather than the department to make sure that every one of those P.O.A.s is enforced, but the resources needed would be extreme.

4.11.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The P.O.A. on the Strive site also highlighted the expected subsidy provided to the different groups, with schools being 100 per cent, sport being 89 per cent, community groups being 93 per cent and the Jersey Rugby Club being 98 per cent. Will he ensure that when he does engage with the operator for reporting that the current levels of subsidy are reported within that, as well as the hours?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I will make sure that is done. I only have a summary of the P.O.A. in front of me and I was not aware of those particular percentages that the Deputy has so quoted.

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

The Minister in his answer to Deputy Curtis reiterated that the P.O.A.s are registered in the Royal Court and it would, therefore, be up to those who feel that they are not being enforced to contact the department. Can I ask the Minister if there are any time limits or expiry provisions in enforcement of P.O.A.s or are they outstanding? If there are P.O.A.s that maybe have been put in place 10, 20 years ago that are now not being complied to, would they be able to follow up with the department to enforce them?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

As I stated in my original answer, we do not monitor these as such in the department. As such it is a bit difficult to answer the Deputy's question, certainly going back that far. If the department are not actively looking at every P.O.A., how would they have the information to know that something had not been complied with? But I will certainly ask the question of officers and see what answer I get.

4.11.5 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I think my original question was more about the public in understanding that if there is no time limit on P.O.A.s they will be able to contact the department if those P.O.A.s that they understand, even though there is from some time ago if they are not being complied to, they will be able to contact the department and they will be followed up.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Sorry, I misunderstood the specifics of the Deputy's question. I think 20 years is a long way in the past. My understanding is there are time limits and they are usually around 5 to 7 years.

4.11.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

The interesting thing here is that no government department has chased up the planning obligation, despite the fact that the Education Department, the Economic Development Department and the Environment Department were all signatories to the planning obligation in the Royal Court. What steps will the Minister take to ensure that in the future these planning obligations have some teeth and the public can have an expectation that there will be some work taken to ensure that they are enforced?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

As I said originally, if there are concerns about the way the community use in this application or this P.O.A. is being given, I do have the legal mechanism to address those concerns.

[11:30]

I said to date no such concerns have been brought to my attention but I certainly will take the Deputy's question on board this morning. From what I intimate from him, he has concerns and I will look into them.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. To ensure that we complete the questions, from now on it will only be one other Member, other than the questioner, who has a chance to ask a supplementary question.

4.12 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Social Security regarding pay transparency in job advertisements (OQ.225/2025):

Will the Minister provide an update on work undertaken to encourage pay transparency in job advertisements, as discussed during the Gender Pay Gap hearing with the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel on 6th May 2025?

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):

As I discussed with the Scrutiny Panel, I felt that we had an opportunity within our Jobs in Jersey website to encourage employers to not advertise jobs as negotiable with regard to pay and be more transparent when advertising. With that in mind, changes were made to the functionality and help text on the online vacancy form to encourage employers to publish salaries. Those changes were made in 2024. Unfortunately though those changes have only seen a marginal increase in greater pay transparency, and this is something that myself and Deputy Alves, as Assistant Chief Minister with responsibility for diversity and inclusion, take very seriously. We do feel that we need to take more action in this respect and consider mandating that when advertising on Jobs in Jersey there should be pay transparency.

4.13 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the reasoning for the introduction of the ‘flat-rate card’ for freight (OQ.234/2025):

Further to his comments following the Scrutiny Panel hearing on 13th October 2025, will the Minister expand on his reasoning for the introduction of the “flat-rate card” for freight and explain how he considers it will improve competition?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

As I have said, because I have had a number of similar questions this morning, so I will repeat myself ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well you could keep your answer short if that is possible in view of the time we have.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely. A flat-rate card provides a safe and investable ferry service. This is my priority as Minister for Sustainable Economic Development because the ferry service is the single most important part of the supply chain. The flat-rate card puts competition into the correct part of the supply chain. Instead of the ferry service, the most important part of that supply chain, being beaten down on cost and price, competition will henceforth take place in the freight forwarding part of the supply chain. That freight forwarding part is 60 per cent of the cost of the supply chain or the cost of delivering goods to Jersey. It is appropriate that competition takes place in that majority part of the supply chain rather than the minority part, the single point of failure, that is, the ferry service.

4.13.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Can the Minister confirm if the Treasury or the J.C.R.A. were consulted on the potential market effects of the policy and, if so, what were the discussion outcomes? Can he explain how he will monitor whether the flat-rate card delivers any measurable improvements in market competition and how he would intend to do so?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not believe Treasury were asked; I do not know. The J.C.R.A. were asked about the competition impacts of such and whether it would be an appropriate mechanism from a competition perspective. It is quite clear to me that the reaction we are seeing at the moment suggests that the flat-rate card is indeed having the appropriate effect. I know that there are importers to this Island who have slashed their bills for freight to this Island. By importers, I mean major importers who bring in vast quantities of goods to this Island because they now see that they can operate the supply chain differently and in a competitive manner, so they are not beholden to the dominant supplier, keeping them over a barrel.

4.13.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I am grateful to the Minister for his answers which have been very, very interesting. I get that he wants to protect the ferry service and argues that competition should be in the onward freight market but the question is: can Jersey sustain competition and has he taken advice on this? It is fine if it can but an awful lot is riding on this, that we should have competition in the freight-forwarding market. It would be good to have reassurance that it is possible because if it is not, does he agree that we would need to look at other solutions such as regulation of the market?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Effectively this flat-rate card does regulate the market and it protects the ferry service in the way that it should. Can competition be sustained? Yes, I believe competition can be sustained in the absolutely enormous freight-forwarding market, which is dominated, though, by one player. We will see what investigation the J.C.R.A. come out with, but it will be potentially interesting. It is, no question in my mind, quite possible for competition to take place in an area of Jersey's economy which is worth tens, if not hundreds, of millions of pounds. I cannot believe that it is not possible for competition to take place there. Where it is not possible to take place is the beating down of the cost of providing ferry services to the point where new ferries could not be invested in, and I am fearful that safety was being reduced as a result of these cost pressures brought to bear by the reductions demanded by the players in the freight forwarding part of the market.

4.13.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

I guess the supplementary is, I take that he has a very passionate belief in this, but has he taken advice on the question of competition?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There was advice given by members of the Ministerial group that were looking at the whole ferry contract and also from officers throughout but I could not pinpoint one document or one piece I think; it was a constant discussion.

4.13.4 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Would the Minister please explain or confirm when he first heard the mention of a flat-rate card? Can he also explain that if the policy is found to have reduced competition or indeed increased costs, would he consider reviewing the policy or indeed reversing it?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is far too early to tell whether there is going to be a negative impact on competition or a negative impact on cost. This is a contract which has been running for 6 months. But I do know that supermarkets will be seeking to protect their profits and the dominant player in the supply chain will be seeking to protect their dominant place in the supply chain. What I will not have is the ferry service being the recipient of those costs and those who desire to protect their current positions. It is appropriate to have competition in our grocery market and other retail markets; it is appropriate to have competition in the freight-forwarding service part of the market. The idea that we are placing

a freight-forwarding service above the ferry service is quite, in my mind, disconcerting. That States Members should seek to protect a freight-forwarding service over the ferry service is very disconcerting to me. It is the ferry service that is vital to this Island. I received a request for £40 million from the previous ferry service provider which said if we do not provide that £40 million the ferry service will stop. This is proof that the ferry service had become uninvestable and I am now concerned that it was also unsafe. This was a result of the cost being beaten down on to that ferry service by the freight forwarders and their customers.

Deputy M. Tadier:

May I ask a point of order? I think Deputy Wilson is going to do that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

I just would like to hear what the Minister's response was to when he first heard about the flat-rate card, please.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, in a sentence.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely. I do not know. This is a 3-year long discussion; I do not know.

4.14 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the flat-rate freight-pricing requirement (OQ. 230/2025):

Will the Minister explain whether the flat-rate pricing requirement was part of the joint tender or only part of the single-Island tender and, if part of the joint tender, were both the G.C.R.A. (Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority) and J.C.R.A. made aware of the pricing model and were their views sought; and if not, why not?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

As I have stated in a previous answer to Deputy Tadier this morning, the aspiration, as distinct from the word "condition" that was used in Deputy Tadier's question, for a flat-rate card in any new concession agreement was set out in a joint Jersey/Guernsey invitation to tender and followed through in a Jersey-only invitation to tender. With regard to the G.C.R.A., I do not know; that would be up to Guernsey to have decided whether or not to do that.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry, I do not think my first one has been answered. My question was were the J.C.R.A. consulted?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I had answered that in a previous question this morning, that is why I did not put it in the ... so the J.C.R.A. was asked as to whether this would create problems from a competition perspective.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry, I am specifically drilling on to this issue because I want to ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well we have not got very much time.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I assume this is a supplementary.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Yes, it is a supplementary; yes, it is.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Good, that is all right then.

4.14.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am drilling into this because at a meeting where 2 other Members and I were at the J.C.R.A., we asked them whether or not they were consulted on the flat-rate card. They said - this was the full board - no, they were not consulted. I pushed them on whether or not they thought they should have been consulted and whether or not they thought it was under the legal requirements to do so. There were rather sketchy answers but it is was clear that they did not provide. I am asking the Minister, did he receive written advice from the J.C.R.A., who of course created the situation by requiring the sale of Condor Logistics earlier, in respect of the flat-rate card?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is very interesting that the Deputy mentions Condor Logistics because there is a story that I think has a few tales to tell. But with regard to the J.C.R.A., as I have said before, I understand that the officers asked the J.C.R.A. about whether a provision such as a flat-rate card would present competition issues in terms of Competition Law issues. The J.C.R.A. did not provide an analysis of impact on competition, I do not believe.

4.15 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the pedestrian footpath between Mont de la Pulente and Rue de la Sergente (OQ.238/2025):

Will the Minister advise what plans, if any, he has to complete the pedestrian footpath between Mont de la Pulente and Rue de la Sergente in the area adjacent to Le Feugerel, and also provide the timeline to deliver this project?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. Further to my response to Deputy Renouf's recent Written Question 371, I confirm that I remain committed to delivering a continuous footway along Rue de la Sergente and improving the adjacent rail crossing to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity in the area. Significant work has been undertaken since 2021 to progress the scheme, including design development and engagement with private land owners. However, delivery and programming of the works are contingent upon concluding land purchase agreements with neighbouring landowners and negotiations are ongoing and final agreement remains to be reached. The department continues to actively pursue a resolution with the land owners and once it is reached we will be able to provide a timeline for construction.

4.15.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for his answer and previous answers to my St. Brelade colleague. Could he confirm that if it appears there is going to be any holdup for whatever reason in the sale - and this has already been going on for 4 years - of that land, would the Minister advise whether he has any backup plan to join the roads up which may include no sale of private land, no purchase of private land by the States but a St. Mary's Village or St. Martin's Village development style of road narrowing and virtual footpath which may do the job just as well without needing to purchase any land?

The Connétable of St. John:

The Deputy raises an interesting question. The difference between the areas cited by the Deputy and Rue de la Sergente is the geometry. There is a corner which would not give oncoming traffic full sight so we do not believe that a virtual footway is sustainable there.

4.15.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

In his answer to the Written Question I posed, it was revealed that the most recent contact of the landowners was in May for one land owner and June for the other, with the comment that the department is awaiting response. Back in June we were looking forward to summer. Now the swallows have left, the leaves are falling, the clocks are about to go back, how long will the department wait for a response?

The Connétable of St. John:

I asked that very question myself because, while I am happy for people to wait a few weeks, I was disappointed that it had taken several months. I have asked that question myself, I await the answer, but hopefully soon.

4.15.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

If I may pick up on Deputy Tadier's point about alternatives. It seems to me that there are potential alternatives that would not involve a land purchase.

[11:45]

They might involve more extensive works than have been done in other similar schemes that the Deputy referred to. If the land purchase is proving really impossible, will the Minister undertake to review whether there might be other options that would be possible without a land purchase?

The Connétable of St. John:

I am happy to do that but I am hopeful that we can reach agreement. Part of the area was more complicated than first anticipated but I will go back and speak to officers about alternatives and also chase up for the times.

4.15.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

First of all, I would say it is not a corner at all, there is a slight bend, and that an alternative solution could be found whereby traffic was held up. I ask the Minister whether he would be open to both that possibility as an alternative to purchasing private land and also whether he will be willing to meet with representatives from the area at a site visit in the very near future to see what the options might be?

The Connétable of St. John:

I am more than happy to meet at St. Saviour, St. Brelade, any other district, to talk about road safety initiatives and try and get positive and constructive suggestions. I have to rely on the professional advice I am given. Often I will say to officers that I believe this will work or that will work, but I have to rely on the professional advice I have from professional road traffic engineers.

4.16 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the total cost of purchasing the Jersey Gas site from Andium Homes, building the proposed new Town Primary School on the site, demolishing Springfield School and Le Bas Centre and creating pocket parks on these sites, and delivering the proposed North of St. Helier Youth Centre (OQ.235/2025):

Will the Minister provide the estimated total cost of purchasing the Jersey Gas site from Andium Homes, building the proposed new Town Primary School on the site, demolishing Springfield School and Le Bas Centre and creating pocket parks on these sites, and delivering the proposed North of St. Helier Youth Centre; and also provide the timescale for the delivery of these capital projects?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, in 90 seconds.

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. To ensure the purchase can proceed without further delay, the formal transfer of the Jersey Gas site from Andium Homes, a price has been agreed for a nominal sum of £1. To compensate Andium Homes, the Draft Budget proposes an agreed reduction of £1.5 million per year to the return Andium pays to Government lasting 10 years. A number of factors, both known and unknown, can influence accurate predictions of future costs and these must accordingly caveat this answer. There is currently a sum of £15.5 million identified in the latter years of the Draft Budget for new schools and educational developments, which is intended to provide funding to commence provision of a much-needed, modern town-based primary school at Gas Place. The cost of demolition of the buildings referenced is currently in the order of £15 per square foot; however, that sum will be heavily influenced by additional factors such as site access, the presence or not of hazardous materials, waste management and disposal, and logistics. The cost of the new pocket parks is also a subjective assessment and will depend on the exact nature of the project and I would expect extensive stakeholder engagement with the people that live nearby. The proposed cost of the North of St. Helier Youth Centre is on record in the Draft Budget on page 56 at a total of £16.13 million. I would emphasise that this price also includes provision of a new Y.E.S. (Youth Enquiry Service) Centre and is not just limited to a Youth Centre.

4.16.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Has any consideration been given to using the Jersey Gas show room for the provision of a much more affordable and much-needed St. Helier Youth Centre and, if not, why not?

The Connétable of St. John:

I believe there was a debate in this Assembly about the use of the gas site and that debate took place after discussions with officers. We do not currently own the site so we are currently not able to use it. The debate about the Youth Centre I believe has been long exhausted and I support the decision of Government and this Assembly to continue with those plans.

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

Based upon what the Minister explained in terms of ifs and buts and maybes of future Budgets, would he be prepared to give a date when he would expect this new primary school to be opened? What year is it?

The Connétable of St. John:

It is 2025, that is the era it is. In terms of the ...

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

This is opening the new school on the Gas Place site? I do not think it is possible.

The Connétable of St. John:

In terms of the opening for the town school, there is a lot of work to be done in terms of detailed design, *et cetera*. I visited the town schools personally to see the challenges those schools have got and we have to complete this building as soon as possible. I am not sure of the exact date but I would hope it would be around 2028, 2029.

4.16.3 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Is he saying that there is going to be budgetary provision for a school opening of that town primary school by 2029? Is he going to really restate that for certain?

The Connétable of St. John:

That will be a decision taken by this Assembly but I believe that if this Assembly supports the provision of modern facilities for our young people, for our teachers, for the parents of those people, then we have to make the provision within our capital funding as soon as we can do that.

4.17 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity of the Minister for the Environment regarding the potential allocation of a quota for fishing of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (OQ.240/2025):

Further to the potential allocation of a quota for fishing of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, will the Minister advise what further actions, if any, will be required in order to maximise the value of any such quota, and how this work will be funded?

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):

Should a commercial quota for Atlantic Bluefin Tuna be allocated to Jersey or to Jersey-registered vessels, this opportunity will be managed with the utmost responsibility and care. A strict licensing regime will be implemented fully aligned with I.C.C.A.T. (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna) Regulations and there will be vessel-specific authorisations required. A rigorous application process will ensure that only those vessels which are properly equipped and professionally prepared will be permitted to participate in this fishery. This approach is designed to uphold the highest standards of sustainability, traceability and industry best practice, ensuring that any quota allocated to Jersey is not only respected but also maximised in value for our economy. I would expect as regards funding that that licence application process would be “business as usual” and in-house. I accept that there will be costs for fishing boats to convert to fish for this very specialised catch and that the funding for that could be discussed at the time, potentially using the Marine Support Scheme.

4.17.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for his answers. Just to confirm, if the Minister could reiterate whether, to maximise the value of any such quota, it is about the vessel itself that needs to be equipped and there is nothing else that needs to be done. Are there other issues like facilities on land or marketing that needs to be supported to ensure that the value is maximised or will the Minister just be focusing on vessel specifications?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

To support what I said before, my officers are looking to introduce management measures that prioritise the retention of tuna landings within the local market. By staggering landings throughout the season, we can avoid market saturation and protect the value of this premium product. Our fishing industry and local merchants will need to adapt to the specific requirements of the species, including its seasonality and its handling needs. Looking ahead, should this fishery become established, we will also explore the development of an individual fish-tagging scheme which could enhance traceability and transparency, allowing each fish to be tracked from the sea to the plate. When paired with information such as the vessel of origin and location of capture, this system has the potential to significantly increase market value. I take the Deputy’s sentiments on board. There may be - and I say “may” I am not sure of this - some requirements on the quay side. It is my understanding at the moment that we do have the facilities to process these fish as they would need to be required.

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

Very briefly, this could be a huge bonus to our long-suffering fishing industry. My question is: are the blue tuna in sufficient numbers for them to be taken, will it be time-barred and are our French counterparts taking tuna already?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I can assure the Constable that there are sufficient numbers. The whole reason for having I.C.C.A.T. is that all the blue fin tuna, especially in the North Atlantic, are monitored and the amount of the species swimming around Channel Islands water has, I am sure seen by some people on social media, been a huge explosion in numbers, not only here but off the south-west coast of England. I am assured the numbers are there, they are very sustainable. We will take a very small amount. Let us be assured, if we do get some quota, it is not going to be a large amount of quota, and we will work very hard to make sure that that small number of fish are maximised financially by staggering the landings and making sure we do not saturate the market.

4.17.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I just would like to maybe ask the Minister to reiterate around the funding needed to support the fishing industry to adapt to vessels and also the fish-tagging scheme that the Minister spoke about, that this would be able to be funded under “business as usual”, there would be additional funding that needs to be found and where would this come in?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The number of boats which would be allowed to do this may well be very small. The quota will be small so the number of vessels fishing will be small. I expect that that licence application process and awarding to be done as “business as usual” and in-house. When it comes to the requirements on the fishing boats, I think there will be several thousands of pounds that will be needed to be spent on boats in order to convert them in order to land these fish carefully so that the meat does not spoil. I am sure there is also going to be requirements on deck to make sure the meat is treated properly between the time of being caught and being landed. We do now benefit from the Marine Support Scheme, which is a fund of money there to support fishermen and they have been able to access that recently. I am sure when we get to next year, if we get a quota and if we manage to secure enough quota to establish a fishery, that there will be some demands on that fund. I would very much hope that we could use the Marine Support Scheme to help fishermen to convert their boats.

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

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. We now move on to questions to Ministers without notice and the first period of questions are questions directed to the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs.

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

In relation to the recently-lodged Draft Marriage and Civil Partnership (Dissolution and Separation) Law, will the Minister advise whether consideration has been given to include specific provisions to recognise and protect against coercive or controlling behaviour within divorce or separation proceedings?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

In relation to the new legislation, which I welcome, this means that there is no longer any issue in relation to people getting divorced. Obviously if there is a matter of coercive behaviour then this, in the normal way, can still be reported to the States of Jersey Police and this matter would be dealt with accordingly.

5.1.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Has the Minister taken advice from front line services and key stakeholders on how coercive control may manifest during financial negotiations or child arrangements in divorce cases?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I have not taken specific advice in relation to this matter; however, I am fully aligned to the fact that these matters do occur. As Members will be aware, there is ongoing work in relation to reviews of our certain courts.

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

Further to the States of Jersey Prison Service Annual Report, R.123, the most pressure on the prison was on the vulnerable prisoners' accommodation unit, the V.P.U. (Vulnerable Prisoners' Unit), which has a maximum capacity of 59 prisoners but the average number of prisoners requiring this facility was 8 per cent higher than 2023 and 15 per cent higher than 2022. What action is the Minister taking to extend the capacity of the V.P.U.?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

As the Deputy alludes, this is an ongoing matter for the States of Jersey Prison Service. We can all accept that we have a finite facility which cares for all of the categories of prisoners on the Island.

[12:00]

The prison has and regularly does assess the Vulnerable Prisoners' Unit and they constantly change the facilities within the prison so that we can increase the capacity. Moving forward, there will be a need obviously to be able to provide more facilities within the prison and that will be something that will move forward in relation to capital projects.

5.2.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

With the average prison population increasing from 138 in 2023 to 155 in 2024, what pressures will be put on the V.P.U.? Is there a need for an extension to the prison population and an actual increase in the size of the prison?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I thank the Deputy for the question. In relation to the V.P.U., I think people would recognise that the nature of the offending as to why people are within the prison is in relation to prison sentences which are significantly getting longer. We will need to take this into consideration, as I said, in particular in relation to the Vulnerable Prisoners' Unit. I do think that there is going to need to be a facility increase in relation to the prison at La Moye and that will need to be looked at in the capital budget, I would suggest, in the next couple of years.

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

If one accepts the premise that freedom of speech includes freedom to offend and upset some people, does the Minister agree that any legislation to outlaw hate speech should be very carefully and tightly drafted?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I would 110 per cent agree with the Deputy with respect to the legislation in relation to hate crime. I think when it is drafted we need to take all of these matters into consideration and ensure that we do not impede on people's ability for freedom of speech but also that we do not allow people to commit crimes either.

5.3.1 Deputy P.M. Bailhache:

I thank the Minister for that. Would the Minister agree that the States of Jersey Police should be encouraged to follow the example of the Metropolitan Police in London in not investigating so-called non-crime hate speech?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Obviously I will not give an answer to something that really is not within my remit. It is really in the remit of the Chief of Police; my role is not to interfere with operational matters. However, I think moving forward I am sure that that will be something the Chief of Police will be in full discussions with his counterparts in the U.K.

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

Has the Minister met with the police chief regarding the recording of crimes motivated by hatred as requested in previous sittings?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In relation to the matter, I believe that the States of Jersey Police are recording these matters. I talk regularly with the States of Jersey Police and that information was provided to me. I do not recall having a specific conversation.

5.4.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Would the Minister commit to having this conversation with the police chief specifically looking at the characteristics are recorded by the police and expanded to make sure they cover a wider range of characteristics that Jersey residents might hold?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes, I will do that. As I said, we have certainly had a discussion about meeting with other groups in relation to this topic, we just have not organised that meeting.

5.5 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Will the Minister let us know when the new shooting range up at Crabbe will be available for non-police shooters?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I do not know the answer to that question. The facility has now obviously been opened and I will check that question for the Deputy.

5.5.1 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I thank the Minister for taking the time to find out the answer. Could she also find out whether it will be used for income generation for the States of Jersey Police?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

That is an interesting question and that might be worthwhile doing. I do not think it has been income-generating previously but I think if there is an opportunity then it would be a good one.

5.6 Connétable R.D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Following on from the last question, I hope that before paying any income to the States, account will be taken of the need for appropriate rates to be discharged to the Parish.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Absolutely.

The Deputy Bailiff:

No supplementary there, I do not think.

5.7 Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, I wonder if, given recent court cases, the Minister has had cause to reassess whether the matter of corporate manslaughter should not be a higher priority for the Government than it currently is.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I would like to reiterate that it is not a high priority in relation to corporate manslaughter. The issue with the situation that we are in is the fact that we have another piece of legislation that is going through in relation to the Violence Against Women and Girls, which is where our drafting legislators are committed. In relation to the corporate manslaughter law, that awaits the possibility of going to the drafters; however, at this stage there is no capacity. What will need to be looked at, of course, is when we go into purdah and how the arrangements for the non-political legislative work will be done.

5.7.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can the Minister clarify exactly what state we are at with this? Is there a draft law ready to go but is simply waiting for a once-over from the law drafters or is the law yet to be drafted in any form?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In answer to that, the law is ready to go pretty much to the drafters; it is not just a once-over though. Let us be quite specific here, a law drafter is somebody that is a lawyer and takes 5 years to qualify as a law drafter. I think we need to get this into perspective. It is not a: "Here is a piece of legislation, please write it up"; it is a complicated job to do.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any further questions for this Minister before we conclude this session? No? All right.

6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Social Security

The Deputy Bailiff:

In that case we move on to the second period of questions without notice for the Minister for Social Security.

6.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Returning to the States grant, the Social Security Fund. The letter from the actuaries regarding the reduction of the States grant is based on an instruction from the Minister to increase the expected rate of return by 1 per cent. Why did she not ask for projections based on the current rate of return, which would have allowed like-for-like comparisons to be made with previous projections?

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Social Security):

The advice given to me was that the 1 per cent was a sensible rate of return. As I said previously, we asked for a number of scenarios and I took the advice given to me by both Treasury officials and my own officials.

6.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

The graphs in the letter from the actuaries make clear that by far the most significant factor in reducing the impact of the reduction of the grant is the increase in the projected rate of return on investment; without this the Government's case falls apart. Given that the Government has not taken up the actuaries' offer to assess whether the changed investment return is wise, what confidence can the public have that the Minister has not just made an assumption that is politically convenient?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As I said earlier, there are already plans to instruct the actuaries to undertake further reviews in relation to the ongoing input into the Social Security Fund. What is in the document and the letter relates to an ongoing reduction to the States grant. That is not currently what is proposed or planned. The reason why I asked for that information was to inform any future decisions of this Assembly.

6.2 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

What action will the Minister undertake to investigate options to better support the limited number of households where parents of pension age are looking after adult children with additional needs and who are not entitled to Home Carer's Allowance?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I thank the Deputy for her question. I also thank the Deputy for the time that she gave me a few weeks ago to look - I think "collaboration" is the right word here - collaboratively at how we can provide more support for families who are indeed caring for their adult children. I know that this is a matter that does cause concern to a number of people. People want to see that carers are valued and that we value the role that carers are playing. I do not think necessarily the solution to that would be changing the rule specifically in relation to Home Carer's Allowance. I think what we do need to look at is our benefits system as a whole in relation to those cases. I will undertake to work collaboratively with the Deputy to find a solution.

6.2.1 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I thank the Minister very much for her very positive reply. Will the Minister give her views on personal independence payments and whether she would be prepared to research how they could be introduced into Jersey to give claimants more choice of how their benefit is spent?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I do believe that the claimants themselves, the people who are being cared for, do deserve to have choice around their circumstances and their own care, so that is something I would look at. I am, of course, mindful of where we are in relation to the term of office and the end of the term of office, so I could not promise to take that particular action before the end of the term of office. I will of course stick to what I have committed to, which is to work with the Deputy to look at what we can do in the short term.

6.3 Deputy B. Ward of St. Clement:

Slightly a move on from the previous question. There are over 5,000 informal carers, will the Minister give serious consideration in the introduction and provision of a carer's allowance in addition to people who are receiving an old-age pension by either changing the Social Security Law which prevents 2 benefits being paid or by moving the carer's allowance to come under and be paid from the Long-Term Care Fund? If not, why not?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think there might be many possible solutions to the issues that have been raised. The 2 solutions as proposed by the Deputy may not be the correct ones. I believe that policy on the run is policy underdone, and I will not undertake to take policy decisions here in this Chamber. I do want to give the Deputy assurance that I do take the needs of carers very seriously and I will of course continue conversations with her and any other Deputy that is concerned around this area.

Deputy B. Ward:

Yes, just to say thank you for the Minister's assurance that we will meet up and have further discussions on that. I thank the Minister.

6.4 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

Does the Minister believe the current system that some Islanders in their 60s who have paid full social security contributions because they started work perhaps at a younger age but are not yet at pensionable age, have to continue overpaying or face taking a reduced pension if they take it early, is fair? If not, what is she doing to address the issue?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As I hope the Deputy would be aware, due to our discussions in Scrutiny, it is something that does cause me concern; I am concerned around fairness. I did undertake to ask officers to look at what kind of flexibility we may be able to offer people who have reached the point at which they have paid in their full years' worth of contributions. As the Deputy is aware, because she sits on the Scrutiny Panel that scrutinises me, I have other priorities that have pipped that one to the post, but it is very much on the list of things to work through.

[12:15]

6.4.1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

I am grateful to the Minister for that response. Given the conversations that are currently ongoing about the Social Security Fund and claims of it being overfunded - perhaps we should be looking at the model and we are using some of the money on other things - would now not be the perfect time to be addressing this issue? If we are saying that there is too much money going into that fund or it has currently got a surplus, to say to these Islanders: "Yes, we recognise this is really unfair." Some are facing overpaying by £16,500 as an example. Is now not the perfect time to be addressing this?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think now is the perfect time for us to assess what we expect out of the fund and what we anticipate putting into it, which is why we are undertaking that additional work with the actuaries in the coming months, so that we can address exactly these kinds of questions. I would take the opportunity to remind the Deputy that even people who have their full years of contributions do continue paying, it does give them access to the working-age benefits that come from the Social Security Fund.

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

With regard the proposals for the Social Security grant in this year's Budget, could the Deputy provide us with a description of the evidence that was provided to her upon which she amended the assumptions for income growth through investments of 1 per cent?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The evidence was provided by our investment specialists in Treasury and the advisers that advise me. I am not an investment specialist so I undertook to take that advice. Of course, if Deputies wish me to gain more advice to give them more assurance about the decisions that they are going to take in December when we discuss the Budget, I am more than happy to do so.

6.5.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think that might be a sensible option, particularly a negative investment growth, might assist Members.

6.6 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

With regards to the minimum wage offset for accommodation, will the Minister share if she is aware as to whether the full offset can be claimed in instances where staff share a single bedroom? If not, will she investigate the offset policy in regard to shared rooms and share her findings with Members in short order?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, the use of offsets and the appropriate use of offsets is something that is of concern to me. I am somewhat limited in the information that I have or can get in relation to offsets. This also came up as a topic within the recent Scrutiny hearing around migrant workers. I think myself, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs expressed during that meeting the willingness to work together collaboratively. I will continue to work together collaboratively. Again, I wish to reiterate the point I made in that hearing that if anybody is concerned around the treatment of workers and their accommodation standards, the right thing to do is report that to the correct authorities so that the correct action can be taken.

6.6.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

As part of the annual review into the offset and the minimum wage, will she consider what statutory mechanisms she may need to implement to collect that data from any employer who uses an offset as part of their arrangements with staff?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

That was something I did consider as well last year when I set the offset rate. A lot of the statutory provision in relation to the quality of accommodation of course rests with the Minister for the Environment rather than myself. I think what I can do here in the Chamber today is again further commit to working with other Ministers to assure people of the right quality standards and that people are being looked after. Again, there is an encumbrance on people that if they are aware of standards not being met, of unsafe living conditions, they really do need to report that to the authorities so that the correct approach can be taken.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any further questions for this Minister? Another one from Deputy Renouf.

6.7 Deputy J. Renouf:

Moving on to a totally different subject, the Health Insurance Fund, one of the other States funds, can the Minister state, given that this is probably the most precarious of the funds that are currently under her management, if you like, what work is being done to determine the sustainability of the current funding commitments?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

In addition to the work that is being led by the Minister for Health and Social Services in relation to the whole landscape of Health funding, I am also conscious that we also have the Comptroller and Auditor General's team currently doing an audit of the Health Insurance Fund, which is something that I will look forward to receiving. I think it is important to remember there has been a lot of dialogue about expenditure on the Health Insurance Fund. These things are important to spend money on. They are things like our vaccination services, our pharmaceutical services and providing affordable G.P. access. I would encourage Members to be mindful of that when they talk about expenditure coming out of the Health Insurance Fund.

6.7.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, very mindful of that, which is why the question of sustainability is so important. If these things are important they have to be important going forward, not just for the short term. Does it concern the Minister at all that the Health Insurance Fund is in the state it is in or is she entirely relaxed?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Of course I am concerned. I am concerned that we have enough money into the future to fund affordable access to G.P. visits, I am concerned that we have enough money to put towards our vaccination programmes and of course our other public health programmes that may be run by the Health team. I am concerned that we are able to provide for our pharmaceutical benefits as well. We

also need to see that in the round of health funding as a whole and the whole-of-government budgets. As I have said in Scrutiny and committed to do so, I am committed to working collaboratively with Ministers to that effect, and also with States Assembly Members so that we can make sure that we have got the right provisions in place for the future.

6.8 Deputy K.L. Moore:

Given the revenue in 2024 was lower than the assumption, could the Minister describe how she has considered the potential impact that it will have on a future government if that trend continues?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am not sure which revenue the Deputy is referring to.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, could you clarify that?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Overall revenue lower than assumption. The question I should finalise is what impact on the ability of a future government to make a grant to the Social Security Fund?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am looking at the Minister for Treasury and Resources because I think that would probably be a question for her. I think revenues and money coming into the States budgets is something that we should all be concerned about. Like I said, I think it will be a matter for public debate as we near the election.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

That does not really answer the question. This is a matter of her responsibility and the assumptions that she is making for a proposal that is being brought to this Assembly.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, unfortunately, the period for questions for this Minister has now come to an end. Has it not, Greffier, we have reached the end of that 15 minutes?

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

Did we get the extra from the other Minister?

The Deputy Bailiff:

That goes to the Chief Minister automatically; it does not go to anyone else. The fortunate Chief Minister gets the extra time.

7. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any questions for the Chief Minister? Yes, the first question is from Deputy Renouf.

7.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Returning to the Social Security Fund. I do want to make clear that I am not against the Budget proposals in principle but we do need to know the basis of the Government's decisions. Can I ask why did Government not start with the question: how much can the Social Security Fund afford to lose in contributions rather than how much it needs to take to balance the books?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

All of that information and all of those would have been considered by the officials and the Treasury officials very carefully, who produced lots of different forecasts of how the fund might look if it reacted in certain ways. I think we have taken a careful and prudent approach to forecasting the future of the fund. You can never forecast things accurately but I think we have got a good track record of being relatively close over previous years. We do live in more uncertain economic times, so it is getting harder, but what we do know is there are significant reserves and it is something we will keep under review. We look forward to the full actuarial review, which will happen next year, which will give us further guidance on how the Assembly might decide to supplement in the future.

7.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Let me come at it from a different angle. The Budget includes funding commitments that extend into the future on health, childcare, *et cetera*, but the chief funding mechanism in the Budget, reducing contributions to the Social Security Fund, is only available for 4 years. That means, as the Minister for Social Security told Scrutiny, it will be for the next Assembly to work out how to deal with the funding gap. Why does the Chief Minister think it is appropriate to hand the problem over to the next Assembly?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think if one was to go back and analyse all of the previous Budgets and Government Plans and 3-year plans and 4-year plans over the last 20 years, you will find they change significantly. I have missed you, Deputy Ozouf, but I find you rather distracting. Can you let me finish, please? Yes, we have changed significantly year on year the Budgets depending on circumstances and forecasts. They change all the time so the short answer is we cannot guarantee anything in the 4-year plan because we can only make our best estimates and those have always been generally good. Deputy Renouf keeps coming at this from lots of different angles and we keep giving the same answer, so I am not sure what we can do other than say this Government has very carefully considered that it would be in the best interests of the taxpayer to take the action we are proposing.

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

I wonder if I could ask the Chief Minister whether or not he understands and accepts the difference between the Long-Term Care Fund arrangements, which are entirely contributors from working people and non-working people, and on contrast the Social Security Scheme which was in its essence, a third, a third, a third: a contribution from the employer, from the employee and from the public purse? When he says that he has decided, or the Government has decided, because of that third that comes from Government they are going to reduce it, does he not feel and understand why the contributors also feel as though, with their third responsibilities, they also should be consulted about whether or not? Would he also accept that some of them say: "Well, why are we not having a holiday from our contributions if the fund is doing ..." does he understand the difference between the contributing of a taxation issue versus social security which is 3 parts, not just Government?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I do understand the difference. I am not sure I fully understood the relation in the question but I do understand the difference, yes.

7.2.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

It follows then, if he understands that the contributors are 3 types of people, employees, employers and the States, then does he not think it is right to ask the employees or the employers what they would do in the event of what is clearly a surplus of funds taken by a series of proper decisions in the past about budgets?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Well I think we have to do what is practical. As the Minister for Social Security mentioned in the previous question, we need to introduce some generational equity into what is going on. The formula for supplementing the Social Security Fund was based on different ... Reserve Fund, beg your pardon, we must not get the Social Security Fund and the Reserve Fund mixed up, was predicated upon a different set of population forecast and future planning. That needs to be revised. As a result of that, we have a Reserve that is in a very, very strong position. I still repeat myself, we do believe it would be in the interests of the public, including all the contributors to the fund, those who have contributed and those who are now benefiting from the fund, to follow the course of action we are proposing in the Budget.

[12:30]

7.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I would like to ask the Chief Minister about the Road Works and Events Law, in particular the announcement that a permit and licence scheme for a road works card will be in place from January 2026. Has the Chief Minister had any discussions with the Minister for Infrastructure about the rollout of this new scheme? If so, were the topics of the impact on business or bureaucracy discussed?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, but I believe I am due to get a briefing.

7.3.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Given that the Chief Minister has not been briefed on this, and given that the apparent training being provided will require the costs in the region of hundreds of pounds per individual on an open course, will the Chief Minister consider thoroughly, when he is briefed, whether any deferment is needed on the implementation to ensure the Government is not overreaching or overly bureaucratic in its regulation?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The short answer to that is yes.

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

I wonder if the Chief Minister can advise whether his Government is still on track to bring the same-sex parental rights legislation into force next month, please?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am looking at the Minister for Children and Families, he is nodding his head; so I think that has to be a yes.

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

Given the feedback that is being given from the business community at the moment, what consideration has the Chief Minister given to future revenue declining on assumptions versus continuing on the current trend?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Is the Deputy relating to general revenue, overall revenue? I am not sure I am correlating that in relation to businesses. Can she just try and explain that a little more?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Could you be more specific about what you see declining?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Yes, one could easily assume that a decline in business confidence and a decline in business activity will equal a decline in revenue through income tax, corporation tax and even the duty that the Government collects.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, we have limited corporation tax and that is why we are focusing on the important piece of work, primarily to look at the competitiveness of the financial services sector. They pay the vast majority of corporation tax and we hear that confidence is steady and beginning to build again in that sector. The other businesses, I think ... I am trying to recall the latest business confidence survey but we were seeing confidence building in more areas again, with the exception of areas like the hospitality who the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development is working more closely with. I do not see a longstanding confidence crisis from business, I see confidence start to rebuild but it is quite fickle at the moment based on geopolitical circumstances.

7.5 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

The Chief Minister, in answer to an earlier question today, said that his Government had done more on the cost of living than any other Government. What evidence does he have that the measures taken by his Government have made life better for Islanders?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure that we made a claim that we have made life better for all Islanders. I hope we have made life better for some Islanders with the introduction of some policies that I have named earlier, extension of childcare, access to homes, financial support for purchasing a house, a reduction in G.P. fees. So I was referring to the measures we had introduced to help Islanders with the cost of living, which I hope have benefited a good proportion of Islanders. But certainly, I am sure, I did not make the claim we have benefited all Islanders. I am confident that we have introduced significant financial support measures to help, not just middle Jersey but all Islanders.

7.5.1 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

I will resist asking if the Chief Minister will be authorising an advertorial on the matter in the *J.E.P.* Without measurements of impact and being able to point to what you are trying to achieve with cost-of-living measures, then how can the Chief Minister make such a claim that his Government has done more on the cost of living than any other Government?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I was going to resist mentioning that Deputy Warr, who asked me the question, commissioned an advertising campaign for the Better Home Service in the Government that Deputy Stephenson served in. That was a large campaign with Google ads, *J.E.P.* ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you want to focus on the question, Chief Minister?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, what was the question. Could the Deputy just repeat the question?

Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

With pleasure. To get back to the serious point here that I think we are all trying to get to actually, it was regarding when you are bringing in measures to tackle the cost of living without measurements of impact in place and being able to tell us about those, how can the Chief Minister make the claim that his Government has done more on the cost of living than any other?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think that is a very good point, but with the measures we have introduced, such as the completion of the rollout of school lunches, extension of nursery care provision, the First Step scheme for housing as an example, those results are in numbers; we can see the numbers to those quite clearly and that is how we can measure. There are some areas, I think, with more general policies that are harder to focus on, but generally with those ... of course, we do rely on the very good work of the Statistics Unit as well to guide us.

7.6 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am not sure, respectfully, that the Chief Minister answered my earlier question about the different types of contributor for the Social Security scheme. It is an important point because it is raised by Islanders. Does the Chief Minister understand, has he been given - and I say this with the greatest respect - a background briefing with his Ministers about what the essence of Social Security was, which was this notion that it was a third, a third, a third. Therefore, would he accept that the idea in the public's mind is that they are almost jointly contributors into the fund and therefore that is why many Members in the past and ongoing - Deputy Bailhache, Deputy Warr, Deputy Barbara Ward, *et cetera* - have all focused on this issue of we have a say in this as well because we are contributing? Now, does he understand that? I say that most respectfully, having been doing lots of Budgets with him as a Minister. I am not going to make any snide comments at all.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

That is a good question. I appreciate the question. We do understand the principles, going back some time, of a third, a third, a third, but that is when the Social Security Fund was more focused. The benefits paid out of the Social Security Fund now are far greater, far broader than have been for some time. The principles have to change with the actual fund, what it does now. That is the same with the Reserve Fund. The Social Security Reserve Fund is paying out a much broader range of benefits. That is the situation we find ourselves in, so we are having to amend the policies appropriately.

7.6.1 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I say this having not been not in the Assembly for the last few weeks, and I wish to remain respectful to Ministers because I know how difficult it is, but does the Chief Minister, with the benefit of hindsight and knowledge of the very torturous discussions that happened over numerous Budgets about the Health Insurance Fund, see the risks of now, in the public's eye, there being effectively an alternative use class of monies from the Social Security Fund arising which could be ... one would not want to have to relive the H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund) experience. I am sure the Chief Minister would understand that misunderstanding on both sides, but would he commit to ensuring that there is a greater understanding of the views of the different contributors of the Social Security Fund and that their views matter? Because it is all very well saying that other things are being used but at the end of the day money is there because of 3 different parties, and that is a moral obligation if it is not a legal one.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, I think we do fully understand that and we have had a series of very in-depth briefings. This Government would not do anything and would not ask the Assembly to do anything if we felt it risked any aspect of the Social Security Fund, the Social Security Reserve Fund. So I am not quite sure what else I can add to that. We find ourselves repeating ourselves again and again and again on this issue. So, no, I do understand the rationale of what Deputy Ozouf is asking, and I do not think there is a risk in any way to the future of the Reserve Fund by the measures being proposed now.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I hate to raise a point of order, but I think you may, as the Presiding Officer, be aware that I am asking a question that does not appear to be being answered. Not on purpose, but I genuinely think maybe

it is a form of words. I am talking about the different classes of contribution and the Chief Minister is talking about everything else.

The Deputy Bailiff:

He has given his answer.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Not an answer, Sir, to my question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Alex Curtis is the next person to speak, unless someone wants to propose the adjournment. I do not suggest that you should, but is your light on for that purpose? No.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Just to ask a question.

7.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

One of the common strategic priorities is to reduce red tape, enhance opportunities for business and strengthen Jersey's international reputation. Can the Chief Minister advise what is the most recent policy decision he has delivered or overseen by other Ministers that tangibly reduce an area of red tape to business?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I will have to come back to the Deputy with that because I have not been working on that. There is some work going on by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. I will come back with the latest progress on that area.

7.7.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If the Minister does not have anything to hand, can he advise whether the Council of Ministers have a clear understanding or record of what areas of red tape they will reduce before the election? If not, will he then report whether they are happy with the current actual or perceived levels of "red tape"?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Absolutely. The Council of Ministers will be getting a briefing on that but I would add that I am still not content that we have made enough progress in reducing regulation and red tape, and we need to go a lot further. One particular area that I am concerned about is planning. For example, no disrespect to the Minister or the chair of the Planning Committee, but that is where we seem to get the most noise and the most concern from members of the public. We have made progress but not enough in my opinion, and that is something we need to double down on.

7.8 Deputy J. Renouf:

I make no apology for pursuing the matter of the reduction in the States grant because, up until a few years ago, Government contributions were sacrosanct. The Chief Minister's Budget depends entirely on the reduction in the grant. When did it become apparent to the Government that this would be the case?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Well, our Budget is not completely dependent on the grant. It is dependent on what the States Assembly agree. If they decide they want to put more money into the grant, they can choose what services or what areas they would like to reduce to do that. It is a proposal that can be amended. It is not correct that we are completely reliant on reducing the contribution, the supplementation, to the fund.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, there is on 18 seconds left so that concludes the period for Questions without notice.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Deputy Bailiff:

The adjournment is proposed. Are Members content to adjourn now? The Assembly is adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:43]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:15]

The Deputy Bailiff:

The next item of business is a statement to be made by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding an independent review into children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

8. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will make a statement regarding an independent review into children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (S.E.N.D.).

8.1 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning):

I thank the Assembly for the time today in order that I make this statement addressing the findings of the independent S.E.N.D. (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) review conducted earlier this year. This review marks a pivotal moment in our journey towards a more inclusive, equitable and responsive education system for all children and young people in Jersey. Between January and June 2025 this year, a team of independent experts visited 20 schools, spoke with leaders, staff, parents and pupils, and examined our systems, policies and practices. Their work was thorough, thoughtful and deeply respectful of the efforts already underway across our Island. Let me begin by acknowledging the many areas of strengths highlighted in the review. Across Jersey, we see passionate educators, committed support staff, and creative school leaders working tirelessly to meet the needs of children with S.E.N.D. Pupils have told us they feel supported and safe in their schools. Many parents have shared positive relationships with their schools, and we have seen promising developments in early years identification, special educational needs co-ordinators, S.E.N.C.O., networks, teaching assistant training, and improvements in the use of data. These examples of good practice are not just encouraging, they are the foundation on which we build. However, this review also makes clear that we must do better. It identifies inconsistencies in leadership, strategy, and communication. It highlights the need for clearer shared vision, stronger accountability, and more transparent budgeting. It reminds us that too many families still feel unheard, unsupported and forced to seek help outside the system. This is not the experience I want for families in Jersey. We accept these findings in full and, more importantly, we are acting on them. Already, we have made changes to the leadership of our inclusion services. We have seconded experienced headteachers into the department to strengthen collaboration between schools and the central team. We have appointed a transformational lead to drive improvements in our educational psychology service. But this is not about quick fixes. It is about building a responsive system, one that places children's needs at the centre of our every decision. If we want sustainable, inclusive education, we must build it with the teachers, not around them. Their voices must be heard and their roles respected. Sorry, their voice ... this is what comes from reading from a script, I do not usually do that. Their voice must be heard,

their role respected and their capacity strengthened. The future of inclusion in Jersey depends upon a confident, well-supported teaching workforce. That is why training, collaboration and professional autonomy are the heart of our response. I know that we need to improve our communication between centre schools and families. We will work with schools and parents to co-create a new shared approach to inclusion that puts children's needs at the heart of every decision. I know that change will not happen overnight but we are making the next steps to get there. We are moving from pockets of good practice to a system where every child in every school gets the support they need. Staff must receive the training and support they need and we will listen - really listen - to the voices of professionals, parents, carers and young people. Jersey is not alone in facing these challenges. A recent cross-nation summit held here in Jersey made it very clear. But we have a unique opportunity to lead the way. With declining pupil numbers and budgetary pressures, we must be bold, creative and united in our approach, protecting funding and using it as effectively as possible. We must move away from a culture of complaint and towards a culture of partnership to ensure that every child, regardless of need, feels supported, valued and empowered to thrive. This review confirms what many of us already know, the solutions we need are not distant or out of reach, they already exist within our schools, our professionals and our communities. We have skilled and committed staff, experienced leaders and engaged parents. The challenge is not simply a lack of capacity, it is a need for clearer direction, stronger co-ordination and better support. I will finish, before taking questions, with this. This review is a turning point, a clear, honest reflection that gives us the roadmap for real improvement. Although some good work came from the N.A.S.E.N. (National Association for Special Educational Needs) review, we must remember that moving to truly inclusive education is a continuum and will be incremental. Success will be a system where no child is left behind and no parent feels they must fight for support. We will not move forward in an atmosphere of competition or blame. We will move forward with a culture of upskilling and co-ordination. I want to empower our teaching profession. Finally, and I reiterate this key point, there is strong practice in Jersey schools. It must be consistent and system-wide. Thank you for listening and I look forward to your questions.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister. We now move to 15 minutes of questions. The first question is from Deputy Moore.

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

The Minister says this is a turning point, which is very good to hear. We all are aware that much improvement is needed in this area but could the Minister just outline for us briefly, before we move forward so that we can understand, what have been the blockers to progress following the N.A.S.E.N. review and why now we are in a position where concerted effort is needed to catch up?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do thank the Deputy for the question because that is a very good point. I think the phrase "blockers" is a good phrase because, as I have said, I think the skill is already there. A couple of things I would mention, the N.A.S.E.N. review did talk about a need for around £18 million and only £6 million was allocated. Therefore, I do not think it is a coincidence that we have pockets of good practice. For example, the training of teaching assistants has improved, the S.E.N.C.O. networks have improved, but we need to improve further. The other thing is as well that the N.A.S.E.N. review was at a set time, 2021, straight after COVID; it was influential at the time and remains so. But I think we have had a changing environment as well in our schools of increased need and increase in identification. Now is the time to step and look again. It does not mean it throws the N.A.S.E.N. review away at all, it means that we build upon those processes within it. I hope that is enough.

8.1.2 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

I would like to thank the Minister for commissioning this report in the first place, for finally listening and indeed hearing parents, teachers and children and young people. Nonetheless, the review makes for salutary reading and it clearly highlights the systemic and endemic issues around special educational needs in Jersey. My question really is what mechanisms will be put in place by the Minister to hold leaders in his department to account for delivering the recommendations of the N.A.S.E.N. report, this S.E.N.D. review, and to ensure progress on S.E.N.D. and inclusion in general?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There are a couple of things there. The first and the most important thing is that we need an openness in our communication between schools and C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills). I think too much in the past schools feel that things have been done unto them by C.Y.P.E.S. centrally and not understood why. That communication needs to be broken down, and we have started that with the secondment of headteachers directly into the department for that communication. The other accountability measure that is very important is the changes to our school review system. Within that school review system the provision for S.E.N.D. and equity in our schools is central, at the very heart, of that system. That system is also not one that grades and reduces a school down to a single grade, which I have always opposed. It is one that looks for development and skilling up. So that accountability is built into that system. Also, from C.Y.P.E.S. itself and those headteachers that are seconded, there has to be accountability across our schools. I think accountability comes best from collaboration, not from competition or fear of getting something wrong. It is about openness.

8.1.3 Deputy H.M. Miles:

I thank the Minister for his answer. I have said quite often this year that the frontline only works well when the back office is properly resourced and robust. How will the Minister ensure that given the recruitment freeze and the bar on consultancy on non-front line services, the progress that he seeks will not be affected?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I really do thank the Deputy for that question. Absolutely. With a review like this, I think there is an openness and transparency to it. I think across this Assembly, we would support provision within our schools for all of our children, regardless of their need. Therefore, I think it is easier for me and for anyone who is Minister in this position to gain the support we need for any recruitment that is there. However, I will say that I believe that the vast majority of the solutions are within our grasp, within the staff that we have and the professions that we have. There have been changes made there. I would like to see those reviewers revisit in time to give that similar constructive feedback and realistic, trusted feedback. If that costs something, I am certain that I can make a very strong case for that need.

8.1.4 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

The review describes the experience of parental involvement in the inclusion agenda as lip service. Parents have approached me to share this concern, especially around the operation of records of need. Back in 2021, the N.A.S.E.N. review recommended records of needs required clarification and transparency. Does the Minister have plans to meaningfully engage with parents on matters such as this?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy for her question. I know that she knows a great deal about this through the panel as well. Yes, absolutely, I think the record of need process has become a process that is more about the link to funding, perhaps, when it should be about the specificity of the need of that child, and we need to make sure that parents are fully involved in the development of that record of need. This is where the relationship between parents and professionals in the school is so important. There needs

to be an air of trust across that so the parents' knowledge of their child is taken into account and understood, the school's understanding of those needs of that child is taken into account so that everyone can come up with the best pathway forward. Whether the record of need is the right vehicle, because I know it is changing in other jurisdictions, is a very good question. But I would also like to see much earlier identification of need and much earlier addressing of those needs, because I do not think we should be waiting necessarily for documents in order to provide the need that children have in our schools.

8.1.5 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I thank the Minister for his answer. Will there be a proper consultation with parents about records of needs or any similar needs plans?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

To be quite frank, that process is already happening because the record of need process includes, as we stand here today, that requirement to involve parents. I think there are 2 things here. One is to ensure that that is actually happening and then to ensure that if that can be improved, let us make those changes. But, again, we have to move to a culture of collaboration, trust and co-operation between everybody involved with one simple outcome, which is the best outcomes for those children. Now at times there may be challenging conversations that go on because of recognition of what professionals have. That is okay, but we need to have that trust built into our system, and I think that has not necessarily been there.

[14:30]

8.1.6 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

I am pleased to follow Deputy Catherine Curtis because my question also focuses on records of need. The report recognises weaknesses in the records of needs system and although it says that work to improve that is underway, issues still remain with the process, the matrix and the funding. Does the Minister accept that finding and what does he propose to do to tackle the outstanding issues? Is the record of need system fit for purpose?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy for the question. One of the things I will say before I answer this is I think we need to be careful of this world of absolutes that I think we have lived in for too long. Either everything is absolutely perfect or everything is not working at all. Somewhere in the middle is where we are at the moment. The record of need has a good purpose, it identifies need, it links funding to that need specifically, and it can actually link at the higher levels of need, some very significant funding to those individuals. I think the gap occurs when the record of need takes too long or there are disputes over the record of need, or the way it is being used in schools for funding is perhaps not as effective as it could be. I actually feel that we need to look at - and the discussions have already started with headteachers, there was a meeting with headteachers where this was begun - our model of funding around S.E.N. (Special Educational Needs) and R.O.N. (Record of Need) in particular. Do we have base funding for all schools, first and foremost, so that you do not have to go and jump through hoops - and that is not a great phrase but if the Deputy can accept that for this moment in time - in order to get the funding that is needed or the support that is needed. I do not think we should have to do that, I think we need to re-establish what we mean by that provision within our schools and move forward without those perhaps formal identifications so early on in the processes.

8.1.7 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Does the current system of records of needs and matters linked to it adequately provide for and protect individuals as they transition from school to life afterwards? Does the Minister believe that records

of needs, for example, should continue for longer to help bridge that gap and perhaps reduce the cliff edge that currently exists?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. My simple answer is yes. That is a really positive way forward, a record of need. We have an issue on the Island in regards to compulsory education. I think we need to be moving towards extending the age for compulsory education, but the provision needs to be there anyway. We have made one success - I give it a parallel success - is those around care leavers who have identified up to the age of 25. I see no reason why record of needs cannot follow somebody up to the age of 25, which identifies their needs beyond formal schooling perhaps into the workplace and beyond. I think that type of support will help our young people be fully engaged in our society. That would also be a call to employers to say: "Look, you can be involved here." I think, as an Island, we all need to be involved in the support of our young people with additional needs. It is not just one area.

8.1.8 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I thank the Minister for commissioning the report as well and for his statement. I acknowledge his point that much good work is underway, but the report is indeed a very salutary read and it details a long list of failings. For example, the system does not promote collaboration, poor culture, insufficient transparency, absence of coherent strategy, lack of clear leadership, extensive delays, overstretched resources, out-of-date key policies. That is just the first of 3 areas in the summary of findings relating to strategy and structure. Would the Minister identify from the list of failings what he regards as the most serious failing?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

First of all, I would like to say to the Deputy, I was hoping that we would have a more inclusive language around this report. I noticed that the press reports have moved away from the word "failings" and more towards "a greater need" or a "greater working together" and that is the approach I would like to take. But I can deal with his questions. I am not going to list in order of priority the recommendations from the report. I think they are all very important. There are some that can be worked on quicker than others. Some are already being worked on. The communication issues, the issues of addressing funding and the model of funding, the bringing in of specialists, of really experienced teachers who have worked in the areas of special needs on this Island directly into the department to give advice and to actually take control, if you like, or oversee the provision of S.E.N. across our Island is a huge step forward. It is doing something we have not done for a long, long time, which is saying we have a huge number of highly qualified professionals out there, let us listen to them, let us get them involved in the change and let us make that change realistic for every single teacher. So I am not going to prioritise them, and I would say as well - and I recognise some parents may want to use that word and that is absolutely fair enough - but I would like to move away from the language of failure, away from the negative language around that and look forward. Yes, it is salutary, I absolutely accept that, but we could have ignored that, we could have not done this and we could have just moved forward without doing anything at all. We cannot dismiss that and I have no wish to dismiss the challenges that we face.

8.1.9 Deputy J. Renouf:

I am sorry the Minister takes offence with that. I would say the summary of key judgments line says: "Overall the current leadership organisation system strategies oversight and accountability arrangements in relation to inclusive education in Jersey are not sufficiently effective." So perhaps we will go with "not sufficiently effective". A simple question to follow up really which is, is the Minister confident, given the inability to deliver on the previous N.A.S.E.N. review and his statement that funding was not sufficient to do that, is he confident he has the resources available to deliver on the statements he has made in relation to this report?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would say to the Deputy, this is not about me taking any personal offence, this is way more important than me being personally offended; that is absolutely fine, it is part job. This is about a workforce and parents and children not being offended by the language used. That is just my point. I think we need to be more corrective and not sufficiently effective is exactly the point. The N.A.S.E.N. review was not totally dismissed or missed. There were good things that came from the N.A.S.E.N. review, I want to reiterate that. Things happen. I mentioned some of them earlier in my answers. In terms of money, I agree with the Deputy. I think more money will be needed in the future. What I would say is we are in a period at the moment where we can start to really look at the structures that we need to build on with the people and the skills that we have now, so that when that argument for more money comes into the future, it is accurate, it is clear where it will be, and it is clear as to the outcomes that will be made with that. I do not think that happened before and I think subsequently money may well have been spent that was not as effective as we thought. So, yes, I think into the future, whoever is in this role will need to ask for more support and funding. Just one other really key point, if I may, and I mentioned it in my speech. As our general demographic across the Island goes down, and we have got a - it is a terrible phrase - bulge going through our secondary schools, a large number going through. As that number flattens off, the key is to keep the funding in schools. So that will not be extra money. The money we have got there, let us spend it effectively. spend it in the right places without cutting that money back. I think we can have a huge impact, even with that as a starting point.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There are 3 further Members with questions. Are Members content to extend time for an extra 15 minutes, as permitted by Standing Orders? Yes.

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

I thank you for that. I thank the Minister very warmly for the statement and note, of course, that it comes during A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) Awareness Month, so it is quite appropriate. Coming, as I do, from a world of teachers like he was, he will know that these issues are not new. They have always existed, not just labelled, and they have, of course, advantages, but huge disadvantages as well. I wonder if the Minister would say: does he accept that inclusion must go - and I think he has already said it but let us say it openly - beyond school gates, that there needs to be a better understanding of neurodiversity in all its forms, advantages and disadvantages, and particularly in relation to the Discrimination Law? Also there needs to be meaningful rather than token adjustments because that is vital for children's upbringing and how they end up as adults. Does he agree that inclusion is about understanding and support, not labelling and stigma?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The short answer is yes, yes and yes. It certainly it is not about stigma and labelling, and this is where we have to be careful in the way that we use diagnoses because it is not about labelling a child. In terms of what happens in our wider community, yes, I would like to make a plea for companies and businesses and those who perhaps can provide spaces for young people who may be neurodiverse in their industries, their businesses, their companies, because you will enrich your workplace with diversity. That is a good thing to do, and you will give opportunity and find skills that perhaps you have not seen before. I think that is something very important that we have to do as a society, way beyond schools. As for the understanding; yes, absolutely, I think Island-wide we need to understand more. It is not about labelling, it is just about understanding that people are different. We have difference in our society and that is okay. Our schools do an incredible job to deal with the exponential growth in identification of those differences and are trying their very best to do that. What I want to do, and I hope that we can do as an Assembly as well, is support schools in providing for that across our education system.

8.1.11 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

If I may, I thank warmly the Minister, he clearly gets it and that will be of real comfort to parents and children across the Island, and adults as well who have been through good and bad education. I know just how important and fantastic the work is in some schools in his department and they deserve our congratulations because it is brilliant, some of it; I have seen it. May I ask, does he believe that he has a good understanding among his Ministerial colleagues? As he rightly said, it has come from the top. Do the Ministers agree and does he think that they understand what these issues are really about?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would say, I hope so. Many Ministers have children themselves, they have contact with schools and they understand the challenges that we face. Let me address that in this way. It is very nice of the Deputy to say that I get it and understand it. I would say after 8 years of being out of education, and from the 20 years ago when I started education, the world has changed there. I am not sure I would get it as much as I used to in terms of the understanding of those situations if I went back to teaching. It would be a learning curve for me too. I think that is what we need to appreciate, that it is a learning curve for everybody, no matter how experienced you are, whether you are new to the profession, and we need to support that learning curve, both for teachers, for all the staff that work in schools, and, yes, of course, across this Assembly. I think it is an iterative process to understand S.E.N., but it is also a very rewarding process because there is nothing better than seeing a child that struggles at the end succeeding. I think that is one of the things that I remember most from my time in education, and I would encourage people to keep sight of that.

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

I really welcome this report. I think it is great that the Minister is following through on the work of the previous Government, and also I think we should remember that it was former Senator Vallois who initiated this work. I am very grateful that the thread of that work is being carried through and I hope it will also be picked up by the next Government. He mentioned being a former teacher - the Minister and myself are both former teachers - I would like to understand whether there is anything wider than this report, outside of this report and the recommendations, that the Minister himself - whether it is from his own experience or from the work that he is doing in the department at the moment and seeing in schools - would do on top of these recommendations? It might be something that is a cultural change or something that is a wider change beyond these recommendations.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy. That is quite a question. The first part was about, yes, the thread of this. Yes, absolutely. I am very pleased to say that we are continuing this work and it must continue into any future Assemblies. Just as we will talk about the town school, which is something that also has a thread through continuous Councils of Ministers and Ministers, and I hope we can continue with that as well because that develops one type of need. In terms of the wider actions that were taken, it is a difficult one. One of them is our culture and environment for our education system as a whole. I think we need to move away from schools feeling they need to compete to prove their worth because they do not. What they need to do is just have really good practice and collaborate to have the best practice across those schools. That is a much more successful system. I think we have been guilty of being involved in the commoditisation of our children for too long, and I do not want to see that happen anymore. I want to see us working together, collaboratively across Assemblies, across different iterations of Assemblies to make sure that we are doing the right thing for our children.

[14:45]

I will say to the Deputy, this is slightly like the question I was asked when I did a podcast last week from the wonderful students at Le Rocquier School. The podcast was about what would I tell my younger self. I would say to the Deputy I would probably need a week to think it through, as I did at

that one, so if that answer is not good enough then do forgive me but I think it is about a cultural change across the piece more than anything.

8.1.13 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I would like the Minister to reflect on a specific point that I feel from my experience I would like to see happen in schools and from the conversations that I have with teachers, and it is around planning time. I think it used to be called non-contact time.; I am not sure what the term is. But given the increased level of need and given what the Minister has said that I think we all agree with that it is the expertise and competence of the teachers that is actually the biggest resource, would the Minister agree that terms and conditions for teachers need to be looked at so actually there is more flexibility within the teaching day for teachers to actually accommodate these additional needs and to make adjustments for the students that are in their care?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Again, the simple answer is yes. I will say that in the Government Plan that we will debate I hope the Assembly can support the money that is put towards the terms and conditions review. The first time there has ever been real money put towards that. Is it enough? No, of course I would like a lot more but that can go towards making time. I think the collaboration between schools and getting schools working together more will also help with that planning in a simple productive flow. I think something from my time, I would say that if we had one curriculum across our schools that the planning of that curriculum and the planning of those resources could be shared widely across all of our schools, and that would also cut down on the time needed to give more time on the specific areas around special educational needs and those sorts of things. So there are other things that we can do as well. I would say to the Deputy, I am convinced that schools are absolutely willing to make those type of changes and that type of collaborative working together because they are seeing that need. They just need to be freed up to do it, and I do not think they have been free to do that before.

8.1.14 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Minister said in his statement that we must move away from a culture of complaint towards a culture of partnership. Will the Minister clarify that he is not suggesting that any parties, parents, for example, who have a legitimate basis for complaints should not avail themselves of the complaints procedure and just explain exactly what he means in that statement?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank the Deputy for his question. Yes, that is a good point. Absolutely, the complaints system should be there and used appropriately. However, I want to see a system whereby our inclusion process, our S.E.N. process, is good enough, collaborative enough, working with parents enough, that they do not need to complain, because the processes are working for them and their children. I think that is what I was getting to there. Otherwise, when that communication breaks down, we spend too much time simply talking about the complaints, rather than solving the problem for the child. At the end, I do not think a complaint system really does that much to solve a child's problems. That has to be the basis for everything we do. I hope that answers the Deputy's question.

8.1.15 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South

Does the Minister believe that some of the issues referenced in this report are reflected in the fact that we have seen a doubling of absenteeism at schools since 2019? What does the Minister think is necessary to get kids back into school again and to reduce those levels of absenteeism?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do not know if I would necessarily agree with the notion that absenteeism is growing; it is isolated. I think we went through COVID. We all know that we had significant effects of COVID when children were staying at home, going back to school, it did not become the routine and I think we are

still paying for that now. A lot of work is going on in terms of getting children back into school, getting the right environment for children. That is the other thing, the environments in our school have to be right. When schools are too crowded, too small, not suitably equipped to meet the needs of particularly those with additional needs, then there may be an increase in absenteeism. I hope therefore, that the Deputy later on will support the town school build and the La Passerelle new build.

8.1.16 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I will leave that for the later debate. Just one point which has been made to me, and there is a real danger in when we have all of this need identified, is what I think someone has termed “inclusion tokenism”. How do we make sure that we do not have inclusion tokenism, that we actually really do build the resources correctly to ensure that inclusion is properly done?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I really do not like that term, I will say, because for some parents who might be listening to this, that would be not good. I think I understand the Deputy’s point, but this is exactly the point about early identification. Early identification so that we do not have to go down necessarily the process of diagnoses. Do not get me wrong, diagnosis can be extremely important if we are getting a specific need and widening that need beyond education into health, into C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), et cetera, I have no issue with that at all. I think we just have to be careful to say that it is not about tokenism - I do not like that phrase - it is about appropriate use of terminology appropriate identification and appropriate support where it is needed. A child may have a particular educational need but it may not show itself in every single circumstance. A simple example for myself is if you put me in the science lab I was happier than anything but as soon as you put me into an art class - and I have a lot of art teacher friends I will say before I say anything else - I was a little out of my depth. So things come out in different ways but it is that early identification, it is the appropriateness of identification, and I think it is that trust of that and what is going on in the schools that is more important. I would agree with that element of what the Deputy ... if that is what he is suggesting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you, Minister, that completes that period of questions. We now move on to Public Business and the first item was to be the Draft Harbours (Inshore Safety) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations but, Minister, I understand that to be deferred to the next meeting, is that right?

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

That is correct, Sir.

9. Proposed use of former Jersey Gas site: request for reconsideration (P.45/2025)

The Deputy Bailiff:

Under Standing Order 87. We now move on to the Proposed use of former Jersey Gas site: request for reconsideration, lodged by the Connétable St. Helier. The main respondent is the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

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

Sir, before Greffier does that, could I just state for the record that I will be withdrawing from this debate. It will certainly end up in a planning application, which I will stay well clear of.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Thank you.

The Greffier of the States:

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion - to request the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to reconsider the proposal to build a new primary school on the site immediately adjacent to the Millennium Town Park, formerly occupied by Jersey Gas (“the site”) and, following consultation with the Council of Ministers, to present a report to the States Assembly by the end of 2025 providing - (a) an assessment of the need for a new town primary school in the light of demographic changes, including the capacity of the existing primary school estate to meet demand for new school places, and any alternative approaches to meeting this demand; (b) data as to the number of households located within 400 metres of the site, and estimates of the numbers of potential users by age group of an expanded Millennium Town Park, including those living outside this radius, visitors, shoppers and office workers; (c) an analysis of the health and other benefits provided to the whole community by the Millennium Town Park, especially the ageing population, and an assessment of the likely impact of doubling its size, compared to the current proposals to develop new pocket parks on sites such as those presently occupied by Springfield School and Le Bas Centre; (d) an assessment of the expected traffic impacts on the St. Helier road network of a new primary school constructed on the site, including air quality levels in surrounding streets, and an assessment of the role active travel could play in mitigating them; and (e) up to date financial projections on the cost of building and maintaining the proposed new primary school, compared with the costs of meeting the demand for new primary school places by alternative means.

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

I am indebted to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning for inviting me to tour some of the town primary schools several weeks ago. I must say that I am sorry I did not have that tour before I wrote my report - and I am not criticising the Minister, he has offered me a tour on many occasions - but certainly some of the remarks in my report particularly suggesting that the rural primary schools could in some way meet capacity for town students, I probably would not have written that if I had been around the town primaries that I visited recently. Because, of course, I have seen for myself the potential for meeting the demand for town primary school education within the town. Having said that, I do not think that the tour of the schools that I undertook has changed anything that I have put in my proposition which has just been read out to Members. It has 5 parts and I have got 5 things to say. I will try not to be too long-winded, and in fact my 5 points do not relate directly to the 5 points in the proposition. If I can return, first of all, to that tour I took with a member of the Friends of the Town Park Group of 4 primary schools. We started at La Passerelle. As any Member will know, who has visited that particular school for special needs, it is staffed by hugely dedicated and committed teachers with - the ones I saw - very happy children taking part in their classes, but in woefully inadequate premises. It absolutely does need to be replaced. I completely concur with that. What I am not sure about, and one of the reasons I brought the proposition, is whether the needs of a new La Passerelle can be met or should be met in a large town primary school near the town centre or whether there are no other ways of including a new La Passerelle in other town primary schools which already exist. I then went to St. Luke’s and what a wonderful, wonderful school that is. The headteacher took us round, and he deserves a medal for what he is doing in that confined space. A very happy school, as I say, again; dedicated teachers working in a very cramped site. At first blush, one might look at St Luke’s and say, of course, it needs replacing in the centre of town. But when you think a bit more about it, you think that is quite a way to go, it is quite a way to travel for existing parents with their small charges. Members may have received some emails from parents at St. Luke’s - I know I have - who are aghast at the idea that they should be making that trip into the town centre with their children every day. One of the more recent emails pointed out that do we not have the beach on one side and Howard Davis Park on the other? Is there not more that could be done to improve St. Luke’s and to make more use of it? I noted when I was there that part of the building has been made out of bounds due to recent health and safety regulations. We all love those and we understand why they are necessary but would it be possible for St. Luke’s to stay on site? After all, it has a fantastic Safe Routes to School system which is now in place, and I heard from one leader of

the community - I will not embarrass them by saying who they were - that to move St Luke's will rip the heart out of that community. I am not saying that it is a wrong move to do but the point of my proposition is to say: "Well, should we not just think again? Should we not reconsider whether St. Luke's is best served by moving it into the town centre?" I then went to Springfield School, which I know well. I was shown the missing roof tiles in one of the classrooms and, sure, it is a bit dilapidated, it does need money spending on it, but we are not very good at that as a Government, are we? We are not good at maintaining our infrastructure. I remember the plumber from St. John rolling up his trousers ... he could get away with that as the Bailiff of the day either could not see his knobby knees or he let him get away with it. The plumber from St John was always talking about the lack of maintenance in public buildings, and absolutely right. Springfield needs money spending on it. Having looked at their outdoor space there is definitely room for expansion of their outdoor space, fabulous trees and incidentally a nice, fairly recent, pedestrian crossing that was installed by the Parish and unveiled during a fairly recent branchage.

[15:00]

So not only students and their parents can get to school more safely but if they were to have an extended Town Park to benefit from it will be a much easier task for them to walk down to the new Town Park. Finally, I went up to Janvrin. Janvrin was not on the list that I was offered by the department. Instead, I was offered a tour of d'Auvergne School, which struck me as interesting, because d'Auvergne is an example of what you can do with a primary school with no space constraints. You can get everything up there and it is a fabulous school, but I did not want to see d'Auvergne because I know it well. I wanted to see Janvrin, where one of my children went many years ago. Again, inspirational headteacher, fantastic staff, particularly the music department I thought was doing incredibly good work. The school itself does not have any disabled access, which is quite remarkable to me. I am surprised that has not been dealt with yet, but it is on a big site. I think crucially for me, Janvrin is on an elevated site, it is above the Ring Road, it is above the town centre. I was thinking to myself, surely we have got a number of sites which are elevated above the town in the escarpment. Surely there is opportunity for a new primary facility, or possibly including La Passerelle, to be taken away from the traffic. I will come back to the traffic in a minute. I want to move now if I may - it is quite a move - to the proposed youth centre. Just to change topic a bit. So my vision of doubling the size of the Town Park has been in my head and my heart for a long time. I had to compromise that when it was pointed out to me that the Jersey Gas showroom is a big building, it is a relatively new building, it has a lot of potential reuse. When I walk around it, and I have done that tour twice now, I was really struck by what a waste it would be to just knock it down. Because you could put a fantastic youth centre in there. I have been round it with some skateboarders, some other young people, and their eyes were popping out at the thought of having all this wonderful space so close to the town centre. My question, really, for the Minister is: have young people been consulted? But have they been asked to choose between a youth centre in the Jersey Gas showroom, the former showroom, or the new one that is being purchased at considerable cost off a developer down the other end of the park, down at the brewery site? Because it does seem to me, and again I am no expert on what makes a good community centre or youth centre, that that question should have been asked and those sums should have been done. How much would it cost to convert that site into a community centre and youth centre right in the heart of an extended Town Park? So, moving on; cost. I have just referred to the cost of that and the cost of the whole proposal; I was hoping today to hear from my Minister, via a question from Deputy Warr, what the whole cost of this project is. Unfortunately, we did not get any meaningful figures. We got one figure of £15 million in the Budget, which obviously is not going to pay for the new school or anything like it, and we got another figure of £16 million for the youth centre, which is about £30 million. I would guess that the total cost of this project is going to be double that. It is going to be about £60 million to get the youth centre and a new primary school built on the Jersey Gas site. We do not have a cost, we do not have a timetable. In some ways, that should be a relief for people who want to see the project of extending

the Town Park go ahead. Because clearly it is not a case of people are just about to put spades in the ground. This project that is being pursued by the Government is not ready to go yet. Actually, that does buy us some time, and it buys me some comfort because I think whatever the outcome of this debate there is going to have to be a budget allocation for the new school and the new youth centre, there is going to have to be a planning application. The current campaign, which is being extremely well run I think by the Friends of the Millennium Town Park, is going to gather more and more force as the weeks and months pass. I think there will be a real question about the cost of these new facilities that are being proposed, particularly when there does not seem to have been any comparison done with the cost of alternatives. At a time when, and I quote from the chief executive of the States: “The precarious position of States finances, at a time when we are starting to worry about budgets and taxpayers are starting to worry about States expenditure again, is it really wise to be spending tens of millions of pounds when there may be a better and cheaper alternative?” Traffic has been raised by almost everyone who has written to me about the proposals. They cannot see how a 400-space primary school on an already busy ring road will be achieved without even more traffic chaos. Now we are told that all of these students are going to walk and cycle to school. Well, I just saw a pig fly past the windows of the Assembly. I do not know how long we have been told that people are going to walk and cycle to school, particularly primary school. It is not going to happen; we all know that. People are going to drive their children to school and to drive everybody there rather than perhaps driving them to smaller schools or to improved educational facilities around the town, it is going to be difficult for traffic to say the least. Again, I suspect that people who live in the lovely new homes that have been created all around the Town Park are going to start to think about would they rather have a very, very busy road outside their door or would they rather have a bigger Town Park. Finally my fifth point, I wish I could summon up the shade of Frederick Law Olmsted, a name that will not be familiar perhaps to everyone but he was the mid-19th century designer of Central Park and in fact he designed many parks in the United States and numerous college campuses. Without Frederick Law Olmsted, New Yorkers would probably have a number of pocket parks to enjoy. They would not have a park that you can jog around and lose ... well, when I say lose your way, it is actually not a very safe park in some places either, but it is a fabulously big park and I was told off recently when we were debating this matter in another shape that St. Helier is not like New York or London and I should not be talking about city parks. But I beg to differ. In 100 years’ time people are going to look at the northern part of St. Helier, if this large building development goes ahead, and they are going to wonder at the lack of vision, the lack of foresight of the Assembly that approved it and they are going to say: “Why did they not find other ways of keeping that precious piece of land, the only piece of land that can be used to extend the Town Park? Why did they not find other ways of solving their school problems to enable St. Helier’s growing town to have the bigger Town Park it deserves?” That is all I am going to say. I think the points I have made and the points in my report do make a good case for reconsideration of whether we should not be having another look at this and I urge Members to support the proposition.

The Deputy Bailiff:

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

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

I thank the Deputy for his speech. It is very interesting. The Constable, sorry. One gets confused. I speak today in firm opposition to the proposition before us of the Constable of St. Helier and I will look at each part in turn. Part (a) of the proposition seeks to undermine successive Governments initiatives to construct a new town primary school. I will say that it is quite remarkable this is something in the Assembly which actually previous Council of Ministers, the Council of Ministers before that, the Council of Ministers before that, I think, agreed on and that has become something agreed on by the previous, I think, 5 Ministers for Education. There is a continuity here that I think is important to point out. Unfortunately there have been obstacles put in the way throughout, and

this will be another obstacle and it is clear that this is not just about delaying this, this is about ending the project. But this is an initiative that is not only necessary but visionary in the response to the future educational needs and urban development. I urge Members not to be distracted by selectively cited demographic trends. Birth rates may fluctuate, enrolment numbers may dip temporarily in isolated areas. We have been looking at demographic changes for years. We track the changes and anticipate future trends. We have presented this to headteachers, to Scrutiny, to teaching unions and there is no justification to pull a plug on a long-term investment in our infrastructure. A modern purpose-built primary school in St. Helier is not about reacting to today's numbers, it is about planning for the next generation with facilities that meet evolving educational standards and community needs. There is an irony to me speaking, as I did earlier, with my statements and the questions that came about special educational needs and me talking about this subject straight away. The argument from the proposer hinges on maintaining a viability across existing schools by adjusting catchment areas. It is interesting that suddenly the Constable, who has been Constable for a number of years, from one visit to a school has changed his idea about bussing children out. But that will still have to happen if we let our schools collapse in the next 5 to 10 years without actually addressing the need that is there. Is that what we want for St Helier? Longer commutes, disrupted communities and a reliance on an increasingly strained transport system. The argument over transport, which I will come to later, will not be helped by bussing children out of the centre of St. Helier to country schools, because that is when parents will drive and then we will have absolute road chaos as they drive back into town in order to park up by their homes and walk to work. That is not a sensible approach. Putting our youngest children on buses each morning and at the end of the school day goes directly against the type of identification of needs and the challenges that some children may face in going to school, including increased absenteeism, which I was asked a question about earlier. Let us think this through from the beginning. I will say Trinity School, as lovely as it is, and I have visited, should not bear the weight of accommodating children from other Parishes when the answer is to build where demand is. I remind Members that the new school replaces 3 outdated existing schools. Without it, we will be looking at transporting whole cohorts when the current schools become totally unfit for purpose. The proposition also claims, and the Constable has claimed, that alternatives to the Jersey Gas site were not truly explored. I reject that characterisation. Forty-one sites of properties were initially considered on a long list of potential sites. Most prove unsuitable due to size, location or alternative use already identified and committed to. This information was presented to the Millennium Town Park Group by the previous Minister, and Deputy Alves was there, in November 2023. All of the evidence that shows why this is the site was presented but it seems to have been ignored, and the previous Government presented that evidence ... well, I have the document here and in fact some of those sites are now totally not available because they have been built on already. There was an alternative site for the school. Deputy Coles brought a proposition in 2022 to have the play.com site used by the school. That lost by 3 votes, it was a close vote and now we are on the final stage that gives us a joined-up solution to all the issues that we have. The school is supported by the Bridging Island Plan and it reflects the reality that our town schools are struggling and our children are paying the price. Today's schools demand space, sustainability and accessibility. Qualities that the Jersey Gas site has to offer and others do not. We should celebrate, not question, the opportunity that has been created here. We have even had reports from one Member suggesting that we make a temporary school while retrofitting schools that are already not meeting space standards. To put simply, that is a very, very, very bad idea. Finally on this part, I caution against nostalgia disguised as prudence. Educational policy must be guided by data, inclusivity and ambition, not anecdotal whispers and retrofitting plans. If we are serious about excellence in education, then we must be bold. Building a new town primary school is not an overreach, it is overdue. On to part (b), it argues from a place of concern from demographic trends and park accessibility. It risks sacrificing critical education infrastructure on the altar of hypothetical data. That is bad decision-making if we do that. Let us be clear, the proposition to gather extensive new age-related statistics before approving development is not unreasonable. But when it is wielded

as a delaying tactic, it undermines progress that is both necessary and fully considered. Unfortunately, the Constable let the cat out of the bag when he talked about how well-run a campaign it has been, and that will grow because that campaign is to stop the school happening. It is not about looking at it again.

[15:15]

It is saying we are not interested in the school being there regardless of all the information and the data you produce, it simply will not be there. So which is it? The Constable needs to answer that. Is he really just asking to look again or is it just a recipe for ending this project? It has already been delayed by 3 years. It could have been opened this summer, we would have had that school in place and that is why costs have gone up as much as anything else. Now, what is equally being overlooked is the need for urban renewal as well as education renewal. There is an assumption made that senior citizens are best served by green space alone. In reality, what they deserve, what all generations deserve, is thriving communities with families staying local, where grandchildren can attend school close to home and where intergenerational interaction is a feature not a flaw. Replacing the current Springfield site with a considerable park will provide green space closer to many of our elderly residents. Holding one site hostage in perpetuity on the off chance we may want to expand decades from now is neither practical nor responsible. As for major developments mentioned at the Northern Quarter and Mayfair Hotel, these are testaments to St. Helier's growth, but with that growth comes the need to balance recreational space with civic services. A new primary school is not an intrusion. It is a foundation. It offers structure, safety and a cornerstone for family life in an increasingly dense urban zone. So we have an ongoing project with the Minister for Infrastructure. I am sure the Constable will know about this because he is an Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and that project is to open schools to communicate access in a safe and practical way. I was at one of our secondary schools - I will not say which but it was on the east of the Island - the other day where we were looking at opening for a community project. Quite rightly, there was a point made by their headteacher there who says: "I am happy to open my school but you have to recognise when I open the hall, I have to open the entire school. That is a problem because then I have to check the entire school because they were not built with community space in mind." We have an opportunity in the centre of St. Helier to build a school with that community space in mind. The green fenced-off space in front of the school where our children in St. Helier can play in a green space, what a remarkable idea. Our children in St. Helier can play on a green space. That can be available for the community out of school hours in a controlled area. I was recently in the park looking at the Festival of Words. A brilliant thing going on there. The whole park was taken up by things for children to play. It could have fitted into that space in a safe environment with fences around it and the rest of the park can be used. With smart use of this community space, we can extend community use in a number of different ways. Plus there is the plan for the 3G pitch on top of the school and, when it is built, from day one, it is simple. You have 2 entrances. One for daytime use and one for use after school thus increasing the facilities for that local area. A simple approach which makes a huge difference for the people there. The new school will be an opportunity to build that community access but there are new green spaces for the community. The current Springfield site will become parkland. Over 5,000 metres squared of open space in the heart of town on the doorstep of Le Coie Estates in the heart of the elderly communities nearby. Plus there is the development of the Le Bas site. The Gas Place site is 9,072 metres squared, Springfield 5,079 metres squared plus Le Bas of 6,873 metres squared. Sorry about the numbers. That is a total of 11,952 metres squared which equals 32 per cent greater than the Gas Place site area, so when you look at it analytically, you are getting a greater green space available next to communities and there is more in terms of the facilities. I am talking about outside of school hours. Also schools like that are open all weekends. When we had the meeting at the Town Hall, I stood up to correct the Constable who talked about schools not being open to say that his secondary school was open from 7.30 until 9.30 at night. I know that is true of the school in Les Quennevais and I know that is true of La Rocque. These schools are all opening to the community.

They are vital community spaces. I know that happens in primary schools such as St. Martin's School. I know these things are happening and we encourage them. That needs to be understood. So I urge Members to reject part (b). Turning to part (c) and (d) of the proposition, a hypothetical situation overriding urgent realities is a note I made about that, and I think we need to really consider that. These sections take us down the path of delay and indecision and this is a delay built upon this not happening. The idea of let us extend this to the next election, that is absolutely fine. We stand on principle. I stood on that principle in the last election. I believe we have a really good project to revitalise that area of St. Helier with a school that is needed, community space and green spaces put together, and I am quite happy to stand and defend that and explain that. So that is absolutely fine but let us get on and do it. There are health benefits of green space and they are undisputed but the claim that expanding the Millenium Town Park via the Jersey Gas site would confer exponential greater benefits, which is referred to as a marriage value, lacks any objective evidence. Adjacency, functionality and aesthetic appeal but that is all. Creating new parks at Springfield and Le Bas is not hearsay. It is flexibility and flexibility is exactly what Jersey needs in a limited space in the centre of town. Local communities can go to local spaces. They can be built appropriately. We have the opportunity to build more of the fantastic play park like the one in Parade Gardens that was brought to the Parish Assembly by Deputy Feltham. So there are opportunities there to make those impacts elsewhere and draw people to those parks. In terms of traffic, we have already jumped into the planning process which we are not ever going to get to if we delay where we are now. The costs will go up and it will be even more difficult. This Government and the Constable, via the Parish of St. Helier and Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, is already committed to enhancing active travel routes and developing safe paths for walking and cycling and then stand up in this Assembly and say: "Well, you are never going to get anybody walking anywhere." So which is it? What are we being sold by the Constable of St. Helier, who has been a Constable for a long time, to make these changes to St. Helier? So you either believe in that or you do not. I say with proper support, infrastructure and planning, a new town primary school can be a flagship model for sustainable school transport. Many of the children who go to St. Luke's or Springfield already walk to school and it is the traffic around those areas which is the risk to them and not the traffic taking them to school. If we take them away from that, our children in St. Helier might have the opportunity to walk through a park to school and then play on green space when they have their playtime. Do they not deserve that, like country children do? I think they do and I think across this Assembly that would be agreed. I have already talked about busing our children out causing the chaos of transporting hundreds of children to Parish schools at different times plus breaking up friendship groups at the end of the day and not allowing play and that nonsensical idea that that might work. I urge Members to reject parts (c) and (d) and stay on course towards the smart inclusive future for St. Helier. I am finishing and I thank the Assembly for giving me time because this is really important to me, and I will just speak once, get on with it and that is all I can do, but I will try to do that. Part (c) suggests that Jersey's site might be of more financial benefit as parkland rather than educational infrastructure. They are not triple questions that we have here. They deserve some thought and responses. Building a new school is expensive. It is more expensive after the delay that we have had and if we delay it any further, it will become even more expensive. If it had been built by now, we would have spent the money and we would be looking at what else we can do with the money as we move forward because money was put aside when we changed the Bridging Island Plan. The so-called refurbishment repair of ageing schools is not a matter of fresh paint and optimism. It is a long-term financial drain of piecemeal fixes, accessibility compromises, as I have just mentioned, and diminished educational outcomes. We are spending thousands upon thousands in just keeping our schools running in inadequate buildings with no green space for our children. In fact, that is not true. There is a piece of green space outside Springfield School. It is about the size of the centre of this room as I walk past it ever Monday when I go into the school. I still read with children there about my political career, which I have been doing for about 5 or 6 years, so that is why I know the way the school is structured. We read in a corridor, by the way. There is no space to read anywhere else. We read in the corridor and

then when P.E. (physical education) ends and they walk past, we have to stop for 5 minutes while all of the children move about. Is that what we want for our children? I do not think it is. Apart from the undeniable benefit for mental health, biodiversity and aesthetics, they are rarely economic engines. A new primary school on the other hand supports working families, enables parents to contribute to the economy, creates jobs and enhances the desirability of nearby housing. It anchors a community. The global outlook is uncertain but what is certain is the cost of any more delay and this delay, which is designed to stop all of these projects ending, is certainly ultimate in that. I am going to cut short some of the speeches. I am probably losing some of you here. Parks are vital for children's play and for older Islanders for cohesion. The romanticism of a park reminiscent to Central Park or Parc de la Tête d'or must not cloud our judgment. Jersey is not in New York nor Lyon. I used to live by Central Park in East Ham or as I called it East Ham on Thames. It was a beautiful park but it was not Central Park in New York. It may well have been just as dangerous but that is not necessarily true. So we are a compact Island with finite land and pressing needs and one of these needs is a modern and accessible primary school in the heart of St. Helier to deal with all of the issues that I talked about earlier we have just exposed for a report that we commissioned this year. We know what we have to do and we know the facilities we need to do them in and we are not doing that at the moment for a significant number of children in the centre of St. Helier. The cost of inaction is not just financial. It is social, educational and generational. The notion that the Jersey site must be reserved exclusively for park extension ignores the creative potential of integrated planning that I spoke about earlier. I look at the Minister for Infrastructure, and I know that is what he desperately wanted our schools to be to begin with because it would be a lot easier to go through the process we are going through at the moment to get those schools open. A new school and green space are not mutually exclusive. With thoughtful design we can deliver both. A school that opens on to a park, a park that serves as a classroom and a community hub that bridges generations. Spaces available to the local community built in from the design stages. A genuine community space in a densely populated area of town. The call for a fully objective and comprehensive reconsideration is euphemism for delay and cancellation. I am stunned that the Constable of St. Helier will suggest that we do not build the youth facility that is so desperately needed and we are getting underway with and is started for the first time. There is something slightly counterintuitive about saying extend the park and leaving a whopping great big building on it because you are not extending the park. You are leaving a whopping great big building on it and I think that is an example of the complete lack of co-ordination of the argument here, but let us be more positive. So we have the date, we have the need and we have the opportunity. I urge the Members of this Assembly to let us not squander this. I urge you to reject the final argument in supporting this proposition and all parts of this proposition. Let us build a future for St. Helier that balances beauty with purpose and vision with action. Let us give our children and our people in St. Helier the community that they need, the spaces that they need and the opportunities well into the future.

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

The Connétable, in his speech, raised some points about the youth centre and I feel that, as I have political responsibility for that project, I would like to respond to some of the issues that he raised. First and foremost, he asked: "What other sites were considered?" Secondly, he asked: "How were children and young people engaged with?" Thirdly, he asked whether planning permission has been applied for. So of course all of this ultimately is going to be subject to us approving the new youth centre in the Budget debate in December. But to answer the questions that the Connétable raised, there were indeed 11 sites that were extensively reviewed, we engaged with young people to gauge their opinion and also working alongside C.Y.P.E.S. and Property Holdings, we have scored them against the matrix to find the ultimate winner. The sites that were seriously considered were La Motte Street Centre, the ambulance station, J.S.P.C.A. (Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), the Le Bas site, The Bridge, Harrigan House, Gas Works showroom, Nelson Street car park, obviously the brewery site, Rouge Bouillon and Springfield.

[15:30]

The only other site that came anywhere close to the ultimate choice was Paragon House and Nelson Street, and of course the one thing that we did not want to do is upset the Honorary Police and so that was quickly shelved, which led us on to the ultimate site of Ann Street, so young people were intensively engaged with. Plans were shown and put before them to gauge where they would like to see a youth centre, how it could be safely accessible, what hours they would like it open and we have got serious plans that have been worked out. Planning has been applied for and approved and, ultimately, the building, although it will not open until 2028, will have capacity for 100 children and young people at a time. When we consider that multiple sessions will be conducted over any one day, we would see upwards of 300 or 400 young people in that youth centre at a time. When we have got over 1,050 flats being built in that immediate area, there is a pressing need to get something which is suitable and is of the right stature and class for the people in that area to make sure that we keep them engaged in productive activities and keep them off the streets basically and away from their digital devices for a short period of time. So, yes, ultimately, it will be subject to approval in the Budget and that will come back. But turning to the school itself on the gas site, as the Minister has already alluded to, this will be a community hub. Another piece of my work is the play strategy and I was really encouraged to hear that any play facilities on that school site will be open and accessible to children and young people outside of school hours. Gone are the ways of closing up school gates in the early afternoon and not letting children and young people enjoy those facilities. It will be at the heart of our community and it will service children and young people at weekends and at all times after school, so I equally would urge Members to reject all parts of this proposition.

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

I will be supporting the Constable of St. Helier and, with the benefit of some remarks that I have thought long and hard about, both in discussion with the Constable and having had the significant benefit of attending the Town Park debate that was held in the St. Helier Town Hall. I am supporting the Constable of St. Helier, and I speak both with heart and head about the future of our town, which includes Georgetown, and the future of green spaces and our schools. How appropriate it is that we are discussing schools after the statement from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, as made earlier. This debate, if I may say, is more than just about a line on a map or a planning policy document, more than a Bridging Island Plan decision that was a Bridging Island Plan for 5 years and is now expired, but is still the policy. This debate is about schools and young lives. I would remind Members that one of those schools which the Constable has kindly taken in St. Saviour, St. Luke's School, is a school that sits at the very heart of a community. It exists not least of which because the late, great T.B. Davis was educated at St. Luke's. He would have walked the corridors of a St. Luke's primary school. He was put in the cellar of a house that is now in the Howard Davis Park in honour of his son. T.B. Davis vowed that he would create a park and build it and he did. So I would ask Members both politely and respectfully what would T.B. Davis say today if we were here telling him that the school that shaped him and everything he achieved in his life and was the school that inspired him, we going to close it and uproot it? Would he recognise progress in demolishing a living school to create what is described as a pocket park or would he shake his head and wonder how a Government in 2025 could think of closing a school in order to create a green space and say that that represents enlightened planning? The proposal before us as advanced in proposition to the Constable's proposal I do not think is the vision that I would want the legacy to be. It is confusion dressed as regeneration, if I may say. We are told of course that St. Luke's is unfit for purpose. I accept that but I do not accept, having listened to some of the parents as the Constable spoke in his opening remarks, and speaking to some of the children, that is a statement of fact that cannot be dealt with. It seems to me that it is a statement of convenience and not of evidence, if I may say. The school buildings are old, yes, but they are also loved and they are part of a community and that person is not the only one that said that shutting St. Luke's school was like ripping out the heart of Georgetown. I must say that I have learnt that those people that make that view known and have

expressed it to me are then of course not 100 per cent because some wanted a new school on the Town Park but I think that the people that want their school to stay need to be heard. Communities are not about statistics on a spreadsheet. It is not just about funding. Schools, as we know, are living organisms. Once you take away their beating heart, they do not recover. There are examples all over the place of schools that have been shut, and they are controversial when they are shut, and quite right too. I say it cannot be beyond the collective imagination of this Assembly and the Council of Ministers to find better and, as said by Deputy Warr and the Constable, better financial alternatives too. The school at St. Luke's grew originally I think out of the church buildings. The States bought it in 1981, as best as I can see, and then the vicarage was also bought. They have been modernised and renewed and it is the school that we find today which is not fit for purpose but why write it off? I also want to be absolutely clear that I support the ambition of the Constable of St. Helier despite the fact that I was on the other side of the ring-binder debate because I wanted an underground carpark, and only because I wanted an underground car park, which the Constable accepts. I would have wanted an underground car park with a park on top so let not their Reform foot-stamping be any indication of my lack of support for a town park because I do agree with it. It is just I would have preferred having a car park underneath, but the park is important. I would like also to say that it is really important that that Town Park is extended. It is a breathing room for lungs that are going to be increasingly less functional because as far as I know - and I can tell from the statistics - it is going to be, if it is not already, one of the densest urban environments in St. Helier. I believe that some of the arguments were advanced when the Planning Committee considered the applications for some of the very much needed and very well-constructed apartments in the area, of which not all have been built yet. They were given an easier passage by the Planning Committee and the officials because of the knowledge that there was and a commitment given at the time to the extending of the Town Park. Members also know that there is undoubted changing minds in terms of the importance of parks and spaces. I do not need to remind the Assembly that Andium has a prohibition on balls in many of their living spaces. You cannot kick a ball and you cannot run about in some of Andium's homes, as brilliantly internally created as they are, and the idea that the people of St. Helier are not going to have that green space as the density will increase in years to come is I think ... well, Members can think of it themselves. Think about 10 years' time when there is a school there and there are all the other apartments around them and there is no green land, and there could have been. It is an opportunity and therefore maximum effort should be made to make best use of resources of which green resources are absolutely at a premium. It seems to me that to say no to the Constable's reasonable request to reconsider this and to consider other options is illogical in the extreme. I would call it, frankly, bonkers. I have also served as a Deputy. I know Members do not like me talking about the past but I have to. I have been a Deputy of St. Helier No. 3 with Rouge Bouillon and I know that that school is in a very difficult situation, albeit delivering brilliant education with such a small amount of open space which, given the amount of children with certain needs, et cetera, in that particular school - I am not sure what the proportion is to others - it is now vital that Rouge Bouillon gets some love and attention. As new schools such as St. Martin's, which is such a wonderful place to go to, as many of the country Parish schools, I believe love can be given to Rouge Bouillon. I do not know where the plan went. As the officeholder that had to deal with the police station and moving that, I thought that the police station site was going to be used to extend Rouge Bouillon School, and if it is not, what happened to that idea? If it is possible to move the police station, it is possible to move the fire service, and if the Minister for Infrastructure wants any clues, then he may want to reconsider his position in relation to the fuel farm and where to put the fire engines. They would be quite near to the police station if you could do away with the blast requirement at La Collette. So, in other words, the fire station and fire engines could be relocated much more easily and therefore we could envision a brilliantly regenerated Rouge Bouillon School. I am asking the Council of Ministers, are they really abandoning all the other options? Are they really saying that Rouge Bouillon and St. Luke's cannot be extended? Are they really saying the fire service is going to be stuck where it is? There was supposed to be a temporary solution, as best as I recall. It seems to me

that we are choosing the path of least resistance and not the path of greatest wisdom where we are asked to accept what is a suboptimal solution that appears to tell parishioners to smile politely where their schools disappear in the name of progress. It is not progress. It is an abdication of imagination. This Assembly has a duty, I would suggest, to respect the fiscal prudence of those past people who have contributed. I am not suggesting that they should be churchgoers but maybe they should attend St. Luke's Church and see what the situation there is with their community centre and their buildings that are in sad need of improvement. Schools are about communities and a school is a community that survives adversity and once you have severed that link you create displacement, ruthlessness and loss. As for the idea that you are going to bus all these children from Georgetown into the town park school, well, I have never heard of anything so crazy. In the catchment area of St. Luke's School, as I have sat and watched it in the area of St. Luke's, those families and those children are going to have to be put in a car and dropped off, as he has rightly said, in the densest area of town. I mean really? Do Members not have any understanding? Can they not imagine what sort of a nightmare we are going to create? I also find it slightly ironic that the man that gave us the Howard Davis Park is having the school that he attended bulldozed and being replaced by another park that is massively inferior to the one that he vowed to create and we all enjoy. The Deputy of St. Saviour does not have to talk about his park because we have got one, it is brilliant, it is under-used and it is brilliantly located next to a school.

[15:45]

Yes, there is a busy road but solutions can be found. It is about renewal and that is town renewal that of course extends not into greater St. Helier but into St. Saviour. The park extension, going back to that, as I said, was one of the justifications. It was a Bridging Island Plan I heard when I was out of this Assembly. It was a Bridging Island Plan that ended this year and I am sorry, but it needs to be looked at again. I ask Members to really consider are we going to send a message to say: "No, we cannot do anything with St Luke's and Rouge Bouillon for the reasons I have said. No, the only thing is just to put concrete on the Gas Works site that was promised as an extension." I commend the Constable. I absolutely commend the volunteering of all those Town Park supporters' groups who have championed this without much thanks often and without seemingly support from the Council of Ministers at various different times. But they are right and they need our continued support and they will get it from this Deputy of St. Saviour because I believe in the Town Park extension. It was vital then and it is even more vital now and into the future. I say to Members please support the Constable of St. Helier. He has been quite right and he has been consistent.

9.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

What a way to rewrite history. So the Member who voted against having a Town Park in 2009 - which he has admitted - he voted against the £10 million for the park, but he wants a larger park now. It is strange how politics can change in the space of 16 or 17 years. I am looking back at the vote because let us remind ourselves of what the genesis of this was. It was not a Constable Crowcroft proposition back at the time - although he did support it, to be fair - it was because Deputy Southern sought to bring an amendment to a Budget and it succeeded in the most remarkable of ways. If we look back at who is still in the Assembly from that vote, by my count there are 5 Members still here who voted for it, including the Constable of St. Helier, then we have Constable Mezbourian as she is now, and I think was then, Deputy Southern and myself. Have I missed anybody? Deputy Labey; how could I forget Deputy Labey? It is because she sits behind me, that is why. So those are the 5 Members who voted for the Town Park. I should say that any one of us of course can say that the Town Park happened because of us, because it was won by one vote and we could say that if we had not voted for it we would have no Town Park. That is both factual and probably slightly misleading but I will leave it at that. Then I think there were 4 current Members who voted against Deputy Southern's amendment which gave us the money for the Town Park, the £10 million, who was Deputy Gorst, the Constable of St. Saviour, Deputy Ozouf, who I have already mentioned, and who

have I missed, the Constable of St. Brelade, so it is 4 or 5:4 in other words. I hope that is no reflection of anyone's support for the idea of the Town Park. So I speak very much as somebody who was a supporter of the Town Park, and I would like to just bring a different perspective on it. Because we have already gone back further in time, Deputy Ozouf gave us a story about T.B. Davis; what would T.B. Davis think about what is being proposed here. Well, let us look at a little story about T.B. Davis. We know that his big legacy to the Island was Howard Davis Park in memory of his son. There is a good website which I have referred to before called Jerripedia; it is basically Jersey's equivalent of Wikipedia. It has got lots of interesting Jersey history on it and most of it is correct; there are a few errors but you cannot always be perfect. The following is a story, Sir, that was in one of your political forebear's memoirs, the former Bailiff Alexander Coutanche - if I can call him a political forebear; former Bailiff is probably more accurate. He did need to be political during the war in a way that I suppose not any Bailiff has needed to be since. He said that as a boy Davis was in the choir at St. Luke's Church and one Sunday he went looking for conkers with a friend, Walter Braithwaite in the gardens of the neighbouring house at Plaisance, as it was called. They were caught by the owner, who was another distinguished gentleman called Jurat Joshua George Falle, who let Braithwaite go with a letter asking his mother to punish him suitably. I am wondering if that was a great plan; I would not have delivered that letter to my mother necessarily **[Laughter]** so he showed some confidence there. I think I would have forgotten the letter. But he confined Davis to his cellar to clean his boots while he had lunch. When Davis was eventually freed, we are told in this write up, that he had a colourful vocabulary for a young boy, he told the Jurat: "One day I shall be a rich man and I shall buy your house", there is an ellipsis there, I am not sure if we are supposed to put an adjective in, "and I shall pull it down stone by stone." True to his word, T.B. Davis made his fortune overseas, returned to Jersey a very rich man and bought Plaisance from Lily Falle, the Jurat's daughter. He had to leave for South Africa but instructed his friend, Coutanche, to ensure that the building was demolished and not a stone left standing. It does say on his return he was less pleased with the result because he realised that they had left the cellar in which he was imprisoned. So when it comes to what would T.B. Davis do, he obviously does not have any qualms about ripping down houses and building something else in its place, or in fact maybe building nothing at all. So he does have form for that, even if he did have a grudge. I am not suggesting he would necessarily have any grudge against his own school, but I like to think that T.B. Davis, as a businessman and somebody who was a go-getter and realised that the world did not stay still, would probably accept the fact that the world does need to move on. He would probably be more concerned about the ethos and the intangible community of St. Luke's School rather than necessarily the bricks and mortar of the school, in the same way that I am as a proud former student all of La Moye, Les Quennevais and Hautlieu Schools. Two of those schools do not exist anymore; Hautlieu School does not exist in the old brick format that it used to be where the current Oakfield is. It has got a brand spanking new school behind it and it has also got an excellent sports facility there, which we never had as youngsters. I remember as an aspiring but not especially talented basketball player - the height helps but not much else - we had a tiny little gymnasium in which you could barely get 3 by 3 teams when you should be able to have a 5 on 5 session with adequate room for substitutes. We had none of that luxury. I am not complaining; I think we had an adequate education. It was the same at Les Quennevais; it was already overcrowded by the time I was there in 1990, and that has been converted - you could argue - into a suboptimal but necessary hospital arrangement at the moment. I will get back to that shortly. Even at La Moye School, I am sure I have memories of being in portacabins and if that is not true it was certainly the case when I was at Les Quennevais School where we had many of our French and maths lessons in portacabins while there was structural work going on. I suspect it must have had a disruption on us, and if not on us certainly on the teachers who were having to mill around, move classroom to classroom, and deal with leaking roofs. That is hopefully not something the students have to do in the new Les Quennevais or Hautlieu Schools. So good luck to them and I hope it helps with the education, but of course education is not just about the buildings, it is about the community of the school and I think that is much more important. I did go up to La

Passerelle - I think I mentioned it last time we had the debate - and I was frankly both heartened by the commitment of staff but also shocked by the conditions in which staff and pupils up there have to live and go to school in. I have mentioned it before - there was a strip of astroturf. That is how we are treating some of the most vulnerable students in our community. This idea that we are going to remove a community from St. Luke's, well, if you live equidistantly between St. Luke's and the Town Park it is not going to make any difference if you are in that catchment area. If you happen to live a little bit closer to the Town Park than you do to St. Luke's, and you currently go to St. Luke's, then that is going to be better for you. There will be winners and losers. I would like to have heard the Constable of St. Helier saying: "We will make sure that we encourage and roll out walking and cycling routes to be able to get to school." Ultimately, if it is easier to get to school walking than it is in a car that is what parents and children will do. The last thing I will say in this debate is let us bring this a bit closer to home because we are dealing with constituency issues, it is absolutely natural ... and I do not criticise, by the way, the Constable of St. Helier for maintaining this. I think he is being consistent in his desire to have a larger Town Park than is currently present. I think other Members have not. I think other Members, and certainly Members of the previous Council of Ministers, have flip-flopped on this issue, and I think one would question exactly why they might have done that. I do not think the facts have substantially changed, as some former Members might have suggested. So I look at what my position might have been if this was in Les Quennevais, and at the time when the previous Governments were looking to move the outpatients up to Les Quennevais into what is now the Enid Quenault Centre - which I think has been quite well received by the local community, not just in St. Brelade but it is convenient for so many reasons. Any one of us could have started a campaign going around knocking on doors saying: "Do you think we should have a park here?" I think a lot of the residents would have said: "Yes, that is a great idea. I know we have got Les Quennevais playing fields but why do we not try and maybe even extend Les Quennevais playing fields on to this area, because it does abut it just across the cycle track? We could make that into another sporting facility or just a park." If we had have got momentum for that, I think we could have a really good campaign, we would say: "What a terrible Government that we have got; they do not want you to have a park." Of course, the idea of the park was never on the table in the first place so it is the counterfactual that I would have been conjuring out of a hat, dangling in front of them and saying: "You are not going to get your park now; that is terrible." In fact the needs of the wider community I think quite rightly were put first. What are the primary needs? The primary need here is that there is a facilities crisis, I would say, going on when it comes to primary schools in St. Helier and it is something which many Governments now, and going back a couple, have also realised and that they would have wanted to deliver by now. So the needs of the wider community must outweigh, I think, the nice-to-haves - and I do not mind putting it in that sense - of a slightly larger park, because we do not even know what size park we are talking about. We have got a suggestion that something else should now go on there; not a school but maybe a community facility, which would still not be a park. We have got others campaigning that it must absolutely all be green space. The last thing I have to object to is that I have no problem with people campaigning openhandedly and honestly about saying we need a new park, but when I saw the leaflet that went around saying what Government is proposing here is a luxury new school, I am sorry, that is just one step too far. It is not a luxury new school, it is just a fit-for-purpose modern school with all the equipment that you need, and for me it just feels slightly distasteful that that kind of campaign should have taken place when I think we needed a much more honest and measured debate about what could go where. The other counterfactual is, if I were also representing that area, I would be very interested to say to the people around Springfield who live there in one of the most congested parts of St. Helier: "You have got the opportunity of having a park now." Some might call it, disparagingly, a pocket park. What we have got an opportunity to create there - and perhaps I have heard 2 possibilities - is that there would be decent green lungs in that part of St. Helier, and I think that would be vastly appreciated by those who live in the area. It is not getting rid of the Millennium Town Park, and I would certainly be protesting if that were the case. It is about having a community facility called a

school, where children can have access to the park, and also creating green space in other parts of St. Helier. I am also happy to reject this proposition and let the Council of Ministers and future Governments get on with the building of this.

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

The Constable may have an uphill task but it seems to me that the Assembly should not dismiss this proposal out of hand. It is difficult to stop a bus that has started to move, and the question it seems to me is really whether anything substantial has changed from the time when the decision to construct a school was first made.

[16:00]

It seems to me at least arguable that things have changed. We are talking about something that is at root a planning issue: how should land in St. Helier be used in the best interests of the community? It is not really an educational issue except to the extent that it is a question of how best to provide educational facilities. Has anything changed? Well, the first thing that has obviously changed, it seems to me, is that our financial situation is not as rosy as it once was. I forget the word that the chief executive ... precarious, thank you. Precarious was the word used by the chief executive and it is a theme I think which will be taken up to a very large extent when we come to debate the Budget later in the year. Is there a more economical way of achieving the ends that we want to achieve? The second thing which arguably it seems to me has changed is the demographic issue. No one doubts that there have been demographic changes. Pupil numbers in 2024 to 2025 in primary schools are 14,762 and in 15 years' time they will be 12,045. That is 2,700 fewer primary school children. That must have a huge effect upon the need for a new and expensive primary school. The department says that schools will then be at 72 per cent of capacity. That is an awful lot of empty desks; nearly a quarter, in fact. So do we really need or is it in the best interests of our community, given our financial situation, that we should be contemplating the spending of tens of millions of pounds on a new school when it might be possible to reconfigure and modernise the existing schools; not least for the reason in the case of St. Luke's given by Deputy Ozouf. Thirdly, the Constable refers to and seeks an analysis of the health and other benefits of the existing Town Park. That is something, it is true, that we do not have at the moment. The Council of Ministers pooh-poohed the suggestion that that was a good idea in 5 lines; 2 of those lines referred to the proposed new park on the Springfield School site, but that area is only 5,400 square metres. That is 70 yards long, 75 yards wide. That is not, in my view, a park; that is a medium sized garden. The Constable is surely right that this is a once-in-a-century opportunity to create a real park in St. Helier. Howard Davis Park is 40,000 square metres but that is on the wrong side of town for those living in the vicinity of Springfield. We should be, it seems to me, absolutely sure before we abandon the opportunity of creating a substantial new park in this part of St. Helier that it is the right decision. We do need to look at the demographics in the context of a new school. We need to balance up the benefits, ecological, environmental, social and so on of a real park in this crowded part of St. Helier against the need for a new school. It seems to me that before we press ahead the case should be proved beyond all reasonable doubt. I think that the Constable has made a compelling case for a pause for reflection and for investigation, as suggested in his proposition.

9.1.6 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

There is a lot being said on this matter but the facts are that there are people living near the Millenium Park and others who use it who would like to see it extended, and that schools - Springfield, St. Luke's and La Passerelle - are not adequate in terms of space and facilities, and anyone who does not agree with this please go to the schools and speak to the headteachers. They are very well-run schools and there will be parents who do not want change, but these schools do not have adequate facilities and that is not fair on the children. The area at the end of the park is the intended site for a new school, and no other suitable site has been found. Those are the facts. Then we have this proposition

from the Constable of St. Helier to reconsider the town school site. I did wonder if this proposition is being brought now as a delaying tactic so that no decision is made on this controversial issue until after the next election. It is not easy to vote for something in your district when there is a very active campaigning group set against the matter, but we, as States Members, are here to make decisions, no matter how difficult. The public has little respect for us when we put off making a decision. We had this ongoing with the new hospital for a long time and here we go again it seems. I do though have respect for the campaigners who want to extend the park, and I fully understand their desire for a larger park, but the fact is there is no alternative site for this town school. I am fortunate to have been in the position of chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel for this Government and for the last Government. During the last Government all potential school sites were explored with the outcome being that the Gas Place site was the chosen site for the new school. The intention of this school is to be a community school, that is, it will be open to members of the public for other uses. There will be a walkway through to St. Saviour's Road. There will be a 3G pitch for use by the community. The siting of a new school here does not mean that people in the area will not be able to access the site. The families who live in the area will also be able to access the site outside of school hours for activities, classes and sports. I will do everything that I can to ensure that this new school building is open to residents for community uses. I hope that the campaigners for a larger park will understand that they will not lose all access to this space. We have also had some concerns raised by campaigners about the size of proposed school. We already have d'Auvergne Primary School, which has more than 450 pupils and is a very effective large primary school with space and suitable facilities, which is what the new school will be offering. The current plans also include new parks at Springfield and Le Bas Centre. Smaller parks are a feature of many towns and anyone who has spent much time in France or Spain will be familiar with the lovely pockets of greenery dotted throughout the towns. The Constable of St. Helier referred in his speech to the new youth centre, and I have to respond to that. The new youth centre, which will include the Youth Enquiry Service, is a great project. I have been around the building with the youth service leader, the Director of Young People's Services, with the C.E.H.A. (Children, Education and Home Affairs) panel members, and with Deputy Ferey. I have examined the plans and seen the preliminary clearance works underway. It is going to be bring a huge uplift to the area, and I would say that this is one of the very best projects that has got underway during this Government. I cannot understand how any States Member who has the best interests of the Island's children at heart would not support the new town youth centre. I also cannot understand why the Constable of St. Helier is not hugely supportive of this centre and was also not already familiar with all the town schools, but had to be invited by the Minister for Education. I do not know what to say really about the suggestion in the report to the proposition that children could be bused out to country schools. It is a totally impractical idea. There is no way that children between the ages of 3 and 11 could be safely dropped to the bottom of a block of flats, no way that separate buses could be used to move these children around to after school clubs and then back to town, and even if it did occur it would be really bad for little children to be spending so much time on a bus. All of us here who had their secondary school children use the school bus service know how long and tiring these trips can be, and that is not okay for a 4 year-old, for example. Families who live in the area will be able to walk their children to school, just as my grandchildren walked to Springfield School when they were pupils there. I hope we can move forward and discard this proposition. We need a new school which is designed with good facilities for town children, including a much greater population of children with special educational needs. We have a suitable site available which can also be used for the community, so I urge Members to vote against this proposition.

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

I am pleased to follow the previous speaker who made a very clear and eloquent speech and raised many good points, so I can assure Members that I will do my very best on my feet to make my points clearer and not to repeat hers. Essentially Deputy Bailhache - with all due respect - mentioned in his

speech that a pause was required in order to search for a better solution. Well, I am afraid the problem with pausing to search for a better solution is that pause can last an incredibly long time. We know from experience that it took us 25 years to deliver a police station; 25 years. Rouge Bouillon School has been on the list for reprioritisation and redevelopment for almost 20 years. There are many, many other sites; of course the hospital being one of them. Indeed I have to remind Members that regrettably the Constable does have some form on protecting parks and a constituent recently pointed out to me that the People's Park in St. Helier may indeed have the greatest cost per square foot of any park in the world because, they claimed, that has cost us at least £600 million at the current rate, given that the cost of the hospital that was proposed for People's Park was less than £300 million and now we are seeing the alternative costing considerably more. So we have to be very mindful of what we wish for. As the Minister has already pointed out, the cost of delivering this school has already increased considerably and it would be unwise to put ourselves in a place where we are increasing costs further for much-needed facilities for our community.

[16:15]

I do also want to make a point about demographic change and the decline in our birth rate. We are seeking, quite rightly, policy reforms to encourage childcare, to support families so that they can thrive in the Island, with the very aim of turning around that demographic decline and ensuring that families can grow up and live and thrive in our Island community. So we should not give up on them. We should be planning schools to accept a future demographic that will go through those schools because education will be the key for protecting our future generation. If we cannot focus on education for that future generation then I am afraid we really should not be here at all. Much has been made of the importance of green space, and I absolutely understand that importance of green space, but we also have a Bridging Island Plan that made a requirement for green space to be within walking distance of people's homes. Well, there are people living in parts of St. Helier, many of them are children of Springfield School, of whom 85 per cent have no access to open space when they go home in the evening, whether that be public or private open space. It is simply not acceptable. Those children from Springfield who are going to parts of St. Saviour or parts of northern St. Helier have not got the ability at their age to walk to the Millennium Park and enjoy it, whether or not it is extended. We should be providing them with those smaller parks within the vicinity of their homes that we put in our Budget in 2022 when Members supported the creation of a park on the Springfield School site, as well as the Le Bas Centre, to encourage the greater greening of our town and improving the environment for all St. Helier residents and those on the St. Saviour border. We have to prioritise and look at the holistic approach of our built-up areas. As tempting as it is to support the Constable in his campaign, I sincerely hope that Members will not support him, although I will perhaps support part (d) which will, I believe, be a sensible thing to monitor the air quality in the environment around those schools, something that I do believe was agreed by the Assembly some long time ago.

9.1.8 Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

I rise to support the chairperson of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, of which I am a member. We have visited all these schools, as my colleagues have as well, and I would go one step further than the Connétable of St. Helier by saying that the principal and the staff at St. Luke's School are positively heroic. I say that because they are struggling on a daily basis with the facility they have. I am somewhat confused: it has been suggested in this Assembly that that school is to be bulldozed. I do not think it is, and I will be corrected if I am wrong, but I believe it is going to be repurposed for an educational facility. I think the scaremongering around St. Luke's being demolished is not correct, but that is something that I think should be mentioned in this Chamber. I too have seen the facilities at Springfield. They are very dated and I think - as the previous speaker has said - it would make an excellent pocket park near to La Coie, near to the play.com site. I think the Le Bas Centre would serve the Mayfair site and possibly the Apollo site when it is built, the Hotel

Rex site and indeed all of the apartments at Woodville Avenue. There are areas there which are very dense indeed when it comes to new flats, so I will not be supporting this recommendation at all. I am also a member of the Planning Committee and we have already made provision within the Bridging Island Plan for a school on this site.

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

I am standing up in support of the Connétable of St. Helier. I was on social media and I wanted to hear the views of my constituents, but also the views of the constituents of St. Helier South and Central. It was very clear when I was engaging with people that they were antithetical about the development of a school. What they really want to see is the extension of Millennium Park. For many young families they are already struggling. The space at Millennium Park is relatively small, in actual fact, when you are looking at the population who live in a very densely populated area. When I look at the north of St. Helier and also some of the rural Parishes, we have got plenty of space, but of course people in St. Helier Central and South, they do not really have much green space. I think they deserve more green space; I really do. I know people have touched on the lowering birth rate, and of course it is a problem, but we also need to be more pragmatic about this. We need to make sure that we right-size education to meet the needs of our population. It potentially could mean that there will be less primary schools in the future. Potentially our classrooms could be smaller. That is just the way it is. But if we are going to maintain the buildings that we have and maintain the level of operational costs then no wonder why we have an issue with public sector spend. We need to be really pragmatic about this. What we need to be doing is we need to be looking at the trends in population and population growth, and in some areas where growth is not seen. Because speaking to many parents in particular who wanted to speak to me about the Millennium Park development, they are more concerned about the traffic and the impact that traffic will have in the mornings. In St. Helier and in St. Saviour there are many schools, especially when we are looking at the east side of St. Helier as well. I have often in the past travelled at 8.15 a.m. and I am stuck in traffic, I remember all of those years ago, when I was heading to college. The reason being is because there are so many schools in the area and I think that problem is only going to get worse, I do not think it is going to get any better anytime soon. So I thought I would just stand up as a St. Helier Deputy. Of course I am in St. Helier North, it is not within my constituency, but I feel that I do owe it to my Connétable that I support him, and I also support my constituents who have made it very clear to me that they do not want the school to proceed.

9.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I start by saying that of course an extension to the Town Park would be great, and of course it would be a better park as a result. If we were just deciding whether or not to extend the park with nothing else at stake then it would be easy to support it. But that is not the decision we are being asked to make. It is also the case that we need a new school; we have a pressing need. Deputy Bailhache raised the question of whether something fundamental has changed since the decision was taken, and I do not think anything fundamental has changed. The financial situation has changed, Deputy Bailhache suggested, but the analysis of which option offers the best value has already been done many, many times. Abandoning the new school will not be a more financially prudent option. While reviews are underway, costs will increase. What will happen if the review decides - as every review has done - that the best option is the Gas Place site? Then we would have added enormously to expense for no reason. On demographics, Deputy Moore pointed out that we are trying to reverse those demographic trends. I would also point out that we do not know how the future will turn out in demographics. In my view it is a racing certainty that population will increase in the future. Indeed, in the last couple of years our population rose by 350 in 2023 and 510 last year. That population rise was driven by net immigration but guess what, many of those people coming to the Island have children or will have children when they are here. The headroom that exists, as detailed in the Minister's report on future numbers, is not so great that we could complacently say we do not

need that extra capacity. The best that is being offered, it seems to me, by the opponents of this school and the desire to postpone decisions, is there might be better alternatives. There might be better alternatives. Perhaps refurbishment of existing schools, perhaps a new school at one of a number of sites, extend existing schools, move the fire station. None of it is real. It is all possibilities. Tantalising options but they do not exist. They may come to something, they may not. It is too easy to casually suggest tantalising options in response to a concrete proposal. I can knock one of those on the head from my experience in Government, which was the fire service. I think Deputy Ozouf argued that it is easy to move; no, it is not easy to move. Loads of work has been done on this. It is, in the parlance, a very bad neighbour. People do not want fire services next to them. A huge amount of work was done by the Government of which I was a Member to try and find alternatives. It is a difficult thing to do. Just wafting these ideas around as alternatives is not going to solve the problem. The question of traffic; all I would say here is that there is traffic around schools currently. There will be traffic around a new school. It is a redistribution of traffic. The question of the longer-term solution of dealing with that will come when we take sustainable transport seriously. Create safe, good routes to schools for people to walk and cycle and they will use them. One of the things that gives me greatest pleasure as I cycle to town every day along the Railway Walk is seeing how many people cycle and walk to my old school at La Moye. I pass them in both directions, coming up from Corbière and down from Les Quennevais. That is because there is a brilliant safe route for people to use. We are lucky out west. If we want to do that in town we can do it. We can do it, and I will support anyone who tries to do that. The Government of which I was a Member was working on various routes that would have gone through town, that would have connected up the hill schools, down into town and so on. I do not know what has happened to that but the point is that we can do that. Yes, the Constable can reply, but it has not happened yet. Well, he is an Assistant Minister in this Government. These possibilities do exist and I would like to see them brought, and I will certainly stand shoulder to shoulder with the Constable should he be proposing those kind of measures. The question of pocket parks, which is divisive I think. I lived in London for 20 years; I enjoyed large parks and small parks - some very small parks - one very small park of Marylebone High Street that I used to travel some distance to get to, to enjoy because it was such a pleasant little spot under shaded trees and so on. Pocket parks can be beautiful sanctuaries as well as large parks can be. I would say that, yes, it does depend, small parks are harder sometimes to control behaviours and so on going on in them, but not necessarily. As I say, I went to a pocket park that was a very, very good park. I would also say that even big parks can be relatively hard to maintain in good order and with good behaviour. Winston Churchill Park in my Parish often pops up during the summer on social media as problems with behaviours and so on. So I think pocket parks are a reasonable and good option and, as other Members have said, offer the opportunity for people who have currently very little access to open space to have open space very near to their homes. I am not going to pretend that pocket parks compensate on a one-for-one basis for the lack of an extension of the Millennium Park, but that is not the whole story. What we are talking about is pocket parks plus a desperately needed new school, a school will be delivered much more quickly than any of the alternative sites which do not even exist as concrete proposals. We cannot have everything we want here, there is a choice to be made. But I think finally the fundamental point that I want to make in arguing against this proposition, the fundamental issue for me is that we are so bad at sticking to decisions. It is something that struck me before we stood for election. It was something I kind of I suppose vowed to try and do something about.

[16:30]

Here we are again with a process that has delivered a result, that has led difficult decisions, difficult debates in the Government of which I was a Member, but has led to a resolution. Alternatives were debated at the time and yet here we are again considering tantalising options that might exist in some future world, against something that we have committed to. The hospital is of course the case study par excellence. There has to come a point when we accept something that we do not like, is something

that has already been decided, and it is not in the Island's best interests to keep relitigating. For my own part, as far as this matter is concerned, I think that point has been reached. I think the public despair at our inability to get things done. There is no perfect solution here. Of course an extension to the Millennium Park is an intoxicating idea; it would be wonderful. But let us imagine that we go back to the drawing board. Let us say this proposition passes. Let us say we get another long delay. Let us say we get more analysis, and of course in the meantime an election with another chance to reverse the decision in the other direction again. I think that is not a sensible course of action and, for myself, I think the town deserves a new, purpose-built school, just as my constituents in St. Brelade have benefited from a new school.

9.1.11 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:

A pleasure to follow Deputy Renouf there. I have been on a journey when it comes to the issue of extending Millennium Park, so I am quite relieved that Deputy Tadier said the world does not stay still. Back in 2022, before the election, I said no ifs, no buts, that the Gas Place site should become an extension of Millennium Park. When I was in Government, however, the Council of Ministers at the time were persuaded by the then Minister for Education, Ina Gardiner, that it was a prime site for a major new St. Helier school. Other sites had been presented but none other could provide the necessary space. So despite my election words at the time I voted in favour of a new school because of collective responsibility. Reform Jersey then brought a proposition to the Assembly to ask for a delay in the building of the new Northern Quarter homes to allow time to check out if this site would be appropriate for a new school. If that were the case they would support a park extension. The proposition was turned down as the Education Department at the time deemed the site too small, plus all the planning permissions had been granted to build more homes. Many of those much needed homes though have now been delivered, going some way to relieve our housing crisis, so things do get done when decisions are made. Following the change of Government, I have revisited that original decision and concluded - for the reasons I am now going to explain - that an extension to the park and the retention of the old Gas showroom is absolutely the right move. There are 3 key issues: the health and well-being of our community, changing demographics, and the sheer cost of not only delivering a school but also a St. Helier Youth Centre. Over 1,000 new residents have moved into this part of St. Helier. These are not town houses with their own small garden, they are mostly one and 2-bedroom flats, whose only private outdoor space is a balcony. It was good to hear Deputy Curtis refer to blocks of flats because she is absolutely right, that is what we have. These residents need a shared space. You only have to look at how extensively the play area in Millennium Park is used today to understand the demand for this type of space. The Minister suggests that a few pocket parks will make up for the loss of an extended park. It seems obvious to me that all this does is make safeguarding issues more complicated, and in a society that is already fragmented, park fragmentation only exacerbates the problem. In a society that is already broken we do not need broken parks. The capacity of the existing park, built for 1,000 fewer residents, is already creaking. Surely we owe it to the health and well-being of our community to extend the park. I would just like to add a little addendum here because Deputy Ward mentioned about Parade Gardens and the success there, and how Deputy Feltham had got that over the line. I would just like to remind Members that it was a lady called Emily Jennings who designed that and built it into such an exciting park it is today. Changing demographics: this is something else which has only been flagged over the last couple of years, and is a significant reason as to why I have changed my mind. Sadly birth rates are at record lows. This is not unique to Jersey, it is something that is happening globally. While the Minister will argue that the demographics of town are different to those of the country Parishes - and I agree with him on that point - is it appropriate to go knocking down some of the existing school provision just because these buildings are not as efficient as they should be due to age and design. I would argue that it is not about the buildings. We have heard today about how extraordinary the teachers are. It is about what is happening inside those buildings that matters. I was recently given a tour of Springfield School. It was an absolute pleasure. The kids and staff were amazing. It was, however,

pointed out to me that there was a leak in the roof in one of the classrooms. I was struck this morning when we had this promoted advert and I wondered if that money that had gone to the promoted advertising in the *J.E.P.* could have helped fix the roof at Springfield. This is surely a simple maintenance issue. We need to be looking after our buildings, not leaving them to rot because we prefer a nice, new, shiny one. It is the budget for maintenance we should be looking at, not the budget for a new school. I do recognise that schools like Springfield are at capacity and some of this is because of the rise in children with special needs. In fact, a member of my staff has a child attending Springfield with special needs. She does not talk about the state of the building; she talks about how well looked after her child is. That is what really matters to parents. It also reflects that we need to keep our primary schools at a scale that remains intimate and not anonymise our kids in super schools. If there is an argument for more capacity what exactly does that look like? I have not seen any numbers. Interestingly enough, at the earlier discussion in the Town Hall the Minister said: "Actually it is not about capacity." So what is it then, Minister? What are we building a new school for if it is not about capacity? All I ever hear is: "We need a new school." That brings me on to costs because ultimately there is only so much to go around. How do we get the biggest bang for our buck? How do we meet the needs of all the stakeholders? Where does compromise lie? Right now we have just seen the budget allocation for the St. Helier Youth Centre rise by over 55 per cent from its original budget to a whopping £16 million-plus. As a result there is no money for the Le Squez project. These are some of the tough choices that have to be made. We have just seen that the cost of buying the Gas Place site from Andium Homes is not £1, it is £15 million. The method of payment suggested has been to reduce the annual dividend paid by Andium to the Treasury. This means that savings will need to be made in other areas of the States due to the reduced income. It is ironic that some time back Andium were offering to build a park for free, recognising the impact of all those building works. Then there is the cost of a new school. A figure of £30 million has been suggested, however, nothing close to this number has been budgeted for in the current Government Plan. So what are the alternatives? The clearest and most obvious is to repurpose the old Social Security building. The current price tag for the purchase of the building is around £3 million, plus we are not starting from scratch. The reality is we are not looking at the existing asset base in St. Helier and thinking how best it can be used. That is criminal. I would just go on to add that between the discussions in the Parish of St. Helier and today I have had an owner of a major office block, which is currently vacated - 5 floors of huge space - who said: "I would happily take in a temporary school if you are looking to refurbish existing schools in St. Helier." These are the hidden assets that we are not using and not talking about. A school at Philip Le Feuvre House is perfectly plausible; after all, there was a school there in this area years ago. It frees up the Gas Place site and allows the Gas Place showroom to be repurposed for community use. Everyone wins. If we need to refurbish Rouge Bouillon, Springfield and St. Luke's on a rotational basis by moving children to Philip Le Feuvre House temporarily then let us do that. We are going to be saving millions and we will have created a long-term sustainable use that both meets our educational needs and the health and well-being needs. I want now though to turn to an email I received from a very concerned parent whose children go to St. Luke's. She asks where is the consultation with parents of children from this school: "Dear Deputy. Two of my children are currently enjoying their education at St. Luke's School and I think the current plan to merge St. Luke's into a larger school at the Town Park Gas Place site is a terrible idea and absolutely not the correct fit for my children. I am not against your idea to build a new school, some schools are in dire need, and St. Luke's School is far from perfect. But St. Luke's needs to remain a single intake school for the students, like my children, who struggle when they are overwhelmed. St. Luke's is currently a 3 minute walk to the beach and 90 seconds walk to Howard Davis Park. Its location is enriching, imaginative, and holistically so good for my children. The proposed location of a new school is truly awful. Our 19-minute walk to St. Luke's takes us along a pedestrianised area, past properly managed and clearly indicated traffic lights, through a leafy mature park, and we get a direct view of the sea from Beach Road. They arrive happy and ready for school. The proposed alternative, which is to walk past offices and through the entrails of empty town shops, stagnant traffic and into

an unfamiliar fenced off world is not inspiring. It takes me back to being 5 years old, playing in my pants and vest in St. Mary's Catholic School in Croydon in the 1980s with the passing public behind the railings. This dreadful walk to school would make me want to put my children inside a car rather than walk or cycle, and there is no designated cycleway to the proposed location. Are there any other reports for this move than the October 2022 report submitted to the Government of Jersey by the IBI Group, forwarded by Deputy Inna Gardiner? The aforementioned report does not support the readiness for a school to be built at all, it relies on an extension to Plat Douet School and shrinks the collective nursery intake from 40 to 60. It was difficult for us to get our first born into St. Luke's Nursery; those shrinking numbers would have made it impossible. As I have said, St. Luke's is not perfect, their play area would be larger if the staff were not parking on their additional play area. Is it possible for you to resolve that issue by finding an alternative parking area, or a park and ride solution for staff? There is an expectation for students to make a green option their travel to school. What percentage of staff take that green option, and what expectation is there on staff of education to make greener travel choices? Our walkway from the blue gate into the school area has been reduced further in the last couple of years. Children are resilient but they have breaking points. This school move is devoid of consideration of the overall mental and physical well-being of 2 children. If you were to be responsible for obliterating their friendship groups, which has been rooted in the community and locality around St. Luke's, it would break them. Yours sincerely, Tracy."

[16:45]

9.1.12 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

It is perfectly legitimate to argue that the size of the Millennium Town Park should increase to include the former Jersey Gas site. We absolutely need more green space in St. Helier; I do not think anyone would question that. Extending the Town Park is one way of providing that additional green space. It is even more legitimate when that request comes from the Constable of St. Helier, who is consistent on his wish to see the Millennium Park extended, whether he has been inside Government or outside Government, which gives him credibility. My remarks today are no criticism of the Constable of St. Helier, whom I respect and enjoy working with. I do have to be clear though that it is not a proposition that I can support. It has been the policy of successive Governments to build a new town primary school on the former Gas Place site, and I was so heartened to hear the former Chief Minister and the former Minister for the Environment speak so positively about this. The rationale behind the policy remains unchanged. We desperately need a new primary school in town, one that is fit for purpose in the modern age and does justice to children in St. Helier and St. Saviour, to their teachers and their parents. Now is the time to move forward with the action and delivery instead of prevaricating once again. I have visited St. Luke's School a number of times since I have become Minister, both to look inside and outside, and to show others that excellent School Street which has been a great success. There is one point I do agree with Deputy Warr on and that is it still irritates me. that in a school with such limited space we use up some potential playground space for parking, but that is a matter for another day and a matter that I think we can still address. Fundamentally though, St. Luke's is not a school which is suitable for educating our children in 2025. Its footprint is too small and it does not have enough outside space. Our children deserve better, their parents deserve better, and our staff - their teachers - deserve better. If I compare St. Luke's to other primary schools, especially those in the country, it is an unfavourable and, frankly, unacceptable comparison. I recognise that the staff work wonders in all of our town schools with the space they have. They do their best and they do very well, but we should not continually be asking them to pour pints into quart pots. We heard a very romantic vision from Deputy Ozouf about what T.B. Davis would have thought. If we look at St. Martin and see what has been achieved in that community, where the school has closed and a new facility provided, it is fantastic to see the art of the possible. If you asked me about my old school, you would not have to pay to demolish it; I would do it for free. [Laughter] Springfield is another school that I visited as recently as Friday. Obviously, I followed the Constable of St. Helier and Deputy Warr there. I am pleased to report that the problem with the ceiling and the

roof is due to be repaired next week during half term. This has been an ongoing problem where we have invested significant money over many years. During my visit, I remember seeing a tent which served as a breakout area if a child needed a moment to reset themselves. This tent was in the middle of a corridor between lockers and just outside the toilet area. I do not question the need for it to be there; a breakout area like this is needed far too often in the school environments. But we need school buildings in 2025 and beyond that can provide that space as part of their design, not as an afterthought in a corridor. I should say that I spent a number of years working in a private school locally, so I am very aware of the health and safety issues of schools, particularly in old buildings, and the challenges. Outside space is again limited, with very little, if any, green space. It does not matter what colour you paint the school; it will not get bigger. You will not provide additional space. The space is the space, and I am sorry to tell Deputy Warr and others that a coat of paint and a refurbishment is not going to cut the mustard. La Passerelle; I suppose at least Springfield and St. Luke's are in permanent buildings at present. My most recent visit to La Passerelle was a visit to a collection of portacabins latched on to the Highlands campus. We do not even begin to apply the area guidelines for primary schools here. But again, the staff are to be applauded. In the comments paper, you see that the pupil numbers have risen from 5 to 25. On another visit that I made last week, the headteacher was telling me that he had pupils who should be at La Passerelle, but there is no capacity for them. Inappropriate buildings are really important; it is not just about pupil numbers. It is easy to point at the demographics and think that a falling birth rate means less need for school places and less need for a new school. Would we really be investing so much in childcare if we did not want to see the birth rate increase? Of course we would not. Not only are pupil numbers not wholly dependent on the birth rate, but fundamentally, schools such as Springfield, St. Luke's and La Passerelle are inappropriately designed and just do not have enough modern space to meet modern educational needs. Pupil numbers are not going to fall by so many that, suddenly, these buildings become fit for purpose. We have reached the point today where the workarounds are at their limits. Their footprints are not sufficient and the design is wrong. The only viable option is to move to a more suitable site. Such sites are not available in abundance in Jersey, but we obviously have a balance to strike between the need for a proper education provision and other societal needs for people in St. Helier, including green space and community space. I would be open to alternative sites for a new primary school, but right now I cannot see a viable option. La Motte Street has just been mentioned; I looked at La Motte Street as a possible area for some of the Highlands campus, because they have problems there. I do not know whether to laugh or cry. If the aim was to find one of the most unsuitable buildings in the Island for a new primary school, it might have made sense. I challenge Members to find one educational professional who would even contemplate turning La Motte Street into a primary school in the 21st century. Seriously, it is just not serious. If I had a 5-storey building empty, I would be looking for anybody to fill that. I am not sure that would meet the criteria needed. We talk about delivery, and we need to stop talking about delivery and actually do it. I have long accepted, especially in this job, that everyone has got a view on property, and property is a highly politicised area. We are frequently criticised for our failure to deliver, but if you join some of the proposals being made here together, then we will delay a school at Gas Place, we will delay the sale of La Motte Street, and at the end, we will still have 2 schools that are not fit for purpose, without a suitable replacement, and without selling one of our disused properties. That does not strike me as optimal for delivery. In terms of access, I have far more confidence than my Assistant Minister. We are making progress, albeit not as fast as we want. We do have a joint working group that involves Government and the Parish of St. Helier and Cycle for Jersey helping us to make progress. Before I close, I would like to talk about St. Helier because the Constable is absolutely right to be looking to enhance the public realm in St. Helier. My support for a school at Gas Place is therefore contingent on Springfield then being converted into a park. What a beautiful space that could be. I also support the need to create more open space at the Le Bas Centre. Further to that, we need to invest more all across St. Helier. We have invested approximately £300,000 this year on player equipment at Millennium Park, and next year we have a plan to improve the ball park, working with a partner.

That is why I have stood so robustly behind our plans on Broad Street. It has sometimes felt quite lonely, but it has been the policy of the last 3 Governments and it supports the retail and the visitor strategies, and that is why I am happy to stand up and be counted. As I keep saying, what we have seen at New Cut and on Halkett Street and what we are going to see in Broad Street should only be the beginning of our investment in St. Helier at Parish and at Island level. We need town to feel fresher, cleaner and greener. That means investing in Jersey the product. If we do this properly, then what we are seeing at the moment will just be the start. That is what our competitors are doing, and that is why we need to make sure we are keeping pace. I do not challenge the Constable's aim to create more green space in St. Helier, but I think we can do this across town and not only in one location. There is unquestionably a balance to strike; I do not believe that anyone here is saying that the option to build a school instead of extending the park is an absolute no-brainer. We would like to do both, but at the moment I cannot see a viable alternative to allow both. Unlike some, I am convinced by the arguments of our teachers and educational professionals that a new primary school is essential, and I think the Gas Place site is the optimal location. In the interests of delivery and averting further delay, I will be voting against the proposition.

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

I was not planning on speaking, as I really wanted to listen to the debates because we have a split, in a way, with the Connétable and one of the Deputies of St. Helier on one side with, I assume, some other Deputies on the other side of this debate. Of course, this is about St. Helier and I wanted to hear from those who represent residents in St. Helier what they feel about it. I wanted to hear what is going on, but of course it is a really difficult decision, as everyone has made clear, because it really should not be pocketed between a school on one side and a park on the other, and we should really be thinking of both. But I have been listening and hearing the arguments that especially the Minister for Infrastructure has just made about the need to get on with it and that we have heard this from successive Governments, and I take that on board. But I just wanted to raise this, and it was a shame I could not do this before the Minister for Infrastructure spoke, but maybe another member of the Council of Ministers would be able to speak to this, around the idea of the pocket parks. Because I noticed that the Le Bas Centre, quite a substantial amount of it is listed, so it will not necessarily be able to be made into a green space. I was wondering if there had been discussions about what that green space, pocket park could look like in that space, because quite a large part of Le Bas Centre is now listed. Yes, the gardens and the wall garden are listed, but also quite a bit of the buildings as well. If these buildings are then to be utilised effectively, what would that mean? Would that mean that the car park needs to stay? Because, depending on what facility would be there, would it not potentially need a car park? Then suddenly, you are restricting this park into even smaller pocket parks. I just wanted to raise that with Members. For example, in those 2 places that we are hearing about, if we think that a pocket park means that it is completely green space and that the buildings that are there now will be completely demolished and there will be availability for biodiversity, for trees and for residents to be utilising that space ... especially at Le Bas Centre, as a grade 3 listed building, quite a bit of that space will still have to be there. To be able to utilise our buildings in St. Helier as well, we would need to potentially have access to that, which could restrict that green space. Therefore, I would really appreciate, in helping me in this decision further, to hear from Council of Ministers if they have had that discussion. Not just about where a school is, but where that other area needed ... where we are hearing about pocket parks, what that pocket park would look like if we are saying it is on Le Bas Centre, what that actually could look like. How much space are we actually talking about, given the situation and the restrictions that are on it now?

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

In my speech I am going to quote both Winston Churchill and Karl Marx, so there will be something in it for everyone. The thoughts of Winston Churchill came into my head while listening to the speech from Deputy Warr. No, seriously; I will explain why. Winston Churchill was a Conservative

M.P. (Member of Parliament) who defected to the Liberals and then later defected back to the Conservatives. He said of himself, at the time ... he quipped: “Anyone can rat, but it takes a special kind of ingenuity to re-rat.” Listening to the speech from Deputy Warr, I did not see the ingenuity of a great statesman but I heard him describing his journey sounding as a man who walks around with a compass that never points north. He has managed to take the wrong position at the wrong time on almost every step of this journey, to the point where, as a fellow St. Helier South Deputy, I am afraid I cannot apologise for saying that I think he is letting his constituents down by the approach that he has taken on this. Segueing nicely from the Winston Churchill quote to the Karl Marx quote, Marx said that history repeats itself first as a tragedy and then as a farce.

[17:00]

That occurred to me, listening to the excellent speech from Deputy Moore who spoke about other infrastructure projects that we have looked at where our systems and our politics have utterly failed the people we have represented. Not just the hospital, but Fort Regent as well. How many tens of millions of pounds have we wasted chasing our own tails, getting almost to that finish line before deciding we have got to stop, head back and relook at everything all over again? A substantial amount of work has already been done on this project; we can move forward on it and deliver something excellent for the people who we represent. I obviously deeply respect those who have been in touch with us about this, and I do not blame anybody who is tantalised at the thought of an extended Millennium Park. I live right next to the Millennium Park. I am in there pretty much every day. I absolutely love it and I absolutely see its value and I am so pleased to be associated with a Member like Deputy Southern who worked so hard to acquire the funding to get it built in the first place. But one of the ways that you show respect to your electorate and to the people you represent, is by being honest with them. In politics, that means being honest with them by telling them upfront that politics is filled with dilemmas. We have to make choices, we have to make compromises and those will often be based on things like what you can afford, what capacity you have got to deliver something, and timelines. We have to give and take often on subjects. When I ran for election alongside my colleagues in 2022, we were honest with our voters by saying to them that there is a dilemma here. We said to them: “We would love to see the Millennium Park extended and if a viable proposal to do that is put on the table, you can be assured of that. But in the absence of such a proposal, the next best thing is to build the school that the children of St. Helier deserve on that site and the other green space that will arise as a result of it.” We won the election on that basis. It is cheap politics to just promise people whatever you think they want to hear and then have no regard for it whatsoever when you do get elected. It is one of the things that I think undermines faith in the democratic process. After the election, we discovered ... we had no idea about this before the election and maybe our manifesto would have looked different if we had known this, but we discovered that a site right next to the gas works had an owner who was seeking to get rid of it. That is why Deputy Coles very ably brought that amendment to the Budget at the time to say: “We need to look at this because there is a viable alternative site that could enable us to get the best of both worlds.” That amendment lost, only very narrowly. I do not accept Deputy Warr’s excuse on collective responsibility on this, because Ministerial Codes of Conduct do say that if you have a staunch position in your manifesto that is well known and held, you can deviate from the Government position on it. This Government has Members who frequently do it; I have done it from time to time myself. But that debate was had and it was lost, and in that moment it became the standing position of the Government and the Assembly that we would move forward with a positive vision to create a new school on the gas works site and green space in places nearby. Actually, an amount of green space that in total is more than what you would get with a pure extension to the park. Our politics now must get behind that, so that we learn those mistakes from history and we do not turn tragedy into farce, and we deliver this project as efficiently and capably as we can in the interests of the children of St. Helier. Like other Members of this Assembly, I have been a regular visitor to the schools whose children fall in the catchment area of my constituency. My constituency actually does not have any primary schools in it - they are just

about over the border - but I have been to St. Luke's, I have been to Springfield, I have been to Rouge Bouillon. They are all absolutely amazing schools run by incredibly dedicated and professional staff with an amazing community of children there who it is wonderful to see thrive as best as they can, given the adversity that they have put against them because of the conditions of their buildings. When I have in the past visited schools in the country Parishes, I have also been in awe at how brilliant they are, the amazing work that goes on there, and the often-excellent green space and play space they have, that the children of my constituency do not have. St. Luke's School has outside play space that is only just over a third of what the recommended outside play space is. These dream alternatives that are put to us ultimately do not resolve that. For those who are adamant that they want to extend the park, great, that is all well and good, but what is the solution for the school? We have had put to us everything from just the naïve to the laughably impractical, as the Minister for Infrastructure pointed out this idea of using the La Motte Street site, which is just not real-world stuff. If you were looking at refurbishing Springfield School, there are only 2 ways you could make that work. One is to keep sending children there while you refurbish it, in which case you are sending children to learn in an active building site for years. That is absolutely unacceptable, in the way that would affect their education and everything else. Or you temporarily close the school and you send those children to out-of-town schools dotted around the place wherever there happens to be capacity. That will be bad for their education, it will be bad for the congestion of our roads; an issue that people in my community obviously care very deeply about. Even if you were prepared to do either of those things, when it came to the end of it you would still have school buildings that fell beneath minimum standards because of the way the sites lie. You simply cannot provide more open play space on the footprints of those sites. It is impossible to do. Therefore, that is why we cannot let the Constable of St. Helier get away without saying what the alternative actually is. Is it the case that he would be happy for the children of town to continue going to schools where they have a provision of outside play space that, in at least one instance, is almost a third of what kids in the countryside would get? I suspect his answer to that will be no, and I would agree with that, but he has a responsibility to say what the alternative is. Because that is the dilemma of politics. You have to be clear about what the trade-offs are. In the aftermath of Deputy Coles's amendment on this when it narrowly was defeated, I had a conversation with the Constable of St. Helier at the time to say: "Look, if you want to give that a second go because of your manifesto, come and talk to us because Reform Jersey has got 8 St. Helier Deputies who would be all ears to any proposed solution." I remember very clearly saying to him: "If you want to do a proposition, come and talk to us about it because if you are going to go ahead with something that has got a few problematic words, we can deal with that before you lodge it and you can advance with our support behind it, rather than things getting messy with amendments or us having to vote against it." I never got the phone call; it never happened until this proposition is lodged. It is lodged with the support outside the Assembly of those who see it as a means for stopping the school, not reviewing it. I spoke to some in the Royal Square at lunchtime, and it is absolutely clear that, for some people, the review is a distraction. It is just a way of pulling brakes and stopping this altogether so you can get an extended town park. There is no conclusion that a review could reach that would change their minds on it, and this proposition does not adumbrate what that alternative would look like. Therefore, as a St. Helier resident, a person who lives right next to the Millennium Park and who absolutely loves it and wants to see more green space there, I simply cannot justify and look in the eyes of my constituents and say to them that, when push comes to shove, I would want to get less overall green space and worse school facilities at the end of it, when the plan on the table right now is for even more green space ... okay, spread about rather than purely on one side, but that has its advantages too, because you can design different parks for different purposes. There might be a park that is better for sitting in the shade and reading a book, versus one for throwing a ball with a dog, et cetera, and then that can meet different people's desires there and provide a new town primary school. Not much talk has been made about La Passerelle as well; that is a key part of this, is relocating La Passerelle into that. That is absolutely desperately needed too. Know that I can live among my community knowing that kids are going to the best school facilities

possible, getting the best educational opportunities possible with facilities that enable that, and when they are outside of school, they will have even more green space to choose among themselves on what they can attend. I am surprised this is controversial, but this Government - after lots of talk for years, including in the previous term of office - is now actually delivering that youth centre on the Ann Street brewery site. We are in the process now of going ahead with it after years of talking about it, so I feel that I can look my constituents in the eye and say: "This is the right decision to make." I am absolutely sure - and I experience this all the time when I speak to those who want to talk to me about these issues - that when you have a reasonable discussion with them, you can bring people along with you and sometimes even change their minds when the dilemma of politics is actually put to them and people understand that you do have to make these hard choices. In the absence of a proper, realistic alternative put to us by the Constable of St. Helier, this proposition risks creating another farce where we simply run round in circles chasing our tail, wasting tens of millions or whatever it ends up being, to not do something for which we already have enough evidence, right at this moment, showing it is a good option for our community. I urge Members to oppose the proposition.

9.1.15 Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter:

I had written a speech for this, but unfortunately it is sitting on my desk in the Parish Hall which probably is not the best place for it. I have written some notes, which hopefully I will be able to read. First, I would not criticise the Constable of St. Helier for his enthusiastic support for a town park, but not on the gas works site at the expense of the school that our children deserve. Our children do deserve the best school. These children are our future and we should not forget that. Unfortunately, he has not, and the Parish has not, shown the same enthusiasm for a youth facility. I have touched on this a number of times before. In the vast number of Parishes - and there are one or 2 exceptions - the youth facilities and the buildings have been built by the Parishes, often with a loan from the Government, but that loan has had to be repaid. We have not seen that from St. Helier. They are not making any contribution towards the St. Helier youth facility. It is rather sad that they do not consider that their children are worth investing in. As the Minister for Children and Families, I see that as a failure on behalf of the Parish. These are their future ratepayers, their future parishioners, and yet they are not putting the same financial contribution in that other parts of the Island are. The youth centre will of course look after hundreds of children. During the time we looked at it, we looked at 11 sites, including the gas works showroom/offices which were found not to be suitable, so I am not quite sure why they have been brought back into the equation. They were looked at along with the other 11 sites; they were found to be unsuitable. What does the new facility offer these children? It has an all-weather pitch on the top of the building, a dance studio, boxing, a climbing wall and numerous other facilities that will benefit the fitness and health of our young people. It might not be a park, but we are certainly looking after the well-being of the young people in that area and possibly to a greater extent than the park would. Of course, everything I have said relates, as the Minister for Children and Families, to the youth facility. I do not intend to touch on the school because I am not the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and I am not best placed to speak about that. But I would emphasise that it is the intention that the school facilities will be available outside of school hours.

[17:15]

That is very important because it will not only be offering those facilities to the children who are at the school, but to children who are not there and to some adults as well. Again, it will be looking after their well-being. Please, I ask all of you, do not support this proposition.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sir, I have a point of clarification. We have just had 2 Ministers talking and none of them have addressed the issue that I raised about the discussion about the listed building and pocket parks.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Will you accept a point of clarification from the Deputy?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. What is the point you want to raise with the Minister?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

That there have been points at the pocket park at Le Bas Centre, and I was asking for clarification about the grade 3 listed building. Can you deal with that Minister, or not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, if I may, that is not a point of clarification, because a point of clarification is a clarification of the speech made by the Member.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is correct, yes. It is not a point of clarification. Thank you, Deputy Morel. Does any other Member wish to speak on this proposition?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

While I am at it, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you can deal with that point, perhaps.

9.1.16 Deputy K.F. Morel:

With regard to Deputy Jeune's question, I cannot answer it. I am afraid I do not have the information to do that. But with regard to the proposition before us, one of my biggest concerns as the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and as a States Member in general is that Jersey has a commitment problem. That commitment problem is genuinely endangering our future prosperity. We find it very hard to say yes and stick to the yes and see whatever development or change that needs to be made being made. We heard in the earlier speeches about things such as the hospital, which is the most obvious one, but there are ... Deputy Mézec mentioned Fort Regent. That is another one. We are driving away investment in this Island because we are unable to make a decision and stick to that decision. This, as I believe Deputy Ward in his opening speech said, is a proposition that has gone through - I think Deputy Ward said - 4 different Councils of Ministers. It is astounding to me that, after that many years and that many confirmations of this being the right project for the Island, we are still here trying to ... in this case, the Council of Ministers is trying to keep the course so that we can make the commitment to ensure that this school does get built. There will be opportunities for those facilities which are left behind to either become parks or pocket parks, to be used as youth centres. I understand, for instance, that St. Luke's school is currently today an important part of that community. That building can still be an important part of that community. It does not mean that the building has to disappear. It does not mean that the building has to be closed down to use. It can still be used in different ways as a really important part of that community; as a community centre in that community, for instance. But if, as a States Assembly, we today decide to agree with the Constable's proposition, we will be sending yet another message to anyone looking to invest in this Island - whether that is through property and construction or whether it is through any other form of business - that Jersey cannot stick to decisions that are made. This is an incredibly dangerous place for Jersey to be, and I will continue to say this because it is something that this Assembly needs to understand. As we come towards an election, I hope that any new Members ...

and whether I am re-elected or not, I will speak to new Members to make sure that they understand the importance of us making decisions and sticking to those decisions. This constant double-guessing, this constant attempt to - if I am being kind - reach for perfect plans, when actually a good plan is what we need because perfection is never available. That is the polite way of saying it. It is something that we must stop doing. My concern is - and I think Deputy Mézec hit the nail on the head - if we were to agree with the Constable's proposition today very little would happen for years. We would have schools that are not sufficient in their current size, in their current scale, in their current maintenance standards, continuing as schools. We would have an area of Gas Place remain, with a building on it, that is not a park, is not a school, is not anything; it is just closed to the public and it is lost for years to come. That is what Jersey is in such danger of doing to itself. Or, more to the point, this Assembly is in danger of doing to this Island. Committing to something does mean, and I learned this through marriage, that you can end up having an absolutely brilliant time afterwards, as scary as that commitment may be. We have got to start understanding that. You can achieve great things once you make a commitment, but if you do not make a commitment then you can achieve nothing at all. Jersey is in real danger of achieving nothing at all time and time again because somebody else always has an amazing, paradisiacal view, an attempt to create some sort of paradise that will never happen. I urge Members to not just think of this school and this site, but also to think about what message is being sent to the wider community, particularly those who may wish to invest in this Island in all sorts of different ways. If we say no to this now, we are yet again changing the minds of this Island, we are yet again stopping progress taking place, we are yet again stopping investment taking place, and we are yet again sending a message that Jersey does not want to move forward. That is an unbelievably dangerous place for an Island that has significant challenges ahead. A very dangerous place for this Island to be. Please, I urge Members to reject the proposition.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on this proposition? I call upon the Connétable to reply.

9.1.17 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am going to struggle to do this in 9 minutes, and I hope Members will bear with me because I will go beyond 5.30 p.m. Not much beyond it, but a bit. I am not going to comment on everyone who spoke; that would perhaps take too long. I am going to pick out a few themes that have come up during the debate and answer a few questions that have been raised. I will begin with what I was proposing to call "the new hospital fallacy." Though after the last speaker, I am tempted to call it "the marriage fallacy." What happens if you marry the wrong person? That, of course, is not in any sense supposed to be a personal remark, either to the Deputy or in any reflexive way. But the hospital fallacy was begun by Members early in the debate, and it really had its peroration with Deputy Morel. If I could just explain it, the hospital fallacy could be summarised as: "Just get on with it. People are sick and tired of the States changing their minds. It will get more expensive." We had a wonderful moment in the debate when I was held responsible for costing the Island ... I think it was £600 million for fighting to protect People's Park from the imposition of a hospital on it. The reason this argument is a fallacy is because if we end up, for example, repairing existing schools instead of spending tens of millions of pounds on a new building, we will have saved money, we will not have wasted it. I do not see that my request for reconsideration is going to cost money. To go back to the first speaker, the Minister did not quite blame me for delay in the project, which is probably just as well because I think that would be hard to prove in any objective way. But he did say the school, and I quote: "Could have been open this summer." I really do not see how that could be possible, unless he and the previous Minister for Education had actually put plans in and asked for planning permission, and probably also got a little extra money from the Budget. I do not accept any fault for delay in that respect, and I think it is a fallacy to suggest that having a reconsideration of whether we need to spend all this money on a new school is going to raise the price. I do not think it is. I thank the Minister

for his comments. He managed to keep it fairly high-level; he did not go low, as a couple of Members did. I am grateful to Deputy Ferey, who was the first speaker to talk about the youth centre. He referred to the fact that the Honorary Police would have had to relocate if the youth centre had gone into Nelson Street car park, and I am grateful that he did not upbraid anyone for that. Of course, we value our Honorary Police far too much. He is confident the youth centre is going to work, as are other speakers, and I hope he is right, because it clearly is going to be built. A few Members were surprised that I and Deputy Warr, for example, think that the Jersey Gas showroom could have a potential reuse. Obviously, I want a bigger park, and if the new youth centre is going to work - and if we can afford it with its rising costs - then I would be delighted to see the back of the Jersey Gas showroom because then the park will be that much bigger. But of course, even if we left the showroom in place, there is an awful lot of open space around it; I have walked around it. That is why I was willing to compromise with my own view that we just need to make the park bigger. Deputy Ozouf, with his long experience of the States, pointed out quite rightly that there are constantly shifting goalposts when we talk about our schools. For most of the time he was in the Government, it was all about Rouge Bouillon. That was the one that had to be replaced. Relatively recently, new schools have come on to the list. Rouge Bouillon seems to have dropped off the list. I know La Passerelle has been mentioned recently, but La Passerelle could be fixed tomorrow if the Minister wanted to. There is space to do it. There are a number of schools where you could relocate La Passerelle. To say that the needs of La Passerelle are one of the things that is driving that high square-metre requirement is a fallacy, I am afraid. I have already suggested, having been around the schools, that I think Springfield has a lot to commend it. You could even have more external space at Springfield. When I was walking around the playground, I asked: "What are these sheds for? Why is that bit of the playground being cordoned off where there is a house falling down next door? Why do we not buy the house next door? Why do we not knock the sheds down and increase the open space in Springfield?" But the arguments from the Education Department have shifted. That is factual. They have shifted over the past 3 decades, and they are now asking us to replace St. Luke's, which presumably could have gone in the other direction. It could have moved east towards Plat Douet School, which they are planning to extend. Deputy Mézec in his speech challenged me to find an alternative site. The Education Department themselves have been all over the place in talking about which school they want to replace. It is not my job to say where we could put it, because if I do I will be shouted down. But clearly, the La Motte Street site could be demolished and cleared, and it would not be as big as d'Auvergne School, but nothing is going to be as big as d'Auvergne School in the town centre. Deputy Tadier rightly singled out Deputy Southern's role in the creation of the first town park. I am still grateful to Deputy Southern for that. But as I say, he talked about La Passerelle and he said it has to be replaced in this new school by Grand Marché, with all the traffic and all the problems that a town centre location will have. In fact, it may escape notice, but the senior school - a special needs school - is being replaced at the moment on site; so, where does that leave us? I was grateful to Deputy Bailhache for his comments. Things have changed, as he said. The financial situation is precarious. Demographic changes; he was specific about. He said quite rightly: "This is a once-in-a-century opportunity to create a real park." We need to be absolutely sure before abandoning such a project. Deputy Moore reminded us that I defended People's Park against the hospital site. Time will tell whether that was a good decision or not, but certainly People's Park is a well-used space and I do not think it was ever a realistic prospect to build upon it. She was one of many Members who talked somewhat glibly about the Le Bas Centre, and I was grateful to Deputy Jeune for querying whether the arithmetic of the Minister was actually accurate by adding that square meterage into the green space equation. Because the Le Bas Centre was not even agreed in the Bridging Island Plan as being green space. It has now been listed. How can you possibly add the Le Bas Centre and then come up with this wonderful figure that there will be a third more green space than there would be?

[17:30]

I am grateful to Deputy Andrews for his support. The Constable of Grouville rightly pointed out that no one is proposing to knock St. Luke's School down. It will remain a community building, I am sure. But the fact remains - and I think he talked about scaremongering - that St. Luke's parents are scared about the impact of losing their school. Deputy Warr demonstrated that in an email that he read out about it. He also pointed out - and here I am appealing to the St. Clement Deputy votes - that the whopping rise, "whopping" is his word, in the budget for the youth centre in St. Helier deprives some youngsters of their improved facilities at Le Squez. There are going to be a few votes in that. I am grateful to the Constable of St. John for his words of support and also for his commitment to improving the public realm of St. Helier. He and I have both got the scars to prove that. Deputy Mézec began with an attack on his fellow Deputy in St. Helier South, which I found unfair. The upcoming election is clearly injecting a caustic tone into our debates, especially in constituencies where Members will be competing for votes. It was an interesting speech from Deputy Mézec. It was a very honest speech; he knows that many of his constituents are going to be concerned if this debate is lost. I think a number of Members are a little bit rattled by some of the emails that have come on to our laptops in recent days; very heartfelt concerns by longtime residents who say that it cannot be the only option to build on this site. "It cannot be. You must look again." The Constable of St. Peter started off by being very nice to me and then he really went for the ... I do not know what the parliamentary phrase is, but yes, he got quite personal and he said that St. Helier parishioners do not contribute to the youth centre. I suppose, if he had asked us, I would have taken it to a Parish Assembly and the parishioners might have said: "Well, what is wrong with the Jersey Gas building? Why are you going to spend £16 million down at the brewery site?" They might have raised that question. But in fairness to the ratepayers, I must say that they contribute substantially every year to the cost of the youth workers in St. Helier, and we have in the past years contributed a great deal to the development of the First Tower youth centre as a building and as a facility. I am sure he would support that. I think I have touched on most of those who spoke. I do want to thank the Friends of the Millennium Town Park group for their work. Some Members have been less than complimentary about their work; I believe it will continue and I would say this is but an opening skirmish in the ongoing campaign for a bigger park in the heart of St. Helier, and also in a campaign for better educational facilities and youth facilities for our young people. I predict it will be the number one issue in the forthcoming elections, and I am glad that the Reform Party feels confident that they can explain their position to the electorate. I am going to just say 2 more things. First of all, I am going to ask Members: "Whatever happened to plan A?" Whatever happened to plan A for improving the primary school estate? You see, Gas Place was always going to be used for yet more housing. Until comparatively recently, it was going to be a housing site. It was Andium's vision of an extended Town Park that freed up the space for Ministers to grab and say: "What can we build on it?" But what was Education going to do? What was their plan A? They must have had a plan A for sorting out the educational estate in St. Helier, but we do not know what it was. Now, all we are told is that they have to put La Passerelle, St. Luke's and Springfield on this site and it is the only site that can take those schools. I am going to conclude by going back many years to the debate. It was a very close debate, as we were reminded, on whether to spend £10 million on a Budget amendment to create the long-awaited, preferred Millennium Project of the Island. As Members will remember, Senator Maclean - Minister for Treasury, former St. Helier No. 2 Deputy - was planning to vote against the proposition. Luckily for those who love the Town Park, he was defeated by his green ring-binder. I have here a green ring-binder [Laughter], which I thought I could pass around the Chamber to Deputy Southern because he has to vote with his party, he has to vote with Reform against my proposition. But maybe he would like to leave his ring-binder resting on the pour button when we come to the vote. Sir, I will be taking the proposition as one and ask for the appel.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The appel has been called. All Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. All Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes. I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been rejected:

POUR: 10		CONTRE: 31		ABSTAINED: 0
Connétable of St. Helier		Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Connétable of St. Peter		
Deputy C.F. Labey		Connétable of St. Martin		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		Connétable of St. John		
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		Connétable of St. Clement		
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		Connétable of Grouville		
Deputy D.J. Warr		Connétable of St. Ouen		
Deputy B. Ward		Connétable of St. Mary		
Deputy K.M. Wilson		Deputy G.P. Southern		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		Deputy M. Tadier		
		Deputy K.F. Morel		
		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
		Deputy S.M. Ahier		
		Deputy R.J. Ward		
		Deputy C.S. Alves		
		Deputy L.J. Farnham		
		Deputy K.L. Moore		
		Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
		Deputy T.A. Coles		
		Deputy H.M. Miles		
		Deputy M.R. Scott		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy C.D. Curtis		
		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
		Deputy M.E. Millar		
		Deputy A. Howell		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are Members content to adjourn? The Assembly is adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:37]