

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

6th September, 2023

Proposition No. P.2023/92

Committee for Education, Sport & Culture

Herm Island School Closure

AMENDMENT

Proposed by: Deputy S Kazantseva-Miller

Seconded by: Deputy B Murray

To insert two new propositions after proposition 1:

2. To direct the Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture to establish a working group whose membership and Terms of Reference shall be as set out in Appendix 1 to this amendment, to research and develop proposals for the future provision of primary education in Herm in partnership with stakeholders and Herm community.
3. To direct the Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture to bring back proposals for the future model of delivery of primary education for Herm children to the States of Guernsey during the Summer term of the 2023/2024 academic year.

Rule 4(1) information

- a) The propositions contribute to the States objectives and policy plans by seeking to ensure suitable on-island primary education provision is available for Herm island's community.
- b) In preparing the propositions, no consultation has been undertaken with the requerants or the Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture and discussions have taken place with various States members.
- c) The propositions have been submitted His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- d) There are no financial implications to this amendment as the Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture confirmed in Amendment 1 that there will be no financial implications for creating a similar set-up of a working group to oversee their trial.

Explanatory note

The provision of primary education in Herm has a unique and special history. Having such a unique education provision is one of the reasons why people have continued moving to and living in Herm, especially when they consider starting a family. If they wanted a different level of education provision, they would have the option to move to Guernsey or elsewhere. Some have described this provision as more akin to home-schooling and is clearly more of a hybrid model which appeals to some.

The availability of this unique education provision is clearly of great importance to the recruitment and retention of staff for the Herm leaseholder and its residents. This has been clearly shown through the numerous communications received by States members since the decision to launch the trial was announced by the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture.

The CfESC decision to run a trial to close the on-island provision has been ill-received and clearly does not align with the wishes and expectations of the community.

At the same time, it's understandable that from a CfESC point of view they are under increasing pressure to deliver an equal standard of education to all children in Guernsey in relation to education standards, safeguarding and other aspects. Their preferred option is to move all-provision off island. According to CfESC, for them to reinstate the education provision in Herm would equate to the proposals in Scenario 2 of Amendment 1 for the academic years 2023 - 2025 and scenario 3 for the academic year 2025/26, which will also lead to a significant increase in per-pupil costs in the future.

That in mind the proposer and seconder believe that unless there are alternative proposals developed in due course, the outcomes of the success of the requete, if further unamended, may set in stone a costly model of delivery of primary education in Herm because CfESC will have to adopt the provision they have outlined in Scenario 2 of Amendment 1 to fulfil their mandate to the best of their ability for the age of the school children for the 2023/2024 academic year. It could be argued that that will put an undue and disproportionate burden on the taxpayer.

Therefore, it's essential that alternative options for the delivery of education are explored but that this is done in full partnership with the community of Herm and its key stakeholders. The stakes are high and go beyond what can be solely considered an Education mandate because they affects the long term viability and sustainability of Herm.

The community element of Herm School is central to Herm's identity and having on island provision of Education is very important to the families who move there. Families want choice in the provision of education, which is why there is also an

increasing demand for home-schooling in the Bailiwick.

The alternative options for research could take into consideration models and inspiration from the charter and free school movement in the US and the UK, where newly established schools could get a per-pupil funding from the centre.

The proposer and seconder envision that such a new partnership model could be researched, including the establishment of a community-led school, a States-supported home school or other models, which are nevertheless supported by CfESC through funding, teaching or other arrangement but not to the extent of the high-cost provision identified in Amendment 1.

The Herm community feels strongly that they should be more involved in the decision-making regarding education provision in Herm, so a working group will offer the opportunity to review how the provision could be delivered, given that the States of Guernsey does not have any legal obligation to deliver the provision in the first place.

The establishment of a separate community school or another alternative model, may mean that there could be hybrid and alternative options for the provision of safeguarding and educational standards, among other parameters that would be desirable and acceptable to Herm residents and CfESC.

Appendix 1

Working Group Terms of Reference

The Working Group membership shall include:

- Two representatives of the Committee for Education Sport and Culture, which could include political and officer representation,
- One representative of Herm,
- One of the signatories to the Requete entitled “Herm Island School Closure”,
- Relevant subject matter experts who may be co-opted to the group as needed (for example on matters relation to curriculum, economics, property, population, safeguarding, transport, etc.),
- An independent Chair,
- A representative of Policy & Resource Committee as leaseholder.

The Working Group shall oversee the research and development of proposals for the future provision of primary school-aged children taking into account alternative models of education provision including funding and present its finding to the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture no later than the beginning of the summer term of the 2023/4 academic year, to give the Committee time to bring its final proposals to the States of Guernsey later in the academic term.