



**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**STATES OF DELIBERATION**

**OF THE**

**ISLAND OF GUERNSEY**

**HANSARD**

**Royal Court House, Guernsey, Wednesday, 22nd January 2025**

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**Present:**

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N. R. Inder	S. P. J. Vermeulen
A. Kazantseva-Miller	

**Representatives of the Island of Alderney**

Alderney Representatives E. Hill and E. A. J. Snowdon

**The Clerk to the States of Deliberation**

S. M. D. Ross, Esq. (States' Greffier)

**Absent at the Evocation**

Deputy J. F. Dyke (*relevé à 14h 30*); Deputy L. C. Queripel (*relevé à 10h 48*);  
Deputy C. N. K. Parkinson (*absent de l'île*)

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# States of Deliberation

*The States met at 9.30 a.m. in the presence of  
His Excellency Lt Gen Richard Cripwell  
Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Bailiwick of Guernsey*

THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*

## PRAYERS

*The States' Greffier*

## EVOCATION

## CONVOCATION

**The States' Greffier:** Billets d'État I and II. To the Members of the States of the Island of Guernsey, I hereby give notice that a meeting of the States' of Deliberation will be held at the Royal Court House on Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. to consider the items listed in this Billet d'État, which have been submitted for debate and Billet d'État II is convened pursuant to Rules 2(4) of the Rules of Procedure.

## In Memoriam – Former Deputy Patricia Mellor

**The Bailiff:** Good morning, Members of the States. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Alderney Representative Hill, as he takes his seat in this Assembly for the first time.

Members of the States, sadly, we must start this first States' Meeting of the year by paying tribute to former Vale Deputy Patricia Mellor, who died on the 16th January, aged 76. Pat, as she was usually known, was born in Guernsey on 9th March 1948 and before entering the States she ran various pre-school businesses. Her entry into the States in 1988 resulted from leading a public campaign to protect the value of family allowances, which were under threat at the time.

Pat always felt that the community underestimated the value of the role of parents and mothers in particular, in raising the next generation. Pat was elected as a Vale Deputy at the 1988 General Election and served until she retired at the 2004 General Election. Her interest in helping children played a big role in the Committees on which she served.

She did long stints as the Vice-President of both the Children Board and the Education Council. On the Children Board, working alongside its then President Deputy Jean Pritchard, the pair had three significant successes. They were the driving force in persuading the States to finance a refuge for women suffering from domestic abuse. They led the project to modernise Guernsey's Children Legislation, ultimately deciding to model it on the Scottish system, with which we are now familiar and moving away from what they saw as flawed English legislation. They were also instrumental in persuading the States to reduce the homosexual age of consent.

On the Education Council she was a constant campaigner for the removal of the 11-plus, she did not achieve that while a Deputy but did have a lesser success in ending the practice of girls needing

a significantly higher 11-plus score than boys to go to either the Grammar School or the colleges. Equality really does matter.

During her time as a Member of this Assembly, Pat also sat on other Committees, perhaps fewer than some others over the time when there were many Committees, but once elected she tended to stay on them for extended periods of time. In 1988, at the start of her service, she was elected to membership of the Public Thoroughfares Committee and the Water Board.

The following year she was elected to the Liberation Day Committee becoming its President in 1994. It later became the Liberation and Millennium Celebrations Committee charged with arranging the formal Guernsey celebrations and commemorations for the year 2000. That extra task complete, she left the Committee in 2002.

She was also a Member of the Recreation Committee and the Island Development Committee, becoming Vice-President of the latter. The final Committee, to which she was elected in 1999, was the States' Traffic Committee, being its President for her final two years in the States and introducing some efficiencies as to how meetings ran.

It was as a legal advisor to that Committee that I remember Pat best and I possibly still bear the scars. *(Laughter)* Long-term parking provision was reduced to ensure commuters did not fill spaces intended for shoppers and in 2003, her formidable skills of persuasion led this Assembly to agree to introduce paid parking to fund Guernsey's bus service. Despite that landmark vote this Assembly subsequently went on to reject every proposed level of charging put forward for paid parking!

In 2002, along with 13 other signatories, those were the days, Pat led a requête to the States on death with dignity, instructing the Advisory & Finance Committee to bring a report to have the Law changed to allow voluntary euthanasia. Whilst it is more than 20 years since she left the States these are matters that are still at the forefront of some Members' minds.

It is fair to say that Pat was a lady with firm beliefs who stuck to her principles. As a Member, Pat had a hands-on approach to politics. When the Board of Administration denied Members' claims that methane was escaping from the former Bordeaux landfill site, Pat invited the media there. She then took out a box of matches and proceeded to produce what she described as a Christmas pudding effect! She had proved her point and a proper venting system was installed swiftly thereafter, while Pat gained the nickname of Methane Mellor. *(Laughter)*

Her longer-term nickname in the States was simply Pitbull, as a testament to her uncompromising approach to politics. However, it was a nickname she revelled in and she was also known for her strong wit and a sense of humour.

On retiring from the States, Pat and Ken, her childhood sweetheart who became her husband, moved to Cyprus. Despite their love for their new home when Ken was diagnosed with a terminal condition, they decided to return to Guernsey to be close to friends and family. Having been predeceased by Ken, Pat leaves children Matthew and Verity and three grandchildren, along with wider family, to all of whom we extend our sincere condolences.

Members of the States, will you now please join me in rising for a period of silence to honour the memory of former state Member Patricia Mellor.

*Members stood in silence.*

**The Bailiff:** Thank you all very much.

**Procedural –  
Liberation Day 80th anniversary photograph –  
Proposition carried**

**The Bailiff:** Members of the States, I am sure it will not have escaped your attention that we are  
75 fast approaching the 80th anniversary of the Liberation. There is a book being prepared, which  
includes pictures from the events in 1945 and tries to replicate what is happening today.

One of the pictures that was taken was of a States' Meeting just after the Liberation and I am  
simply going to ask you whether you will agree to a modern photograph of a States' Meeting being  
taken before we resume business tomorrow afternoon? So, in other words, we would ask you to be  
80 back in your seats a little bit before 2:30 p.m. so that the photograph can be taken just before 2.30  
p.m. tomorrow afternoon. So, the motion is that you will permit photography in the Chamber before  
we resume formal business at 2:30 p.m.

Those in favour; those against?

*Members voted Pour.*

**The Bailiff:** Thank you very much, I will declare that carried.

## Statements

**General update –  
Statement by the President of Committee for Economic Development**

**The Bailiff:** So, the first item of business today is going to be a statement from the President of  
the Committee for Economic Development and questions thereafter. So, Deputy Inder, over to you,  
please.

**Deputy Inder:** Thank you, sir.

Sir, Madam, Members of the Assembly, this will be the last update statement of the Committee  
for Economic Development this political term. I will outline the Committee's main achievements  
85 over this term and the areas that will need to be pursued next term.

I would like to start by thanking my fellow Committee Members for their support. I have been  
supported by Deputy Falla, as the Committee's Vice-President and the lead for business liaison,  
Deputy Miller led the Committee's activities on digital skills and enterprise, Deputy Moakes led the  
Committee's work on the finance sector and international trade and Deputy Vermeulen led the  
90 Committee's work on tourism, retail and construction. I would also like to put on record my thanks  
to the Committee's two non-voting Members, Mr Andy Niles who has assisted the Committee with  
its review of the Office of Public Trustee and Mr Tony Mancini who has provided valuable insight  
from a business perspective.

Governments do not run economies they create the environment for businesses to succeed; that  
95 has been the approach that the Committee has taken. We have put business knowledge at the heart  
of the Committee's work, establishing a Tourism Management Board, funding the Guernsey Retail  
Group and now working with the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture on the establishment  
of a Skills Board and giving Guernsey Finance, Visit Guernsey and Locate Guernsey the funding and  
backing to market the Island.

100 One of the most significant decisions the Committee made early in this term was to increase the  
funding for Guernsey Finance by an additional £1 million *per annum*. This request was supported

by the States' Assembly and the funding uplift has been agreed until 2027. From a business development perspective that additional investment continues to represent excellent value for money, with Guernsey Finance currently facilitating the introduction of four new life branches and a new fiduciary licence. These have been the catalyst for numerous new trust, company and fund structures being moved to or formed on the Island.

Guernsey Finance is also working on over 40 pieces of new business for Guernsey including, notably, a trust, company licence, two investment managers, a custody platform, two major fund structures, a currency management banking licence that is set to become a full banking licence in early 2025 and a further two new banking licences. This is very good news for Guernsey. (A Member: Hear, hear.)

Members will recall that much of the work has been undertaken to better understand and address certain challenges for local banking services, including a reduction in the number of licensed banks, concerns in relation to alleged delays in account opening times for some local businesses and concerns in relation to the availability of credit cards for local residents.

As previously reported, one of the barriers identified has been the difficulty which credit reference agencies have in confirming the names and addresses of local residents as part of their due diligence to issue those cards. The Committee commissioned a strategic review of the banking sector and is now implementing those recommendations. The Committee is working with the Association of Guernsey Banks with a view to providing information on account opening times for locally licensed banks.

The Committee for Home Affairs continues to progress its work with providing access for credit reference agencies to Guernsey's Electoral Roll to address one of the issues affecting the issuance of domestic credit cards. It is anticipated that Home Affairs will present a policy letter to the States in March of this year.

During 2024 the Committee invested both time and resources in preparing for the Moneyval evaluation. A large investment has been made to upgrade the Guernsey Registry's IT system which supported the overall Moneyval objectives and is close to being concluded and, again, I would thank all of the officers for the extremely hard work in that.

On international trade, the Bailiwick has secured baseline participation in all of the UK's post-Brexit Free Trade Agreements and has agreement to take part in the Digital Economic Agreements with Ukraine and Singapore. For trade across the Atlantic the Bailiwick is to be included in the UK's trade Memoranda of Understanding with eight US States.

In 2021, the Committee and Policy & Resources brought a policy letter to the States' Assembly to accelerate the implementation of fibre broadband to improve the Island's digital connectivity. That proposed up to £12.5 million of investment by the States of Guernsey, alongside an investment of £25 million by Sure. The project has now reached a major milestone with more than half of Guernsey's properties now able to connect to the new fibre network, 18,000 properties can now sign up to fibre services and more than 10,000 Islanders are enjoying the benefits of fibre broadband.

In September, the Committee made the case to the States for the temporary suspension of Competitive Law to enable Sure to take over Airtel Vodafone, which secured up to £17.4 million in direct inward investment into Guernsey's digital infrastructure and into the local economy. The Committee, and it is connected, has recently lodged a policy letter on deploying next generation mobile technology to the Bailiwick, which is scheduled for debate at the February States' meeting.

There is an extremely good news story here. If the States get all elements of its digital aspirations lined up by 2027 this Island will be one of the most connected jurisdictions in the world. A jurisdiction focused on global business with a digital network to match. That is a good news story.

In October, the Committee launched a two-year pilot for the Guernsey Enterprise Investment Scheme. The scheme aims to encourage investment into high growth, early-stage businesses in Guernsey. Five applications have been approved to date and a total of £372,000 has been allocated from the £600,000 budget in the Government Work Plan, representing a potential £1.24 million investment into Innovate Guernsey businesses.



Last year, the Committee commissioned an independent Air Connectivity & Performance Review. The review considered three critical success factors as set out in the Air Policy Framework: connectivity, reliability and affordability. Members have been briefed on the review's findings, which will feed into the Committee's review of the Air Transport Licensing policy statement.

The Committee also provided financial support to establish a new direct air link to Paris for three years and the route has performed better than anticipated, with 7,000 passengers using the route and average load factors of 67% from March to November. Other air route development opportunities are also being actively pursued.

Of significant interest to Members and the wider community is that of our sea links. Progress has been made to secure the Islands' sea connectivity with the introduction of the ramp licensing legislation and the signing of a new 15-year contract for Brittany Ferries to deliver Guernsey's ferry services.

There is still further work to be done to improve the inter-Island sea connectivity and I have instructed officers to work closely with their Jersey counterparts and ferry operators to come up with a workable solution. This work will be accelerated once Jersey is able to confirm its full schedule and I can inform Members that I have had a meeting with Deputy Morel on Monday of this week and we are both of the same mind, the importance of pursuing the inter-Island links.

During 2023, the Committee established a Tourism Management Board and appointed Hannah Beacom Chair of the Board. With six representatives from different sectors within the tourism industry the Board provides oversight and direction to Visit Guernsey's marketing and promotion activities. The Committee has a budget of £1.9 million for marketing Guernsey as a destination in 2025.

The new direct ferry service to Saint Malo will offer opportunities to grow the French visitor market and work is being undertaken to take full advantage of this opportunity in addition to marketing to a UK and wider European audience. In March 2024, the Tourism Management Board published its framework for the visitor economy and the Board now allocates the Committee's events budget in line with the objectives within the framework.

I am pleased to sit on the political oversight of the Guernsey Development Agency, along with Deputy Murray and Deputy de Sausmarez. Their plan for the north of the Island is exciting and shows what can be done when the States lets other people and the wider community come up with a plan. Perhaps a similar approach would assist the housing problem, which continues to impact on the Island's competitiveness and which appears to be bogged down, yet again, in the multiple and competing interests of the States. We need a different approach and fast.

I am pleased to say that good progress has been made on the review of the Office of Public Trustee. The Committee recently considered a potential model that would move the risk of funding litigation away from taxpayers whilst ensuring that the office functions are still carried out. The Committee will make a further announcement on the details in due course, but I hope that Members will agree that this is potentially very good news for Guernsey's taxpayers. We will shift the risk from the taxpayer.

The Committee was briefed yesterday and on research that it commissioned from Frontier Economics and Island Global Research to feed in the Committee's review of Competition Law and regulation. The intention is to complete the review before the end of the political term.

In conclusion, I hope that Members will agree that the Committee *for* Economic Development has made significant progress during this political term, notably on finance sector development, international trade, digital connectivity and enterprise, on air and sea connectivity and in relation to facilitating greater input from the tourism industry into promotion of our visitor economy and from the Guernsey Retail Group in driving the retail sector forward. I look forward to answering any questions that Members may have.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Well, Members, it is an opportunity to ask questions on any matter within the mandate of the Committee *for* Economic Development now.

Deputy Soulsby.

**Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir. I thank the President for his update.

210 As he might recall, when the Assembly last debated the Guernsey Competition Regulatory Authority accounts myself and others raised our concerns about the cost of construction and believe this might be worthy of an investigation by that body. The President, in his summing up, gave assurances to the Assembly he would follow this up. Can he now update Members on whether such an investigation is or will be progressed and if not, why not?

Thank you.

215

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Well, there is no if not, there is an is. I have got a tendency to deliver on my promises, Deputy Soulsby. We have had an initial round of discussions, or I have had additional rounds of discussions, with the regulator and he and his team have taken initial soundings from the industry itself. There is an issue arising over aggregates, almost certainly, that is right through from sand, concrete. It needs to be addressed; it needs to be researched. I have had initial discussions with him and it will be in front of the Committee, hopefully, by the end of February.

Thank you.

225

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Leadbeater.

**Deputy Leadbeater:** Thank you, sir.

230 Deputy Inder knows what I am going to be asking about, it is something I have been banging on about for the last few years. Our fishing industry has gone from a once vibrant, profitable area of our economy to being on its knees. Octopus are eating virtually everything from lobsters to scallops.

235 Can the President tell me how advanced negotiations for Guernsey to join the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna are, in order for our fleet to gain quota and have the ability to diversify into the tuna markets and areas of our blue economy, such as catch and release sport fishing like we now see across the UK and elsewhere? Whilst this will be no magic bullet, it will create opportunities for our fleet to diversify and does he believe that the industry is now in need of state subsidy, similar to that provided to farmers by E&I?

240 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** I think there are two parts to that question. One is the ICCAT issue and there has been no real progress since the September update when the same question was asked. The membership of ICCAT is still with DEFRA and I have had no updates, so I take it that it is in their system but I will pursue it for Deputy Leadbeater and see if I can actually get something that looks like a date.

245 On the matter of subsidising the industry, as we appear to be doing for the farmers, in reality through you, sir, and to Deputy Leadbeater, one of the difficulties, I think, that the fishing industry has, it has an association of fishermen, if that is indeed the correct term, but in the last four years I have never had any of them through my door.

250 So what they cannot do is do things through the media where quite clearly, and I refer to Deputy de Sausmarez, there is some quick clear support there for the farming industry because they seem a bit organised, but until they walk through our door I simply cannot guess my way through the problems, which are significant, but the fishing associations do not appear to be organised enough to walk in our door to have that conversation. I hope that answers the question.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

260 I thank the President for his update statement. As he acknowledges, there is concern about the lack of an inter-Island sea link route to Jersey. I just wonder if the President could advise what he would consider to be an acceptable outcome on the inter-Island route in terms of frequency per week?

Thank you.

265 **Deputy Inder:** Sir, I heard acceptable outcome, but I did not hear the last end of the question.

**The Bailiff:** Can you repeat your question please, Deputy Burford?

270 **Deputy Burford:** Certainly. An acceptable outcome in terms of the frequency of rotations per week to Jersey by sea.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

275 **Deputy Inder:** Well, as we have not completed negotiations, at the moment it is actually zero. But what I can inform Members, because almost certainly this was going to come up and I know that, Deputy Gabriel, I may be about to answer the question he told me he was going to ask. On Monday afternoon, I had a constructive call with Deputy Morel, Deputy Morel has confirmed that schedules for Brittany services into Jersey are supported and approved in Jersey.

280 There was a discussion about weekend inter-Island links, we may improve on that as well. At the moment Brittany Ferries are suggesting one boat into Jersey on the Wednesday. We have to negotiate with DFDS to get it reciprocated, so that would be two visits and then we are looking at the weekend ferry schedules as well.

285 So, it is not acceptable today. It has gone on longer than it has but I am afraid, and we were published in the end of November this year and Jersey, just statement of fact, has just taken longer to publish their schedules. But until those schedules are published, we do not know what slots are available.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gabriel.

290

**Deputy Gabriel:** Thank you, sir.

295 I have had to swiftly change tack because that was the question I was going to ask. Recently we all had an email from a Floral Guernsey representative and, whilst not directly under Economic Development's control, it comes under their umbrella, Floral Guernsey, and Floral Guernsey receive a grant from the Tourism Management Board, which Economic Development formed.

We are told this year that there is no grant available, a reduction on last year's £42,000. Considering the complementary work to tourism that Floral Guernsey do undertake and also the match funding that their members do against the grant, could I have Deputy Inder's, and his Committee's, view on the removal of that grant and whether it could be reinstated?

300 Thank you,

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

305 **Deputy Inder:** Well, my job is to give the Committee view but the Committee has not really discussed that particular matter. But all I will say, because I cannot answer the question that Deputy Gabriel wants, is will Economic Development put its hand in its separate budget pocket to support that? I cannot answer that now.

What I will say is that when we take the decision to move stuff out to the industry to determine where the grants should go, we should, in the main, support that and that is what has happened.

310 The grant funding comes from, again, the taxpayer. We do not get into this position where politicians start picking and choosing. It did not work last time, it did not work for the first two years and part of the TMP's role is to make those determinations of which, I assume, Deputy Vermeulen must have been part of that as a Member of the TMB.

315 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Blin.

**Deputy Blin:** Thank you, sir.

May I ask to the President, there is a lot of concerns about connectivity, sea connectivity, air connectivity. £45,000 was spent on a further Frontier Economics report; we have had the summary  
320 report. It just feels to me that there is a feeling of a shroud of secrecy. Why do we not get the full report and what are the next stages, given the concerns on the subject matter?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder:

325 **Deputy Inder:** Thank you, sir.

Happy to answer that, there is an impetuosity there and I am afraid we are heading towards an election and it is really quite important that Members get access to that information. What we have said, and I do not know if Deputy Blin actually read the report and the output from it, but what we actually said was we gave the headline views on the three main areas and we also said that there  
330 would be a meeting on the 6th February, of which he has probably already had the invite, where the full report will be presented to, one, the business community separately and secondly to States' Members on the 6th February. Straight after that, it will be published.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

335

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

I welcome the contract with Brittany Ferries but I know there have been a number of people in the Island who have expressed concerns about whether a standalone Guernsey contract would be financially viable. Now it has been open for booking for some time, I do not expect Deputy Inder to  
340 be a spokesman for Brittany Ferries, but does he have any idea about how the booking pattern is going and whether those fears are legitimate, or whether it looks as if the new contract will be sustainable?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

345

**Deputy Inder:** Yes, I can do that. I think one of the important things is, unlike previously, I have asked, in fact I have demanded, that the lead of Brittany Ferries provides data on a regular basis to, effectively, Visit Guernsey to determine that. At the moment the bookings are holding up. The important thing will be, there is no two ways about it and there is nothing particularly confidential  
350 here, what will make the French route work is French people filling up those boats coming to Guernsey.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

355 **The Bailiff:** Deputy de Lisle.

**Deputy de Lisle:** Thank you, sir.

Twenty-24, last year, was a disaster in terms of the Guernsey cruise liner industry. Very few vessels, mainly small vessels, and I note again this year, with what is proposed, a large proportion,  
360 again, of small vessels for 2025. The future for the industry, sir, does not look bright. So, my question to Economic Development is, what is being done to attract back the larger cruise liners to Guernsey?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** It is a theme and not an unreasonable theme as Deputy de Lisle is a retailer in Guernsey. Now we need to go back again to MSC and Princess Cruises challenges. The two cruise liners reduced their itineraries in 2023, so that is Princess Cruises and MSC. Now they have got three-year burns on their on their plans to come back to the Island.

As a consequence of that, we set up a steering group with Deputy Vermeulen and Members of STSB. One of the significant issues with these larger vessels is infrastructure in the harbours. It is as simple as that. It is paying to offload passengers safely and easily in inclement weather. So that work is ongoing.

In some better news, the engagement is continuing and it is likely, even though there has been, effectively, a couple of years of not particularly good results, the negotiations with the cruise operators are ongoing and we are likely to see an uplift back in, say, 2026-27. I agree with him but sometimes we have got to realise, I believe, it is not always the fault of Government, circumstances simply change and it is an infrastructure issue as well at harbours which, ultimately, needs to be addressed as well.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

It may have been confirmed previously but for the avoidance of doubt could Deputy Inder confirm that inter-Island travel was included in the original joint tender and what, at the point of acceptance by Guernsey of that joint tender, was indicated by Brittany Ferries in the way of inter-Island travel?

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** I am not entirely sure I understand the question but, I think, the first part of the question is whether as part of the joint tender, was inter-Island travel part of the scheduling? Yes, it was, if that is the answer to the question.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy St Pier.

**Deputy St Pier:** Thank you, sir.

Could the President update the Assembly please on progress and timelines for the review of the Guernsey Competition & Regulatory Authority?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Again, only yesterday the Committee sat on a presentation from two parts of the consulting process. That review, with a fair wind, we are sitting on February 6th, I believe, where we will have the policy letter in better shape and I think we have got about five weeks before submission at the at the beginning of March before we get it into the States for debate.

But to answer the question that Deputy St Pier did not ask, we took all of the soundings from the States' Assembly, particularly the piece that he mentioned on competition in the trust area, and that will be fed into it and the Committee will have some decisions to be made. There has been a significant amount of consultation and submissions from those affected by regulation and the States' Assembly is going to have to make some very hard decisions.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

I thank, Deputy Inder for answering the first part of my question. The second part is on the assumption that the inter-Island travel was included in the joint tender process, at the point of Brittany Ferries submitting their tender for consideration it must have included some level of inter-Island travel. So, at what point did Brittany Ferries move away from that schedule or is it still possible to include the inter-Island travel that they had as part of their tender process?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** I will try and answer Deputy Taylor, he is trying to be a bit too forensic and I think he has probably gone a little bit too far in his forensic analysis. The joint tender included inter-Islands. As soon as we decided to award the tender partially to Guernsey only quite clearly the inter-Island part fell away and the reason the inter-Island part fell away is neither Guernsey nor Jersey can create, or basically demand, schedules from either Island, they have to be done by negotiation. The ramps in both the Islands are strategic assets and we knew that when we made that decision that the inter-Island discussion would have to happen another day. I think that answers his question.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

**Deputy Gollop:** Deputy Inder mentioned a review on the banking sector and working with them to ensure credit referencing, etc. But will the Committee continue to work closely with the banks in at least two other regards? One is the tendency for clearing banks to close down regional outlets. Already, there has been concern expressed on the bridge about a sub-branch closure in the north of the Island and, of course, we would not like to see any more closures in Alderney. The other question relates to the apparent failure to get equity release proposals through the lenders and banks as an option for Guernsey people as distinct from UK residents.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** The opening and closure of branches are entirely operational decisions but I think this Island needs to realise that everything is only going one way and it is going to be digital and as soon as we accept that we will be in a better place. On the matter that Deputy Gollop mentioned about equity release, I have no knowledge of that at the moment but if he would like to write an email to myself, I will pass that on to our Finance Director and I will try and get an answer for him.

On other matters, on credit references, there are two parts of this. I mentioned in my update that we have got the Home Department policy letter, which deals with the Electoral Roll part but the other part of it is the Guernsey Registry IT project and the solutions for them, in terms of credit referencing, but it is part of the project.

I did say in a previous statement that I was hoping to get it done by the end of quarter four of last year; that simply did not happen. Time got in the way. But we are considering bulk load and download functionality. That will allow the registry to create a product, will allow customers to obtain either on demand or as routine daily scrape of the full register or individual entity.

So, in short, there are two parts of Government trying to work very closely together to deliver something. It is not quite matching at the moment. The Home Department are probably going to be ahead of us, but Registry is fully minded and will deliver it. If it is not this term –

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder, your time is up.

**Deputy Inder:** Shortly.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Cameron.

**Deputy Cameron:** Thank you, sir.

Given the significant contributions the third sector makes to our community and the growing importance of corporate social responsibility, particularly as many local charities are struggling due to a lack of funding and with the burden falling largely on a handful of organisations such as Specsavers, Ravenscroft, Skipton, what steps has the Committee *for* Economic Development taken to engage Guernsey's high net worth individuals and businesses in providing funding or partnerships for the third sector and key community events such as Liberation Day?

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Well, the short answer to that is none whatsoever. Unlike Deputy Cameron, I do not think it is Government's job to do anything, to do absolutely everything. If charities, and we have got some incredibly good charities in Guernsey and very well organised, it really is up to them to talk to those high-net-worth individuals. It is not the job of Government.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy St Pier.

**Deputy St Pier:** Thank you, sir.

There has been a significant loss of inter-Island connectivity with Jersey over the last decade or so with the reduction in frequency on the air routes and the increase in fares to the point where it really is out of the reach of many in our community to be able to travel readily to Jersey and, of course, with the changed ferry arrangements there is the loss of, or certainly the potential risk of a loss of connectivity there. Is that a matter of concern to the Committee to which they intend to have any policy response?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Absolutely. I am glad Deputy St Pier has picked that up because he has said it has been 10 years of decline. Over the last 10 years the inter-Island service has dropped by effectively half, that is what happened, probably not helped by the ferry contract over the next year or so. But hopefully he will remember that it was pertinent to me that I was very minded that there are a lot of people that simply cannot – as annoying as being stuck in London overnight is for a lot of people, most people in this States' Assembly can probably afford it – there are a lot of people that cannot afford it.

I genuinely believe, in fact it is embedded in the airport statement, that travel on and off the Island is part of social provision. People should be allowed to leave this Island, be they rich man, poor man, beggar man and, well maybe not the thief, so I agree and that is, certainly, forward in my mind, the affordability element needs to be addressed in some way.

**The Bailiff:** Last question, Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I am not sure I quite got to an answer on the last question I asked. So I will try and put it in a different and clearer manner. I appreciate all the difficulties involved in trying to increase the inter-Island frequency on the ferries, but could the President indicate what he thinks an acceptable outcome would be? Would it be one return sailing a week, two a week, three a week, just in those terms?

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Whatever will happen it is going to be reciprocated. So, if we put one in to Jersey on a Wednesday there will be a reciprocation somewhere else in the week. So, again, it is effectively four rotations if we have one on a Wednesday and one somewhere in the week and then one on a Saturday, I am just making these up, this all needs to be negotiated, I think that will be the limit.

In between that we have also got Manche Iles Express and there is another player in the market who is expressing some interest in looking at the inter-Island links as well. But without a shadow of a doubt, this is not just about foot passengers, this is actually about freight. We send something like one container, supposedly, a day I believe it is, inter-Island. That container may not have a lot of value, but what is in it is. But we have got to get horse boxes, we have got to get cars, we have got to get cyclists and we have got to get sportsmen and women inter-Island and both Islands are absolutely keen to deliver on that.

**General update –  
Statement by the President of the Scrutiny Management Committee**

**The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, we will now move on to the second statement from a Committee and this time it is the President of the Committee *for* Scrutiny Management. Actually, no, I think we will call it the Scrutiny Management Committee properly, I was just reading off of my draft of my Order Paper. So, I invite Deputy Burford to deliver that statement and then there will be questions.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to update the Assembly on the work of the Scrutiny Management Committee and to answer Members' questions. The majority of this update will concentrate on two areas, the structure of Scrutiny and the Agilisys Review. But first, I will summarise the other areas of the Committee's work.

Our programme of live-streamed public hearings continued through 2024. The SMC mandate requires the Committee to promote and facilitate the participation in Scrutiny of the widest possible range of States' Members. On behalf of the SMC, I would therefore like to thank Deputies de Sausmarez, Dudley-Owen, Kazantseva-Miller, Soulsby, Oliver, Matthews, Gabriel, Roffey, St Pier, Meerveld, Murray, Taylor and Deputy Trott for sitting on Scrutiny Panels during this term.

Thanks must also go to Deputy Aldwell who took part as a witness for the Island-wide voting review and, of course, to all Committee Members and officers who were subjected to the hearings. My Committee fully appreciates the considerable work and time commitment that being a witness at a hearing involves and we thank them for their co-operation and engagement.

I would also like to take the opportunity in this, my last update as Scrutiny President, to thank the numerous members of our community who have assisted the Committee during this term for their professional insight and assistance and, in particular, our elected non-States' Members, Grace Ruddy and Christa Feltham, together with our former Member John Whittle and, of course, thanks must go to my two political colleagues, Deputies Fairclough and Dyke.

The Committee is currently finalising two reviews. The first of these, led by Deputy Fairclough, focuses on the £3 billion of financial assets invested by the States. The performance of these funds plays a significant role in the overall wellbeing of the public purse and, as a result, the management of these investments has been regularly reviewed by those charged with financial oversight responsibilities, including the previous Public Accounts Committee.

Given the importance and the impact attached to the management of public funds, the current Scrutiny Management Committee considered that it was essential to revisit this area to review the new governance arrangements that have been put in place. The SMC is also reviewing recruitment and retention in the public sector.



An effective approach to recruitment and retention is crucial, not least in the areas of nursing, teaching and Law Enforcement to provide consistent, robust and cost-effective public services. The review examines the processes and procedures currently used to recruit staff, ways of retaining them, as well as other potential innovations that might be considered to improve performance.

565 The Legislation Review Panel has continued under the chairmanship of Deputy Dyke. Last year saw a significantly increased workload, primarily due to Moneyval and I would particularly like to thank our two local advocates, Simon Howitt and William Simpson, who sit as Members of the LRP for their very significant contribution.

570 At the beginning of 2022, the SMC introduced a Freedom of Information appeals process in accordance with a Resolution of this Assembly made in response to the SMC policy letter on the matter. This new service, which I am pleased to confirm was introduced fully within existing resources, provides the opportunity for members of the public to challenge Government decisions not to release or supply specific information via requests made under the Freedom of Information Code.

575 This independent appeals process, which is led by suitably skilled and experienced panel members, has introduced an additional check and balance on the transparency of Government locally. For clarity, the SMC Members are not involved in any decision-making regarding appeals, which are handled by the independent panel and supported by SMC officers. The Committee will include a report from members of the Freedom of Information Appeals Panel in their end of term report.

580 Moving to the Scrutiny structure, last October I prepared a speech in response to a motion submitted by Deputy Gollop to debate the Scrutiny 2023 Appendix Report. That motion was withdrawn, but a section of that speech pertained to the structure of Scrutiny. It sought to explain how Scrutiny is currently configured.

585 It is clear, both generally and from recent proposals that have been placed before this Assembly, that this is not widely understood. In fact, the lack of understanding runs so deep that a late draft of the report by the P&R sub-group on the Machinery of Government proposed changes to how Scrutiny should be structured that are already covered by its existing mandate.

590 No one understands more than Scrutiny Members how difficult it is to be across all Committee mandates, so I welcome the opportunity to explain how and why parliamentary scrutiny is arranged in the way it is and why it was changed from the structure that existed prior to 2016. The process of change essentially began in 2012, with the publication of the independent review into the Scrutiny Committees of the States of Guernsey, known as the Crowe Report. Subsequently, two policy letters were published one in 2014 and one in 2015 by the States' Review Committee.

595 In these policy letters the broad recommendations of the Independent Scrutiny Review were taken forward into Propositions, resulting in the arrangement we have today. Indeed, the Propositions in the policy letter relating to the reorganisation of the parliamentary scrutiny functions were carried by an overwhelming majority of 40 Members in favour, with just two against.

600 One of the key advantages of the current system that has been in place since 2016 is its immense flexibility to draw freely on those, both inside and outside of the States, to sit on panels and undertake scrutiny work generally. My Committee has used this flexibility with local experts joining various panels, hearings and reviews.

605 There is scope to take that still further and, crucially, the system already allows that to happen. All the various parts of the Scrutiny function are overseen by the SMC, which has ultimate responsibility to this Assembly. As Members will know the SMC comprises three Deputies and two non-States' Members chosen for their skills and elected by this Assembly. Unlike non-States Members on Principal Committees, these two people are endorsed by the Members of this Assembly and have voting rights, so have a direct bearing on the decisions of the Committee.

610 Much of the comment around Scrutiny in the Assembly this term has been about the Public Accounts function. In 2020, the new SMC continued with the Financial Scrutiny Panel arrangement that the previous Committee had established for this purpose, using some States' and non-States

Members of the SMC and various Members drawn from the community with relevant experience of financial matters.

While this has worked satisfactorily it has suffered from a lack of public visibility and, in retrospect, I now think a better approach, which is perfectly within the gift of the SMC under the current system, would have been for the SMC to have appointed a Member of this Assembly with significant, relevant experience within the States to lead on financial scrutiny together with persons drawn from outside of the States, an approach not hugely dissimilar to recent proposals in this Assembly.

Additionally, in retrospect, and although this might seem a minor and semantic point, the designation given to this Public Accounts function by the last Committee of 'financial scrutiny panel' is less than ideal. In hindsight, it would have been much better for my Committee to have renamed it the Public Accounts Panel at the outset in the same way that as at the beginning of this term the SMC, through the States, renamed the Access to Public Information Code as the Freedom of Information Code, thus stating what it does making it more visible, accessible and obvious.

But the really important point here is that a Public Accounts function that is led by someone who is not a Member of the SMC, or not even a Member of this States, is perfectly possible under the current Scrutiny system, if that is the way the SMC wish to structure it. No requête, Machinery of Government review or revolution is needed for that to happen.

Earlier this term, I considered proposing a return to the pre-2016 system, which led me to go back and spend many hours re-reading the Independent Scrutiny Review, the policy letters and the relevant parts of *Hansard*. It is the indisputable case that the current system is orders of magnitude more flexible than what preceded it and I am now of the very firm view that any changes or reversion to the previous system would be an unnecessary and, indeed, retrograde step.

Suggestions have been, however, floated to have no parliamentary involvement in Scrutiny whatsoever and I need to push back strongly against that notion. Not only would such a system be cutting ourselves adrift from the established norms of almost every other parliamentary democracy, crucially, it would make the Scrutiny function significantly less politically accountable.

So, if anyone else in the dying days of this Assembly is considering proposing change, I would urge them to come and talk to the Committee but before they do, to read the 2012, 2015 and 2016 reports to gain a greater insight into why we are where we are and what is possible. We are hugely guilty as a States of constantly wanting to break and remake things. In doing so, we rarely, if ever, seem to go back and examine and learn in forensic detail what led to where we are now and why or consider that evolution is often more productive, if significantly less newsworthy, than revolution.

Now to the Agilisys review. This has been an extremely complex review to execute and, firstly, I must take the opportunity to thank the volunteer panel members. They have brought invaluable knowledge and a significant private sector expertise across a variety of information technology disciplines for their assistance to the Committee in this essential work.

Early last year we advised P&R of our preliminary recommendations as we were acutely aware that they were actioning changes in the wake of the 2022 IT outages and the PWC review into those outages. We believed it was vital those changes were made in the light of our preliminary findings and that the delay in full publication would not, therefore, mean that opportunities for significant improvement were lost. There is a myriad of reasons why publication has taken as long as it has but believe me when I say that no one has wanted to get this review off their desk more than I.

Reasons for the delay include the difficulty of getting access to all the necessary people, especially at the same time, access to documentation, legal hurdles and problems and a very complex fact checking process. In order to release any reports sooner, it would have been possible to have simply published a summary report together with the recommendations. However, as the Committee will attest, I have been adamant throughout the process that the entire report must be put into the public domain and I am pleased to say that will take place on Monday.

Reviews are often conducted because things have gone wrong and it is human nature to want to have someone or something to blame for failures. The review does not shy away from stating

where we consider failures occurred, but from the outset the SMC was clear that the overriding objective of our review was to discover what had not worked and why.

665 It was also important to use the information gained to set out a future path via the recommendations that can provide an optimal IT structure moving forward. It is essential that this structure provides value for money and works for both those in the States and, most importantly, for the community we serve and we believe our review will contribute to that objective.

Sir, I thank Members for their attention and will be happy to answer any questions.

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**The Bailiff:** Thank you very much. There is an opportunity to ask questions within the mandate of the Scrutiny Management Committee.

Deputy Brouard.

675 **Deputy Brouard:** Thank you, sir.

Now we are getting to the end of term for Scrutiny and it has been reviewing, in many areas, what actual policies have changed as a result or at success to or for Committees to give evidence to the value of Scrutiny in the way it has been done? What actual evidence of changes that have happened because of the Scrutiny review?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** I thank Deputy Brouard for his questions. I do not have a list in front of me but I am quite sure that if Deputy Brouard would like to give me time, I can go through and come back to him with a reply on that.

685

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Matthews.

690 **Deputy Matthews:** Thank you, sir.

I did not want to pre-empt the result of the review, but I did wonder if the President agreed with me that a separate Public Accounts Committee would be a very desirable outcome and might help the States in overcoming, or certainly dealing with, some of the issues of accountability that are occasionally issues that face States and States' projects?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I think I covered at length and in detail in my update statement, why I do not think that is a necessary change.

700

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

705 **Deputy Gollop:** As a believer myself in a Public Accounts Committee, would not the President consider that such a body could actually evolve into more of an audit commission and/or employ an auditor general and that it would be better if all of the staff attached to the Scrutiny function were not necessarily part of the Civil Service but in a stand-alone organisation?

710 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I think that represents a significant change and if the Scrutiny function is to be looked at in any future Machinery of Government review, that would be the time to examine all the ramifications of that. I do not think that is something to which I can give an answer on the hoof.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Oliver.

**Deputy Oliver:** Thank you, sir.

I have always thought that the Scrutiny Committee should be someone that you almost feared when you went to speak with them. How do you think, being on the Scrutiny Committee for four years now, that you could actually give it more teeth and that it would actually become something that is a real asset to the States because, I think, at the moment you have done a really good job, but in my opinion, it is bumbling along a little bit. How would you give it more teeth?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

Clearly, we did not frighten Deputy Oliver quite enough on the one occasion that we reviewed her Committee and, I think, we were, in fact, the first Scrutiny Committee ever to review the DPA as such. So, I will bear her comment in mind, but I think it depends in what area Deputy Oliver is looking.

In terms of the public hearings, I think, we really do have a lot of teeth. We shine a considerable light on the workings of the Committees and get those in the public domain, particularly through the live streaming of the hearings, which has increased the coverage of those hearings and the things that are reported to the public exponentially really.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Dudley-Owen.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you, sir.

Having been privileged to sit on the Scrutiny Management Committee Panels on a couple of occasions, does the President agree with me that rather than scrutinising the entire mandates of Committees, which are huge and very deep, that actually a better approach could possibly be, for next term, to pick up on thematics arising from certain Committees related to work that they are doing?

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford:

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I thank Deputy Dudley-Owen for her question. Yes, I hear where she is coming from and I think there would definitely be merit in that suggestion. So we could, indeed, have representatives of several Committees whose work crosscuts with each other and in terms of thematic hearings, of course, we recently did one with Economic Development purely on the ferries. So, those options are available and, I think, it is a constructive suggestion.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir.

I am going to do a little bit of a variation on the theme of Deputy Oliver's question actually. Again, having sat on both sides of the equation in this political term with the Scrutiny Management

765 Committee. In my experience, it does have some teeth, they have been used on me and everyone else and, quite rightly, that is their job. But my question really is are there any teeth that Deputy Burford thinks the Scrutiny Management Committee is currently missing that she thinks they should have?

770 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

775 There is a provision in the Law for us to compel the production of information so, I think, we do have adequate legal backing. Fortunately, we have not been in a position this term where we have had to use it but I think, as in most things, as in the Freedom of Information Appeals Panel, the very fact of that existence means of itself that people are less likely to refuse to release information.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Lisle.

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**Deputy de Lisle:** Well, thank you, sir.

I was pleased to hear Deputy Burford mentioned the contribution of the Legislation Review Committee, particularly with the vast amount of material that had to be reviewed through the Moneyval process. But it just seems to me that a lot of that work with regard to legislation and, again, mention has been made of Public Accounts as well, but it seems to me that the Committee for Scrutiny Management should actually recognise the Members of the Legislation Review Panel –

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Lisle, I am afraid the time for posing the question has already passed.

790 **Deputy de Lisle:** Sir, I would like to –

**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Lisle, your time is up.

**Deputy de Lisle:** Thank you.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

800 The Scrutiny Management Committee recently rejected my request for further scrutiny into the events leading to the sale of Fort Richmond. The Scrutiny Management Committee concluded that Government knowingly selling part of the family's home on a questionable map, resulting in said family incurring significant legal and emotional costs over several years was not worthy of their time. Could Deputy Burford confirm whether this decision was unanimous or by a majority?

805 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you.

I am not sure I am entirely in agreement with the framing of Deputy Taylor's question but, nevertheless, I do not have the voting records in front of me. It was considered by the Committee, at Deputy Taylor's request, and the decision of the Committee, whether by majority or unanimous, was that this was not a matter for Scrutiny to handle. We did suggest to Deputy Taylor, I think, that if he had greater concerns around the property services aspect of it, with other examples where he felt errors may have occurred, then at that point we would be more inclined to look into the matter.

810

Thank you.

815

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

**Deputy Gollop:** Some of my colleagues say stop comparing ourselves to other places, especially Jersey, the Island over the way. But I am aware that Jersey has a large Scrutiny function of which part of the process is specialist standing panels of Members to act as shadow experts to the Principal Committees/Ministers.

Would Deputy Burford and the Scrutiny Committee be interested not just in working with the *ad hoc* panels, but in structuring it so in future, as Deputy Dudley-Owen and others implied, there would be standing panels on areas such as, for example, economic affairs or children's affairs or Social Services, for example?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you and I thank Deputy Gollop for his questions.

Yes, Jersey has a different system, they have a different Government system and, crucially, while I see the merit in Deputy Gollop's suggestion I would make two points. Firstly, they have a significantly greater staff resource to be able to run all these various standing panels and secondly, we should not forget at any point that every Member of this Assembly remains a scrutineer and so some of the work has to come from that direction given the level of resource that the Scrutiny Management Committee has.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gabriel.

**Deputy Gabriel:** Thank you, sir.

I am asking the question I genuinely do not know the answer to, despite being a co-opted Member onto Scrutiny Management. To enhance the scrutiny of Committees, certainly at hearings, are Committee minutes available to Scrutiny Management and, if not, do you think they should be? Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** I thank Deputy Gabriel.

We have not had cause, to my recollection, to ask for Committee minutes, but I am quite sure that should we wish to see something, we could compel it under the provision in the Law. But we have not had occasion where we felt that that was necessary.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy St Pier.

**Deputy St Pier:** Sir, with the benefit of four years' experience as the President of the Committee and in an era of tight financial resources, does the President and the Committee have any advice to their successors on how to squeeze more out of the budget for Scrutiny? In other words, how to improve the productivity of the resources which the Committee has in the next term?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** I thank Deputy St Pier for his question and, indeed, for the numerous panels that he has assisted us with. I think there is always more that can be done. I think, possibly, a certain amount of reorganisation around the Public Accounts function of the Committee would be beneficial.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Oliver.

**Deputy Oliver:** Thank you.

870 I have sat both with Deputy Burford as the scrutineer and also been scrutinised. Does Deputy Burford think that the time allotted is enough to actually properly investigate that Committee?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

875 **Deputy Burford:** Thank you.

I assume that Deputy Oliver is referring to the two-hour period for a hearing. We have generally found that to be adequate, on the odd occasion we have overrun the time, but I think two hours is a fairly adequate session and, of course, we can always follow up with Committees with written questions that sometimes arise out of the hearings and often Committees are providing us with

880 further information after the hearing. So, it is not necessarily just what you see in that two-hour window.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

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**Deputy Gollop:** I sat for many years and the Legislation Scrutiny Panel and its predecessor, we often sat for four hours, sometimes double, to cover the amount of legislation but always in private. Would the President support a more thorough review of the legislative scrutiny process by, perhaps both making it a separate standalone Committee again, but also one in which from time to time

890 would have more resources and be able to meet in public for matters of public interest in terms of upcoming legislation, almost a kind of second reading?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

895 **Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

There are quite a few points there in Deputy Gollop's question, so I will try to get across most of them. I think I have made my view on the structure clear so I would not necessarily support moving the Legislation Review Panel out into a separate Committee. Deputy Gollop references resources and more resources, which I know is something he is generally very keen on but, of course, resources

900 have to be paid for, so that is always going to be the constraint.

In terms of discussing certain areas of legislation with public interest in a public forum, I think that is often done in a way during the public hearings because, of course, legislation is generally preceded by a policy letter and we do examine and discuss policy aspects with the Committees concerned.

905 Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

910 Legislative scrutiny tends to be entirely focused on new Laws that are coming through and seeing whether they are correctly drafted, etc. Does the President think there should be an extended role of looking at the body of legislation that already exists in this Island, some of it very old, to see whether or not it is still fit for purpose or requires modernisation?

915 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you.

I think that, to a degree, is something that would fall more in the remit of Policy & Resources. However, again, it is a question of resources and I think everything ultimately comes back to that.

920 So it probably goes on the nice to have but not affordable today list.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

925 **Deputy Bury:** Thank you, sir.

The President mentioned in her statement a few things that, in retrospect, she may have done differently or may have liked to change and I did not quite get a clear indication on whether we can expect to see those changes come forward before the end of term or whether they may form part of the handover to the incoming Committee. If we could just get some clarity on that?

930 Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you.

935 I thank Deputy Bury for her question. Yes, it is the intention of the Committee to produce a comprehensive handover document to the next Committee, together with our experiences, much as I have outlined in my update statement.

Thank you.

940 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

We have got a wide range of support for significant areas of land to be transferred to the Guernsey Development Agency. Does Deputy Burford not think that in the face of a glaring mistake that occurred at Fort Richmond, more concerningly the refusal to acknowledge any wrongdoing on the part of the States, now is actually the time to scrutinise our policies and procedures for land transfers, instead of passing it back to a single independent Member.

950 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I think I have advised Deputy Taylor of the decision of the Committee, but to his wider point I did bring an amendment to the Development Agency policy letter, which was successful, which incorporated the Guernsey Development Agency under the ambit of the Freedom of Information Code, which it otherwise would not have been subject to. So there is the possibility to obtain information via that method.

Thank you.

960 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Queripel, is it your wish to be relevéd?

**Deputy Queripel:** Yes please, sir.

**The Bailiff:** All right, well, then I will mark you as present.  
Deputy St Pier.

965 **Deputy St Pier:** Thank you, sir.

I wonder whether the President or the Committee have any views based on their experience in relation to the need or otherwise, for a Public Services Ombudsperson, consideration of which, obviously, has not progressed during this term and is further into the future, but just based on the experience of the Committee during this term, whether that is something which has emerged from the engagement of their mandate through their work?



**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

975 **Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

It has not been a matter that has been discussed at the Committee. So, therefore, I cannot speak on behalf of the Committee. But certainly it was something that I supported when it came to the Assembly.

Thank you.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Queripel.

985 **Deputy Queripel:** Sir, some Members of our community say that Scrutiny's function is fairly lame on the grounds we are scrutinising ourselves and that when Scrutiny undertakes hearings, they ask the questions of the Committee, the Committee answers those questions and then everyone goes away and nothing else happens. So, it all seems rather a waste of time. Can Deputy Burford comment on that please?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

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**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir, and I thank Deputy Queripel for his question.

We use a large number of people from our community in our panels, hearings and reviews, so it is not the case that it is simply coming from States' Members to other States' Members and this Committee has really accelerated that function. The other thing, of course, is the media. So, we have quite wide-ranging media reporting of the hearings and of various things that are said. So, it does not just end at the end of the Scrutiny hearing. Also, there are often follow up items from the Scrutiny Committee to the Committees that we have questioned. So, I would disagree that it just comes to an end at the end of the Scrutiny hearing.

Thank you.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Le Tocq.

**Deputy Le Tocq:** Thank you, sir.

1005 Does Deputy Burford agree with me that if there was, perhaps, greater definition of Government executive in our system that it might actually improve the quality and the ability of Scrutiny to outwork its function?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

1010 **Deputy Burford:** Sir, I am not sure whether we have an executive system or not is exactly in the mandate of the Scrutiny Committee. However, personally, I do not support an executive system, so it would be hard for me to agree, but I do accept that there are other ways of doing things depending on the model of Government that one has.

Thank you.

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## Questions for Oral Answer

### COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Commercial fishing of crabs and lobsters – Impact of octopus population growth

**The Bailiff:** Perfect timing, 20 minutes. We will now move into Question Time proper and the first set of questions are being put by Deputy Gollop to the President of the Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure*. So, Deputy Gollop, your first question, please.

1020 **Deputy Gollop:** I always thank Environment & Infrastructure and Deputy de Sausmarez's team for answering the question – even if the answer is, oh well. Since the freeze 1963 crabs and lobsters have been numerous in Guernsey fishing waters for the commercial fishing industry but recent climate change patterns and ecological ecosystems change are seeing a rise in predatory octopuses consuming crustaceans and scallops. How can the Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure* encourage and sustain the habitat balance and sustainable crab, lobster and shellfish numbers and minimise octopi – or is it octopuses? – consumption damage?

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**The Bailiff:** And the President, Deputy de Sausmarez, to reply please.

1030 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir.  
I think it is octopuses rather than octopi, but anyway. The current increase in the abundance of octopus in Bailiwick waters is likely causing a reduction in catches for many shellfish operators. The presence of octopus in our waters is not a new phenomenon as they have been previously observed in large numbers prior to 1963 and anecdotally before that time.

1035 The current increase in the octopus population is being observed throughout the English Channel on both the English and French coasts. The exact reason for the increase is not well understood and may be linked to climate change and other changes to the ecosystem. Octopus are not an invasive non-native species and are, therefore, not subject to any specific management which would be difficult to implement in any case.

1040 The Sea Fisheries team have spoken to a number of fishermen and it is clear that the problem is worse in some areas or with certain strings of gear set within an area. There is some evidence that the shellfish are still present but deterred from foraging as normal due to the presence of the octopus.

1045 Due to the dexterity of an octopus, there are not many mitigations available to the shellfish fishermen to prevent them from entering pots. As this appears to be part of a cyclical population event, there is nothing substantive that the Committee can do to restore a balance between octopus and shellfish and certainly not at a reasonable cost.

1050 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Gollop?

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes.  
We know the octopuses are very intelligent and that they are, perhaps, putting off the shellfish from fully moving around, but cannot the Environment & Infrastructure Committee, in concert with learned societies and the marine conservation people of Jersey, work to try to restore the habitat balance by introducing or relocating some of the other fish to get a better balance in the seascapes?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez. (*Interjection*)

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes, the fish could be moved, like the dolphins. *(Laughter)*

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**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I love the suggestion the fish relocation service but I am not convinced it is very practical or achievable!

We did, in fact, have some marine experts in the Committee on Monday and we did talk about octopus and I am afraid to say that those experts were unable to provide any other suggestions as well. Relocation was not actually one of them.

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The other thing that they pointed out is that I think the assumption that this is out of balance I am not sure ecologists would necessarily look at it in that way because these are cyclical population events and so I am not sure it is correct to assume that nature is out of balance. It is just one of the things that happens in that course.

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Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Leadbeater.

**Deputy Leadbeater:** Thank you, sir.

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Clearly the Committee has little option available to it to be able to assist the fishermen with this issue and Deputy de Sausmarez is right, this has happened previously, if you look back in historic documents, you can see it referenced. But does her Committee consider that it is worthwhile examining a subsidy for the fishing industry, similar to that given to the farming industry?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir.

I refer back, it is a slightly odd one, sea fisheries, because, actually, the political responsibility for sea fisheries does actually still sit with the Committee *for* Economic Development. So, I am not even sure where the line is in terms of answering this, but I do appreciate Deputy Leadbeater has asked about both Committees working together as has Deputy Gollop and, actually, I think the next question goes into some of that.

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But yes, we appreciate that times are certainly very tough but, I think, it would be something that would need to be discussed with the Committee *for* Economic Development as it is primarily in their mandate. So, I do feel a bit uncomfortable, effectively, trying to answer on behalf of Deputy Inder and his Committee. But I am certainly happy to explore that. There is a piece of work which is marine spatial planning, which I think, will engage that question and look to the future. So, there may well be a good platform for that conversation anyway.

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**The Bailiff:** Is this a second supplementary, Deputy Gollop?

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes, I know the late great Deputy Paint used to say, 'You cannot stop the fish swimming away from one place to another.' But I think I am on the side of the fishermen here but I am aware that in Jersey there has been more activism with marine spatial planning and the marine conservation area and as much as I want fishing to continue, would not the balance of habitat that previously existed may be sustain itself more if E&I and Economic Development worked with the fishing sector to ensure that current fishing practices are not in any way accelerating the changes in ecology?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, the purpose of marine spatial planning is partly, obviously, spatial, well it is primarily about spatial plan. But some of the things that come out of the marine spatial planning exercise can very much do things to support, for example the replenishment of fish stocks which supports the industry and it also can make sure that some practices are maybe limited to

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certain areas or do not take place in others, etc. So yes, I think the marine spatial planning work can achieve the kinds of outcomes that Deputy Gollop, I think, has in mind.

**The Bailiff:** Let us move to your second question, Deputy Gollop, to the President.

**Deputy Gollop:** Thank you very much.

Yes, I have met a concerned fisherman and am aware of the significant challenge for the fishing sector in declines in commercial catch and severe income restrictions. Will the Committee *for* the Environment & Infrastructure be working closely with the Committee *for* Economic Development and other stakeholders to appraise the situation and consider policies to support the fishing community replenishment and financial support in mitigation to sustain our fishing sector?

**The Bailiff:** The President, Deputy de Sausmarez, to reply please.

**Deputy De Sausmarez:** Officers supporting both Committees will continue to monitor the situation and ensure Members receive relevant updates. Fishermen are resilient and used to operating within a dynamic environment. A number of operators are trying to develop markets for octopus in conjunction with wholesalers and there may be opportunities arising with increased freight links to France expected in 2025.

**The Bailiff:** Supplementary question, Deputy Gollop.

**Deputy Gollop:** Perhaps two. I appreciate the answer Deputy Inder gave earlier too, but really in asking the same question to Deputy de Sausmarez, would she welcome input from the fishing sector as to what their concerns are and what their potential solutions are so that they could make, perhaps, a joint approach to the States for their future to both Environment & Infrastructure Sea Fisheries team and Economic Development to work on the issues Deputy Leadbeater and others are raising?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, our door is always open. That is perfectly self-evident and as I have said before in answers to previous questions and supplementary questions, the marine spatial planning work, I think, will provide a good opportunity for those kinds of conversations.

**The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

**Deputy Gollop:** I liked the answer about fishermen, fisher people, being resilient and dynamic and we have heard about the new tourism approaches to France next season. Will Economic Development be working with E&I – yes, indeed – to encourage people to eat octopus, a bit of a minority taste at the moment, but for those non-vegetarians maybe a change in our dietary habits would help the sector of Guernsey produce?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Sir, I feel unqualified to answer this question firstly, because I am not a Member of Economic Development to whom the question was actually posed, (*Interjection*) but secondly, I am actually vegetarian and I have never eaten fish in my life, so I cannot vouch for how tasty they are.

I am told, for those that have no qualms eating creatures, that they are quite delicious and that did actually come from a marine biologist, so I am told on good authority that they can be. But I think, more seriously, the point at the core of Deputy Gollop's question is a pertinent one because

it is about routes to market (**Deputy Gollop:** yes) and so I think if fishermen are to maximise this opportunity and make the best of an otherwise challenging situation, I think it will be about finding those routes to market and enabling them to use the resources that are available to them at this time when other resources are harder to find.

**The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy de Lisle.

**Deputy de Lisle:** Thank you, sir.

Can I ask what measures are being taken against pair trawling offshore the west coast and the damage to the fishing resource and the seabed actually, that is taking place as a result?

**The Bailiff:** I do not think that arises out of the answer given to the question, so I will disallow that question.

## STATES' ASSEMBLY & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

### States' Assembly candidates training – Publication of attendance

**The Bailiff:** Nobody else is rising, so we will move to the second set of questions under Rule 11 and these are being posed by Deputy Le Tissier to the President of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee. So your first question, please, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.

I regret having to ask these questions formally, but I was unable to get any answers informally. So, question one, will SACC review the decision to publish attendance of those attending the candidates training information session, bearing in mind the objections expressed both publicly and through the States' Members internal emails now that it has been seen as Government interference in the democratic process?

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** And the President, Deputy Meerveld, to reply, please.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Thank you, sir.

As in 2020 candidates will have individual pages linked to the election website. The Scrutiny Management Committee review into Island-wide voting demonstrated that 87% of respondents considered attendance at information sessions important, with just 4% against and, therefore, the Committee considered that placing attendance information on the candidate's page would be of assistance to the electorate. However, the Committee has reviewed its original decision and has agreed that it will remain the decision of each candidate as to whether they wish to include their attendance in their manifesto.

**The Bailiff:** Is this a supplementary, Deputy Le Tissier?

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Yes, I think depending on the answer next, I probably have two. Does the President of SACC have any advice to the Assembly on how this Assembly might, if it was so minded, require SACC to change its mind?

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** As my previous answer stated, SACC has changed its mind. Thank you, sir.

1210 **The Bailiff:** Is there a second supplementary, Deputy Le Tissier?

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.

Why does SACC want to interfere with the democratic process, one that is not seen in other jurisdictions, such as the UK?

1215 Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

1220 **Deputy Meerveld:** SACC does not want to interfere in the electoral process. The decision to publish the information was based on the findings of the Scrutiny Management report and the fact that the States of Guernsey is spending money putting these courses on and we thought it would be of value for the electorate to know who had taken up those courses. But, as I said in my previous answer, the decision has been changed and we will leave it to each candidate to do as they wish.

1225 **The Bailiff:** Your second question to the President, please, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.

If SACC intends to proceed despite the objections, what are the justifications for doing so?

1230 **The Bailiff:** And the President to reply, please.

**Deputy Meerveld:** I refer you to my response to question one.

**The Bailiff:** And your third question, please, Deputy Le Tissier.

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**Deputy Le Tisser:** Was the decision to publish attendance at training information sessions a unanimous decision of the Committee? If not, please would you advise the voting of each Member?  
Thank you.

1240 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld, to reply please.

**Deputy Meerveld:** There was no formal recorded vote on this specific issue as it was part of a wider discussion on electoral matters. However, the decision to now leave the inclusion of attendance information to the individual candidate was a unanimous one.

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**The Bailiff:** Is this a supplementary Deputy Le Tissier?

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Yes, I just have one, sir. Could the President tell me if the unanimous vote, which he mentioned, concerned all Members of the Committee or only those in attendance at a particular meeting?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** All Members were present at the Committee meeting when that decision was made. Therefore, it was a unanimous vote of all Members.

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**The Bailiff:** So your fourth question to the President, please, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.

1260 The media release dated 13th December from SACC does not give any clarity regarding publication of details, just a comment from the President. For example, does it apply to existing Members, returning Members or only first-time candidates? Please advise how this would be handled to fairly represent each candidate and how absence with good reason would be shown.

1265 **The Bailiff:** The President to reply please.

**Deputy Meerveld:** I refer you to the response to question one.

**The Bailiff:** Is this a supplementary question Deputy Le Tissier?

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**Deputy Le Tissier:** Just one. Would the President please answer my question on how existing Deputies' pages will be handled?

Thank you.

1275 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** I am not sure that arises out of the answer, sir.

1280 **The Bailiff:** Well, what you have said in response to the first question to which you cross-referred, was there will be a decision of each candidate. (**Deputy Meerveld:** Yes.) What Deputy Le Tissier is asking about is those who are seeking re-election?

1285 **Deputy Meerveld:** Again, it will be up to the discretion of individual Members. Having said which, the course was never designed for existing Members it was for people who have no experience of the States. Therefore, I think, existing Members will publish their experience in the States and the Committees they sit on, rather than attendance at a course that is meant to make them aware of how the States functions as, after all, they will have already been doing that for over four years.

1290 **The Bailiff:** Your fifth question to the President, please, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.

1295 We will soon get through these. Sir, this is five. Has SACC obtained advice from the Data Protection Office that publishing candidates' attendance without permission is legal under the Data Protection Law?

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** President, Deputy Meerveld to reply, please.

1300 **Deputy Meerveld:** Registration on the course included providing permission to publish attendance and, therefore, there was never any risk of breaching Data Protection Legislation.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Just one, sir.

1305 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Does SACC agree that if Deputies had been briefed on this answer prior to the media release, or engaged with Deputies and myself, that all these questions would not be required?

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Sir, I do not see how that arises out of the answer to the question.

**The Bailiff:** If you want to answer the question, you can.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Not particularly. Thank you. *(Laughter)*

**The Bailiff:** Your sixth and final question to the President, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.  
Does SACC consider it is being open and transparent to the Assembly in this matter?

**The Bailiff:** The President, Deputy Meerveld, to reply.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Yes.

**Deputy Trott:** Sir, can I ask a supplementary?

**The Bailiff:** If Deputy Le Tissier has any supplementaries I will take his first.

**Deputy Trott:** Of course.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** I have just got one, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Would SACC do things differently in the future to engender more confidence in his Committee?  
Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** I am sorry, sir, I did not hear the question.

**The Bailiff:** Can you repeat the question please, Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Would SACC do things differently in the future to engender more confidence in the Committee?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** I am not quite sure what SACC has done wrong, but I will take it back to the Committee for their consideration.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

**Deputy Trott:** Sir, in order to be open and transparent, would the President of SACC agree with me that the first of several important sessions directed towards new candidates organised by his Committee was superb?

**Deputy Gollop:** Hear, hear. *(Laughter)*

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.



1365 **Deputy Meerveld:** I am not sure that question arises out of the answer, but I am happy to confirm that, yes, it has gone very well and I hope that the future sessions will be equally well attended.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop, supplementary.

1370 **Deputy Gollop:** As a supplementary to the last supplementary, would the President agree that the two opening contributions from Deputy Trott and Deputy de Sausmarez were very thought provoking for the potential candidates, but there are still many, well, several, more weeks on Thursday evenings for potential candidates to attend and are there still places available for people to appraise themselves without being forced to publish and declare that they are being a candidate?

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**The Bailiff:** Okay, Deputy Meerveld, can you answer as to whether or not extra people can join?

1380 **Deputy Meerveld:** Yes, sir. We had nearly 70 potential candidates attend the first session. We would encourage anybody else who is interested in knowing more about the States or, potentially, standing to attend and there will be plenty of space in future sessions. At the last session, the hall was divided in half because there was a judo lesson going on next door; a different type of wrestling (*Laughter*) but in future sessions the whole hall will be available to us. So, there is plenty of space if additional people wish to attend.

Thank you, sir.

## STATES' TRADING SUPERVISORY BOARD

### Aurigny –

#### Aircraft availability issues and back-up plan

1385 **The Bailiff:** Right, well there are no more supplementary questions on that set of questions. Members of the States, I have given permission to Alderney Representative Snowdon to put a question pursuant to Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure to the President of the States' Trading Supervisory Board.

So, your question, please, Alderney Representative Snowdon.

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**Alderney Representative Snowdon:** Thank you, sir.

1395 The recent situation without any aircraft available for Alderney services between the 14th and 16th January has impacted the Island greatly. STSB, as the shareholder of Aurigny, therefore, have you raised concerns about how these events can be avoided in the future so the Island is not without any aircraft and do these include detailed backup plans in the event of no aircraft again?

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** And the President, Deputy Roffey, to reply, please.

1400 **Deputy Roffey:** I did indeed raise my concerns with Aurigny. The PSO contract is based on a two aircraft model, with one scheduled for flying and one kept on standby in the event of disruption or medevacs, so they generally benefit from a higher level of resilience than Aurigny's other operations.

1405 But during the annual heavy maintenance checks the contract allows for the available aircraft to be reduced to one. These checks are always planned for the quieter winter months and usually take four weeks to complete, but supply chain issues mean they have taken longer this winter.

Regrettably, the single aircraft in service suffered a technical fault in Southampton meaning both parts and engineers had to be sent from Guernsey to carry out repairs. Aurigny actually routed a scheduled flight to Exeter via Southampton to get them there more quickly. Once repairs had been completed test flights were then delayed by inclement weather, delaying a return to service.

In the meantime, Aurigny arranged boat transfers for affected passengers with Southampton passengers rerouted by air via Guernsey to connect with the boat. Whilst I am very sorry indeed for the disruption, I am satisfied that Aurigny did everything it reasonably could. Of course, an alternative would be to have other aircraft on standby during the winter maintenance program, but I am afraid the expense would be significantly outside the cost envelope for the contract set by P&R even assuming such aircraft were available.

**The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Alderney Representative Snowdon.

**Alderney Representative Snowdon:** Thank you, sir.

Would the President agree that this does show that the two-plane model is too fragile for Alderney and that some other solution may have to be looked at by air services? Can I just put on record just really quickly, thank you to P&R for the Alderney runway support recently.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** I do apologise, I would like that to be repeated I did not quite get it.

**Alderney Representative Snowdon:** Sorry.

**The Bailiff:** Could the question be repeated, perhaps slightly slower?

**Alderney Representative Snowdon:** Would the President agree that the two-plane model is too fragile and is a broken service, with it likely to happen more and more, therefore, there needs to be another solution, potentially, looked at in the near future to try and avoid this as it is going to keep on happening otherwise?

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** The two-plane model was, basically P&R issued a PSO making clear that a £2 million limit was available, which has more recently been reduced it seems, and the only bid that was able to be brought in that was compliant with that £2 million was from Aurigny and they have made clear that within that sum a two-plane model was all that could be achieved.

I would point out that, actually, the level of redundancy on the Alderney routes are, basically, one to two, i.e. two planes for when you actually need one to operate, on the rest of the Alderney services it is one to five. On EasyJet it is actually one to 23. So, I think the idea that there could be a third plane is very difficult, however, I am encouraging Aurigny to look at lateral thinking ways to address the issue of resilience within the PSO sum available and it is far too early to say anything publicly about that, but I know that they are looking to see whether something can be done.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes. Thank you.

I was one of those calls because I wanted to see what was going on in Alderney and I missed my opportunity, never mind. I can see the unaffordability under the current subsidy of a three-plane model but on the rare occasions when neither Dornier is available, would it not be possible, at least in the winter months, to temporarily hire a nine-seater private plane, an Islander type plane? I

1460 appreciate there will be a cost, maybe an insurance payment for it, but it is a temporary expedient until the model has been re-evaluated, but could that not be used in order to mitigate that kind of scenario that Alderney Representative Snowden referred to?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

1465 **Deputy Roffey:** The trouble is, I am not sure I am the right President to ask that because the PSO is issued by P&R and it has financial limitations and what is being suggested would put strain on those financial limitations. So, really it is the terms of the PSO that are being questioned here and my Committee is not responsible for it.

1470 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Vermeulen.

**Deputy Vermeulen:** Would the President consider whether the choice of aircraft that Aurigny actually choose to operate on this PSO, the Dorniers, are, in fact, the correct type of aircraft for this rotation?

1475 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Well of course both the President of STSB and the current leadership team at Aurigny inherited that decision, that was taken in a previous time. I know that in its broad ranging  
1480 considerations about how greater resilience can be brought to the route, that is one of the questions that is being currently addressed by Aurigny. But as I say, it is far too early to say what, if anything will come out of that process.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

1485 **Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

Would the President agree that the optimal solution for solving Aurigny's connectivity problems, and possibly addressing frequency issues with Jersey at the same time, is to reunite all the inter-Island routes under one operator operating a fleet of small aircraft?

1490 Thank you.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

1495 **Deputy Roffey:** What I would certainly agree is that the genesis of this problem was this Assembly issuing a second licence (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) on the inter-Island route, between Guernsey and Jersey I am talking about not Alderney. As a result, two airlines lost money hand over fist, one had to withdraw because, amazingly, the Government had shallower pockets than Blue  
1500 Islands did at that time. As a result, a fleet of 19-seater aircraft having to be maintained just for a community of 2,000, I do not mean just in a pejorative sense, to Alderney –

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Point of correction.

1505 **The Bailiff:** You cannot have a point of correction, Deputy Le Tissier. Please continue, Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Ideally, Deputy Burford is right. However, just to encourage Aurigny to go back in a head-to-head competition with Blue Islands on Jersey would also reignite the sort of loss-

1510 making potential that we saw before. Consideration in this whole area is ongoing and active and it would really not be helpful for me to say anything else at this stage.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

1515 **Deputy Trott:** Thank you, sir.

So does the States' Trading Supervisory Board appreciate that the Policy & Resources Committee acted to ensure that, first and foremost, the PSO remained within the maximum previously permitted of £2 million per year and secondly, would the President of the STSB agree with me that it is unfair that Alderney passengers benefit from greater resilience than Guernsey passengers?

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**The Bailiff:** Well, Deputy Roffey, there were two questions there so you can have three minutes if you need it.

1525 **Deputy Roffey:** Okay, I will take the second first. The trouble is I do not think that there is any way we can operate that does not put that level of resilience, because you either have one aircraft, we are talking about one or two here. If you have one aircraft all the time there would be almost no resilience and it would be absurd for Guernsey to match that by having five spare ATRs sitting around in case the five ATRs all went tech at the same time.

1530 So, I think it is just the nature of the small market and I think Deputy Burford is right, we need some lateral thought in the way that we actually get around that. I am not as familiar as Deputy Trott is with the exact terms of the PSO, it is a contract between Aurigny and P&R. I thought there was some factor for inflation from the beginning of the five-year term with £2 million but I stand to be corrected on that and I would not like to pontificate on something that I am not absolutely certain on, although I do it quite often in this Assembly. *(Laughter)*

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Le Tissier.

**Deputy Le Tissier:** Thank you, sir.

1540 Would the President like to correct his statement that, I am quoting him, the problems arose when the States allowed another operator on the Jersey route because the Jersey route is not subject to a licence, so anyone can run Jersey, Guernsey it is just Alderney to Guernsey, Gatwick and Southampton, which are licensed?

Thank you.

1545 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey, that question does not arise out of the original answer that was given but if Deputy Roffey wishes to respond I will let him.

1550 **Deputy Roffey:** I think it might be helpful. At the moment you do not require a licence, it is not deemed to be a lifeline route although, personally, I believe it is something of a lifeline route, or it ought to be, between Guernsey and Jersey, but at the time that is exactly what happened. Licensing was ubiquitous, anybody wanting to operate in and out of Guernsey needed a licence on any route. Aurigny were the sole operator between Guernsey and Jersey. That meant they were able to share their fleet of small aircraft between that operation and the operation to Alderney.

1555 This Assembly decided to licence another operator in competition with them. As a result, both operators lost a great deal of money and Aurigny decided, eventually, enough was enough and withdrew from that route, meaning that the only route needing small aircraft was the one to Alderney and it is that sub-scale operation that is causing the problem that is being talked about today.

1560 **The Bailiff:** Alderney Representative Hill.

**Alderney Representative Hill:** Thank you for your warm welcome, gentlemen.

1565 With our new £209 fares, I feel that I have arrived in Barbados! (*Laughter*) My question is about unreliability versus cost. I would take slight issue that when we do not have any planes we are literally cut off, but that is not the question. The question is, has the PSO £600,000 overspend that resulted in the STSB ordering the price increases actually been part of an audit and if it has, can we have the breakdown of those accounts to see how that happened and how we can mitigate it in the future?

1570 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** As I explained before, the PSO is a direct arrangement between Aurigny and P&R. I am sure if P&R want to scrutinise the spending under that PSO they have the right. I am sure, again, I have not got the draft of the PSO in front of me, but I would imagine that was built in, that they would have the ability to do that. So, really, I think, the questions need to be addressed, as far as the PSO and the performance under it, to my colleagues at P&R rather than to myself and I would be interested to know the answers too.

1580 **The Bailiff:** Deputy St Pier.

**Deputy St Pier:** Thank you, sir.

Has the STSB either undertaken or received any sensitivity analysis in terms of the impact on the two-aircraft model and passenger numbers and airfares as a result of P&R's decision to contain the subsidy within its original parameters, in other words, understanding the impact of that decision on the service and the two-aircraft model?

1585 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** I think we are moving away from the original question because, to be honest, the problem that arose a week or so ago is because it was always understood from the launch of the PSO that although there were two planes there would be periods of winter maintenance where the contract allowed for only one operational plane and the risks were known and, unfortunately, they became manifest with what happened a week or so ago.

As for what has happened with the instruction to raise fares, I think the STSB and Aurigny do have considerable concerns about spiralling downwards of demand leading to greater requirements for fares, etc. It is not something, though, that we have any role to actually stop. This is a matter for P&R, the terms of the PSO and I can only just reiterate that if people have questions concerning the PSO they must be addressed to P&R.

1595 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

In his reply to Alderney Representative Snowdon, Deputy Roffey referred to the use of boats or boat transfers stepping in for the Dornier aircraft essentially to pick up the pieces. Could he confirm, and if not, could he give an undertaking to come back to this Assembly, the cost of the boat charters so Members might understand the financial impact of these last-minute charters and on the PSO?

1600 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** I do not know the sum, it was an awful lot less than chartering or wet leasing or trying to find, because there are not many commercial aircraft that can actually land in Alderney. It was obviously going to be a far more cost-effective solution. If Deputy Taylor particularly wants to

know the answer, I will try and find out for him and let him know and when I do, I guess other Members would like to know as well, so I will circulate that.

1615

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

1620

**Deputy Gollop:** I appreciate that I cannot ask a supplementary to P&R but in view of Deputy Roffey's previous answers I would find it helpful, personally, if STSB via Aurigny could share with the States of Guernsey and maybe the States of Alderney any material changes in demand that have occurred since the fare uplifts and any costs that Aurigny could restrain in order to minimise the impact of pay increases? So, my question is, will STSB be prepared to do their side of it and ask that of data changes either up or down in demand so that P&R are in a position to judge how effective the PSO is?

1625

**The Bailiff:** Once again, it does not arise out of the answer given to the original question but if you want to respond, Deputy Roffey, I will let you.

1630

**Deputy Roffey:** Well on cost control to play their part, I think, the current leadership team in Aurigny have an absolute obsession over cost control and I do not think that will change as a result of this. As far as the impact on demand, I can ask Aurigny but, actually, as far as the Guernsey-Alderney route is concerned, we will have the stats at STSB via the Airport, we may not have all of the stats on ... yes, we would because we operate the airport between Alderney and Southampton. So, I think it is a bit too early to say at the moment but, I think, in a month or two's time it will be very interesting to look at the year-on-year comparisons and seeing what impact it has had.

1635

**The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy St Pier.

**Deputy St Pier:** Thank you, sir.

1640

Deputy Roffey has referred to the invitation to Aurigny to engage in some lateral thinking. It is not a sector in which lateral thinking is immediately an attractive Proposition, for obvious reasons, but it would be helpful if, perhaps, Deputy Roffey could give some examples of what he is envisaging in that lateral thinking and on what time frame he can expect something.

1645

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

1650

**Deputy Roffey:** It would depend on events, dear boy, but I believe that there are ideas being considered that within the term of this Assembly may, if not be implemented, actually come to fruition in terms of decisions but they may not because due diligence has to be done on all alternative approaches to make sure you are not making a situation worse rather than better. What I will say is that both the Chief Executive and the Chair of Aurigny have enormous experience and a great deal of nous, I think when it comes to aviation and they are bringing that to bear to see whether there are better ways of cutting this particular cake.

1655

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford, second supplementary.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

1660

In the light of events, does the President consider that it would have been useful to have supported the amendment in December 2022 to have investigated the feasibility of reuniting all the inter-Island routes and I would stress, picking up on his answer to my previous question, that of course this does not need to be done under Aurigny, any locally based operator could do this and operate it?

Thank you.

1665 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey

**Deputy Roffey:** I think that the success or otherwise of that amendment did not change the fact that ever since consideration has been given about how and if that was a possibility, because it would certainly be a desirable aim.

1670

**The Bailiff:** Nobody else is rising to ask any further supplementaries so, that is the conclusion of the urgent question under Rule 12.

Can we just lay the Appointment next, please, Greffier?

## Billet d'État I

### ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

#### COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

##### **Appointment of an Ordinary Member of the Office of the Financial Service Ombudsman – Laid before the States**

*Article 1.*

*In accordance with paragraph 1(2) of schedule 1 to the Financial Services Ombudsman (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2014, the following appointment, by the Committee for Economic Development, to the Office of the Financial Services Ombudsman, is laid before the States of Deliberation:*

*Mr. Robert Girard as ordinary member with effect from 31st January 2025. Mr. Girard has been appointed as an ordinary member until 30th January 2028. The States of Deliberation have the power to annul the appointment. The Committee for Economic Development has concluded that Mr. Girard is suitable to be an ordinary member of the Office of the Financial Services Ombudsman.*

1675 **The States Greffier:** The Committee for Economic Development. The following appointment is laid before the States. The appointment of an Ordinary Member of the Office of the Financial Services Ombudsman.

1680 **The Bailiff:** Once again, I have not received any motion to annul that but that would still be available next time. The next item of business, please.

## Billet d'État II

### ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

#### 1. Election of a Member of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture – Deputy Gabriel

*Article 1.*

*The States are asked:*

*To elect a sitting Member of the States as a member of the Committee for Education Sport & Culture to complete the unexpired term of office, that is to the 30th June 2025, of former Alderney Representative S. R. Roberts, who has ceased to be a sitting Member of the States and so deemed to have resigned from the Committee under the terms of Rule 37(6), in accordance with Rule 16 of The Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees*

**The States' Greffier:** Billet d'État II, Article 1, Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture – the election of a Member of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture.

1685 **The Bailiff:** I am going to invite the President, Deputy Dudley-Owen, if she wishes to make a nomination.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Yes, please, sir, Deputy Gabriel.

1690 **The Bailiff:** And is Deputy Gabriel's nomination seconded?

**Deputy Haskins:** Yes.

1695 **The Bailiff:** Thank you, Deputy Haskins. Are there any other nominations to the vacant office as Alderney Representative Roberts is no longer a Member? I do not see anyone else rising. So, we have to go to secret ballot. Do we have voting slips or can we simply invite people to write a name if they want to write a name or spoil paper or do whatever you fancy doing?

1700 So, we have got one candidate for the vacancy on the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture and that is Deputy Gabriel, who has been proposed by Deputy Dudley-Owen and seconded by Deputy Haskins and in accordance with Rule 16 it has got to be voting carried out by secret ballot. Are there any more voting slips Members of the States.

Maybe some rabbit is going to appear in a moment! (*Laughter*) You are in Slytherin, Deputy Brouard!

1705 Are there any more voting slips, Members of the States? So, they will be taken off and counted and I will declare that result at a suitable moment.

*Members voted in a secret ballot.*

1710 **The Bailiff:** In respect of the election to the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, there was a single candidate proposed by Deputy Dudley-Owen, seconded by Deputy Haskins and Deputy Gabriel polled 33 votes, there were no spoilt papers, but there were two blank papers. Therefore, I declare him duly elected. Congratulations.

(*Applause*)



ITEMS ADJOURNED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

## Billet d'État I

### RÉQUÊTE

#### 1. Establishment of the Committee for Housing – Debate continued

Article 1.

*The States are asked to decide:-*

*Whether, after consideration of the Requête entitled "Establishment of the Committee for Housing" dated 1st July 2024 they are of the opinion:*

- 1. To agree to establish a new principal committee called the Committee for Housing, the constitution, mandate and operational functions of which shall be as set out in Appendix 1 to the Requête, and to modify the mandates of the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, the Committee for Employment & Social Security and the Policy & Resources Committee accordingly.*
- 2. To agree that £155,000 is allocated in the 2025 budget to establish the Committee for Housing, to accelerate housing delivery through additional resources and to transfer, for the use of the new Committee, the relevant portions of the 2025 budgets of the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, the Committee for Employment & Social Security and the Policy & Resources Committee that are allocated for housing functions for which the new Committee is to be responsible.*
- 3. To agree that these changes will come into effect on July 1st 2025.*
- 4. To agree that a review of the Committee for Housing should be undertaken before the end of September 2032, the terms of which will include: a) its mandate, constitution and operational functions b) budget and resources and c) the need for its continuation or dissolution.*
- 5. To direct the preparation of such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to the above decisions.*

1715       **The States' Greffier:** Billet d'État I, Article 1, Requête – Establishment of the Committee for Housing.

1720       **The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States let me remind you what happened some weeks ago. We had the openings and then we started with amendments. Three amendments have been dealt with so far, each of which has been successful, which means that in Proposition 1, by virtue of Amendment 5, some extra words were added to delete reference to Item 12 in the proposed mandate.

1725       Then Amendment 3 was carried, which adds two alternative Propositions and then Amendment 2 was also carried, which substitutes Proposition 2, whatever numbers they might get to at that point. So, the next amendment that I was going to deal with, which you did not want to deal with on the Friday afternoon, probably very sensibly, of the last meeting, is Amendment 4 that is proposed by Deputy St Pier and seconded by Deputy Roffey. Is it your wish to move that amendment now, Deputy St Pier?

1730       **Deputy St Pier:** It is, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Thank you very much.

[Amendment 4.](#)

*To insert the following Proposition immediately after Proposition 1 and to renumber other propositions accordingly:*

*"2. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to report annually in an appendix to the States of Guernsey Accounts, the consolidated income and expenditure (including capital expenditure) related to the provision by the States of social housing prepared pro forma as if that provision was being made through a publicly owned housing association."*

1735 **Deputy St Pier:** Thank you, sir.

As you say, much water has passed under the bridge since the Assembly last considered this matter, so I think it is probably worth reading this short amendment for the benefit of Members and, indeed, those outside the Assembly.

1740 *Deputy St Pier read out the amendment.*

**Deputy St Pier:** I think this amendment clearly does go beyond the Proposition. In preparing it Deputy Roffey and I have engaged with the respective Committees whose responsibility it touches, Employment & Social Security and the Policy & Resources Committee both of whom I understand, at the very least, do not oppose and may indeed support, certainly the understanding of the engagement with the Treasury team is the imposition that would be required in terms of the additional disclosure in the accounts is something which is certainly manageable.

1745 So, I do not intend to delay the States extensively in opening this debate as it is a short and simple amendment with, hopefully, the support of the relevant Committees and I am sure the Assembly wishes to engage in the more substantive amendments and, indeed, the substance of the Requête in due course.

1750 However, I think the explanatory note really seeks to provide the rationale for this amendment, which is that the social housing provision which we provide as the States is, to some extent, akin to a trading business not unlike those overseen by the States' Trading Supervisory Board, such as States' Works or, indeed, a housing association. But actually we account for it in a slightly unusual way and, indeed, that has changed over the years.

1755 So we now treat rents as general revenue, just as any other source of general revenue, such as Income Tax or excise duties, whilst expenditure disappears into a different line of budgeting and accounting in providing and maintaining the housing stock and that is accounted for as an expense and budgeted for by the Committee for Employment & Social Security and we saw the challenge which they faced with that during the budget debate when they were seeking some additional funding in relation to maintenance.

1760 So, this amendment is really seeking to provide greater transparency so that we have a much better understanding of the consolidated income and expenditure related to social housing and providing that and disclosing that in an appendix to the accounts. So, I hope this amendment can be dispensed with relatively quickly with the support of the Assembly in order that the debate can move on.

Thank you, sir.

1770 **The Bailiff:** And Deputy Roffey, do you formally second Amendment 4?

**Deputy Roffey:** I do, sir.

1775 **The Bailiff:** Thank you very much. At the moment I do not see anyone rising to debate Amendment 4.

Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

1780 When Deputy St Pier approached me to see whether ESS would back this amendment, we discussed it at ESS and, it is probably putting it too strongly to say that we back it, but we have absolutely no reason to oppose it, on the strength of which he asked me to second it and I thought, why not?

1785 The more I think about it, I am glad that I did because I do think there is possibly, at the risk of sounding patronising, a lack of understanding of how the finances of how States' Housing actually works these days in this Assembly. For example, when I put forward an unsuccessful amendment to try and increase the amount that we spent on maintenance of the States' housing stock to the budget.

1790 There were comments, but I remember Deputy de Lisle saying, you should not be asking for taxpayers' money, you should be spending more of the £20 million you are getting in rent roll to actually do this maintenance and that was exactly what we were asking to do, because it is the rent roll in its entirety that goes into general revenue now and we are asking to hang on to a bit more of it.

1795 I think that showing these separate, not accounts, but this display of how things work will show that compared with any housing association the States take far more money out of its social housing stock as opposed to reinvesting in it or anywhere else. That might not be a useful message because the idea of taking less out of in the current climate would be very unattractive but, I think, we need to face up to that fact and this will do that. So, on balance I am very supportive of this exercise going ahead.

1800 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Leadbeater.

**Deputy Leadbeater:** Thank you, sir.

1805 Will these Propositions result in, because obviously there is a wooden dollar effect with social housing where a lot of rent comes from Social Security in the first place, so will there be a breakdown in these accounts so we can see where the amount of wooden dollars going towards the rent and the amount of money coming in externally is?

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gabriel.

1810 **Deputy Gabriel:** Sir, probably not a great contribution to the debate, but I would like to ask Deputy St Pier, or even Deputy Roffey, perhaps Deputy St Pier when he is summing up, would these provisions relate to the grant given to the Guernsey Housing Association or how that is included? I appreciate that Guernsey Housing Association, GHA, run their own profit and loss, or not for profit, and those would not be included, but I would like to understand how the GHA fits into a piece of the jigsaw?

1815 Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

1820 **Deputy Gollop:** I recall Policy & Resources raised no objections to this and broadly approved of it. It is an interesting subject because over the years one has seen different approaches to housing. At one time the tenants had rent rebates which were different from today's Income Support measures and, I think, there was a time when tenants could pay additional sums to housing, which would be rolled up and held as a deposit on their behalf.

1825 Then we moved to the corporate housing fund era when everything became a bit confusing because the corporate housing program both financed property and received rents from tenants. But the situation currently is perplexing. There was a move from the previous Policy & Resources, of which I had a degree of sympathy for had it been, perhaps, structured in a different way, to consider whether States' Housing should be transferred to a housing association, although there

1830 did not seem to be any real financial savings in that. I believe we will later debate this week, perhaps a Resolution to not sell off houses.

As we decided and, I think a Member of ESS at the time, we did, on balance, we preferred to keep the *status quo*. That is to say the 1,500, 1,600 houses currently owned by the States would remain that way and yet it is a paradox as the amendment points out, because it is a trading business in the sense that it is a collective landlord it is not treated as a housing association and the rents treated as general revenue.

Indeed, that was one of the reasons why, I think, the decision was made to retain the *status quo*, because it is useful for the Treasury to have that as income, but it is wrong to see it as a sort of successful dividend based upon an asset because there are real social costs and property costs in maintaining our property stock and I know Deputy Roffey made a forceful pledge for even higher amount of capital at the Budget. He succeeded in some of it but not all of it.

But surely there is something not quite right about treating rents as general revenue, particularly, or a form of tax, whilst we then rather than hypothecate the money, we maintain the housing stock separately as an expense that ESS find in the overall budget and so it is partly a social service and partly an income generator and it is neither one thing nor the other.

Therefore, I do support, as a new approach, at least three different approaches eventually but in the foreseeable future, to direct Policy & Resources to report annually the consolidated income and expenditure related to the provision by the States of social housing and, indeed, although it may be an appendix hopefully it will be debated by States' Members interested in the subject and I would assume that Deputy St Pier can expand on this and I would assume that part of his motivation is just clarity of thought and transparency, to give the Island and its stakeholders a greater awareness of the costs and benefits and real demands on housing, rather than just treating it as an income source via credit loan, a tax on ... *[Inaudible]*

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Soulsby.

**Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir.

I can see no issue with this amendment, certainly from P&R perspective, Members will be aware, hopefully, that the 2024 accounts the auditor has started, will be consolidated and that consolidation will include the Guernsey Housing Association. So we will have the whole of social housing in one set of accounts. The work will need to be done anyway and all this amendment does is say, we will give a bit more detail in an appendix, so I cannot see that there will be any objections to this.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Matthews.

**Deputy Matthews:** Thank you, sir.

I will be supporting this amendment as well and something that Deputy Gollop said reminded me of a matter where he talked about the recent move to look at selling States' housing, to sell off the houses to form a housing association or to the GHA and I think a lot of people were surprised at how low the capital valuation was and it was low because the capital assets were valued as an income generating asset which would generate low or lower than market rate rent.

So, I can see that this amendment only talks about the income and expenditure. So presumably there will not be any capital valuation that is put in there, which is a shame. In some ways it could have gone further because it does say in the introduction that you could treat States' Housing as if it were a trading company like States' Works, in which case you would then put a balance sheet on and you would then have the difficulty of what valuation you put in because I think that would be, actually, really quite useful information to have and it would probably be quite useful to think about what the actual value of the housing that we have got there is.

One of the things that certainly has crossed my mind, the option of being able to allow States' tenants to buy their own homes (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) because that is something where people who live in States' houses do not have that option. It had been something that had been a big programme in the UK, obviously, to be able to buy council houses but it certainly would be something that would be worth considering as, perhaps, a future enhancement on this appendix report to include the capital value of the assets as well.

Thank you.

**Deputy Inder:** Rule 26(1), sir.

**The Bailiff:** Can I invite those Members who wish to speak in debate on Amendment 4 to stand in their places? Probably not really needed then, Deputy Inder, so I am going to invite the lead, requérant, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, if she wishes to, to speak to Amendment 4.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

The amendment does not have an effect on the Requête on the original Proposition so, I think, from a requérants perspective there is nothing I could say, but I would like to add some personal comments because I guess I could not have made them in general debate otherwise. I think the amendment does raise the question about looking at consolidated costs of delivering a variety of public services, not just social housing at that cost centre level, but the issue is that it does not just apply, as I said, to social housing, it will apply to any public service. It could be the Planning Department, the Registry, the schools or individual schools, the Hospital, traffic and highways. It could be anything.

It is really important to look at the consolidated costs and this is one of the exercises we undertook with the Savings Sub-Committee is to be able to understand better the cost of delivery and this is through this work. The directives on the fees and charges, for example, is being updated to ensure that, actually, first of all central costs are more reflected at the cost centre level.

So, I think, what I want to say is that, actually, it is not as straightforward as maybe the amendments is and I am unclear whether the amendment will just include income and expenditure or whether, as Deputy Matthews has identified, will actually look at the balance sheet, actually the value of the capital stock, because it is misleading to say, as Deputy Roffey said, that it is a highly income generating asset so that we should be able to be spending lots more on maintenance.

Well, you have got to look at the whole cost of what it has cost the taxpayer to deliver social housing. So, there would have been millions of pounds, historically, spent on grants on buying land to deliver social housing and we have got to look at that whole balance sheet and profit and loss account, not just look at day-to-day or year-on-year, in and out expenditure.

If that is the direction of travel, I think that is positive. My issue is that it is extra work and I welcome that Treasury said it should not be a big deal, but then the question is, why are we only doing it for social housing and not for everything else? Should it be part of our annual budget or should it be part of the management accounts that the responsible Committees look at?

Right now the amendment fails to really indicate why do we need that, what for? It could be Deputy Roffey supported this amendment because he wants to have more evidence in the future to ask for a higher maintenance grant. (*Interjection*) Deputy Roffey will not be there, but someone else may use it as evidence.

But as I said, we have got to look at it holistically. So, I think, this brings me back because this is about the relevant Committees having a much better look into the actual derivative of the cost of public services across the whole organisation, then it is a question about really, potentially, the type of management accounts that Committees should have and this reminds me about the work that P&R and ESS have undertaken, and that has been just referenced by different speakers, into looking into social housing stock. There is a report that has been delivered to both Committees and decisions undertaken.

I would like to remind Deputy Roffey that I previously asked whether this report could be published. I appreciate it could be a joint decision with P&R but, perhaps, it is this kind of report which would go into, probably, much more detail to what Deputy St Pier is seeking, will not require any further work on resources, which we do not have in the States and is stuff we do not need. Maybe that could be the step that this report should be published.

So, while I am supportive, in principle, but this is further work and I feel it is unfair that we are not looking at, actually, as a principle for understanding the cost of delivery of public service across the whole organisation. So, I am a little bit on the fence with this amendment because it is just for the sake of doing it. I do not know what is the right thing to do so; this is my personal contribution.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** And I will turn, finally, to the proposer of Amendment 4, Deputy St Pier, to reply to the debate, please.

**Deputy St Pier:** Thank you to Members for that short debate.

Subject to Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's ambivalence towards the end of her speech, I think other Members have been supportive. I think addressing the points really in reverse order, I think Deputy Matthews' point that really we ought to have a balance sheet attached to this process, that absolutely was my starting point in my discussions with Treasury that we should, effectively, account for this as a separate business and what is before Members has really emerged from that dialogue in terms of what is practical, taking into account the resources issues that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller has referred to. So, I think, it is a direction of travel to pick up Deputy Mathew's language.

I think, as Deputy Soulsby said the fact that the Guernsey Housing Association accounts are going to be consolidated into the 2024 accounts, actually, provides a very clear rationale why we ought to be doing this in respect of the non-GHA housing, I think that is an obvious next step. In terms of the value of States' housing held by the States I would expect that, in due course, certainly in full IPSAS accounting to be reflected within the accounts of the States of Guernsey.

So, again, I think picking up Deputy Matthews' point, I think that would be the time at which it would make sense to produce a properly consolidated report in respect of social housing. This is simply a way of providing, as Deputy Gollop has said, greater transparency that is referred to in the explanatory note to ensure that we do make the correct and informed decisions, as Deputy Kazantseva-Miller has referred to and, indeed, Deputy Roffey in relation to maintenance budgets, for example, for the assets that we that we hold.

The two questions, Deputy Gabriel, yes, certainly it is intended that the capital expenditures as is referred to on the face of the amendment, which would include the grants to the Guernsey Housing Association, should be reflected in this amendment and I think Deputy –

**Deputy Roffey:** Point of correction.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** I am sorry to have to do it but it would have been helpful if people had wanted to debate this, they had debated it and let me, but nobody stood so I went first. There is no grant given to the Guernsey Housing Association. P&R and ESS can consider grant funding for individual developments to make sure they come in at a cost to allow them to be serviced, borrowing service on an affordable housing rent. But there is no annual or recurring grant that has just given for business as usual at the GHA.

**Deputy St Pier:** I am grateful to Deputy Roffey for that intervention and clarification which, of course, is absolutely correct and forgive me I think, probably, Deputy Gabriel's question and, indeed, my response was really the shorthand for the project-by-project support that the States provides

which, of course, would be capital and is accounted for as such and so I would expect to see that dealt with.

1985 In terms of the wooden dollars question from Deputy Leadbeater, I had not given that specific consideration in preparing this, but I think it is information which should be pretty readily ascertainable and known, particularly, within the Committee for Employment & Social Security. So I cannot see a reason why that level of detail would not be possible and I think he raises a very valid point so we understand the extent to which the income from States' Housing has already been

1990 provided internally by way of benefit or is coming externally from those who are renting. So with that, sir, I look forward to Members support in the vote.

**The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, it is now time to vote on Amendment 4, proposed by Deputy St Pier, seconded by Deputy Roffey. I invite the Greffier to open the voting, please.

1995

*There was a recorded vote.*

*Amendment 4.*

*Carried – Pour 34, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 1, Absent 3*

<b>Pour</b>	<b>Contre</b>	<b>Ne vote pas</b>	<b>Did not vote</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Aldwell, Sue	None	Hill, Edward	Bury, Tina	Dyke, John
Blin, Chris		Snowdon, Alexander		Murray, Bob
Brouard, Al				Parkinson, Charles
Burford, Yvonne				
Cameron, Andy				
De Lisle, David				
De Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dudley-Owen, Andrea				
Fairclough, Simon				
Falla, Steve				
Ferbrache, Peter				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Haskins, Sam				
Helyar, Mark				
Inder, Neil				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Le Tissier, Chris				
Le Tocq, Jonathan				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Mahoney, David				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Meerveld, Carl				
Moakes, Nick				
Oliver, Victoria				
Prow, Robert				
Queripel, Lester				
Roffey, Peter				
Soulsby, Heidi				
St Pier, Gavin				
Taylor, Andrew				
Trott, Lyndon				
Vermeulen, Simon				

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**The Bailiff:** So, in respect of Amendment 4, proposed by Deputy St Pier, seconded by Deputy Roffey there voted in favour 34 Members; no Member voted against; 2 Members abstained; 4 Members did not participate in the vote and, therefore, I will declare Amendment 4 also carried.

2005 I am not quite sure where we are going to put it at the moment, but we will worry about that later. The next amendment am going to turn to is Amendment 1, proposed by Deputy de Sausmarez, do you wish to move that amendment, Deputy de Sausmarez?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** No thank you, sir.

2010 **The Bailiff:** Alright, so we will swiftly pass over that, as it has not been laid, and there is one final amendment, which is Amendment 6, also proposed by Deputy de Sausmarez?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, please.

[Amendment 6](#)

*The States are asked to decide:-*

*To delete the original Propositions and substitute therefore:*

*1. direct the Policy & Resources Committee, in consultation with the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, the Committee for Employment & Social Security and the public-private Housing Forum, to establish before the end of this political term a Housing Commission tasked with facilitating and driving forward the delivery of housing in the Island, working with (inter alia) landowners, developers, investors and financiers, the construction industry, the Guernsey Development Agency, the Guernsey Housing Association and the States of Guernsey, and to review the effectiveness of the Housing Commission before the end of the 2025-2029 political term."*

2015 **The Bailiff:** Thank you very much. Because this is recent, would you like it read?

**Deputy:** Yes, please. I think that would be helpful, sir. If you would not mind.

2020 **The Bailiff:** Greffier, perhaps you can read the amendment, please.

*The States' Greffier read out the amendment.*

**The Bailiff:** And Deputy de Sausmarez to open on Amendment 6, please.

2025 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir.

2030 This amendment gives the Assembly a choice between two different approaches. The creation of a new Committee *for* Housing, as in the original proposals, which would add another layer of Government into the mix, creating additional Civil Service roles, additional administration and bureaucracy and significant additional costs in the process or the approach proposed. In the amendment to establish a Housing Commission, which, by contrast, would streamline the role of Government and improve efficiency and effectiveness without requiring any additional resource.

2035 Timelines are another important consideration. If the amendment carries a Housing Commission can be created within weeks, whereas the requêtes original proposals would actually divert resource between now and the Election and beyond the Election it would take time for the newly created Committee to get its feet under the table, get to grips with its mandate, advertise for and appoint non-States' Members and figure out where its priorities are and how it wants to address them, etc.

2040 So realistically, even if one of its top priorities was to set up a delivery vehicle, like the Commission that is being proposed in this amendment and if it could find the resources to do so, it would be more likely to happen next year than this. Because this amendment proposes to replace the original proposals with the Proposition to create a Housing Commission, I will first explain why the Requête's approach is not the solution that some people believe it to be and then I will explain why the Housing Commission is a more effective way of addressing the issues that the Requête tries to respond to and what people in the house building industry have actually been asking for.

2045 The requérants hope that the creation of a dedicated Committee for Housing would lead to:

... improved delivery, accountability, co-ordination, resourcing, communication, engagement, scrutiny, long term planning and political ownership.



In fairness to them, I think this Requête is a well-meaning effort to respond to genuine concerns over the multiplicity of States' stakeholders and that this could be negatively impacting the speed of action and progress, specifically on house building, that we are all keen to see.

2050 While I understand the high-level attraction of the idea of a single Committee *for* Housing, in reality it would not be that single point of focus and accountability that its proponents are hoping it would be. In fact, focus and accountability could be more diffuse rather than more concentrated.

I will first of all explain why the Requête's proposed new Committee structure would not meet expectations in that respect and then I will explain why a Housing Commission would be a better way of achieving what, I think, most people are primarily focused on: the more effective and efficient delivery of new homes in Guernsey.

2055 The Requête introduces no new work streams beyond those that are currently mandated or included in the Guernsey Housing Plan. If Members like the sound of the work listed in paragraph E of the Requête or, indeed, the appendix which describes the proposed new Committee's mandate, they will be reassured to hear that every single one of those workstreams is already something we are doing, including those slightly misleadingly described additional mandate points. The bulk of those are already being actioned by the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure, which has responsibility for housing policy.

2060 In one sense, it makes no difference whether it is a Committee called E&I or a Committee called the Committee *for* Housing that has responsibility for those work streams but the complication is that in divorcing housing from other forms of infrastructure such as transport, energy, flood risk mitigation, etc., two Committees rather than one are unavoidably engaged. That is because E&I would need to be involved in all of the wider infrastructure aspects, which are particularly important in terms of unlocking larger sites, as anyone who attended the excellent master planning presentation a week or so ago will attest to.

2070 Page 12 of the letter of comment explains E&I's concern that a new Committee:

... adds expense and complexity, it also risks diverting resource away from that front line delivery over the course of the transition between now and July 2025, in particular, just when the when the Committee wants officers to be able to focus their efforts entirely on work streams that will make a material difference to housing in Guernsey so that they can take effect as quickly as possible

Which is another pertinent consideration, but would this trade-off in decoupling housing from other forms of infrastructure be worth it if consolidation and efficiency could be achieved in other areas were a new Committee *for* Housing to be set up? The evidence put forward by all of the Committees consulted suggests that would not be the result.

2075 Forward planning and planning policy would still necessarily sit with the DPA and, indeed, Amendment 5, brought by the requérants themselves, makes it explicit that the implementation and delivery of IDP policies will remain with the Development & Planning Authority. The DPA itself expresses a concern in its letter of comment found on page three of the document that:

... creating another Committee would add to rather than resolve co-ordination problems.

2080 Land purchases and the funding of the Affordable Housing Development Programme would still need to be agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee and the States' Property Unit, which sits under P&R, will still be responsible for operational aspects. P&R, which has responsibility for the Treasury function, would also still need to make the decisions relating to any financial levers with respect to housing, for example in relation to tax policy or financial support for particular developments. Regulation of the Guernsey Housing Association would also still necessarily sit with P&R. Employment & Social Security has the mandate for social assistance and social housing is obviously integral to that policy area.

2085 In its letter of comment it explains on page six of the document, the importance of 'ensuring social housing policy development is aligned with social assistance policy development', and goes on to explain that if a separate Committee for housing were established:

... rather than accelerating progress it has the potential to complicate and slow down delivery of strategic housing objectives by adding to the number of Committees that will need to work together in a co-ordinated way.

Similarly, with respect to key worker accommodation, the Committee *for* Health & Social Care would still need to be heavily involved in respect of specialised housing policy and ditto the Committee *for* Home Affairs in respect of population management. None of this paints a picture of singular, streamlined focus and accountability. It is less the clear, fluid lines of Henri Matisse and more the complex abstraction of a Jackson Pollock.

There are various other examples I could draw on to illustrate the point that creating a new Committee would not deliver what, I believe, many saw as the main selling point for requêtes the proposals, but it is probably best summarised by this excerpt from page 13 of the letter of comment:

A new dedicated Committee for Housing would not be able to deliver what is needed to address the island's housing needs on its own and it would not stop the need for this cross-committee working. Neither would the creation of a new separate political Committee speed up this essential cross-committee working or the delivery of housing; indeed, because of the added complexity there is a risk it could be slower.

So, to the alternative approach proposed in this amendment, the establishment of a Housing Commission. First of all, let me say a quiet bit out loud, something I think many people, even I dare say some of the requérants, or maybe many of them, would inwardly acknowledge. I do not think that the Requête is really about who is making decisions on social housing carpet policy or overseeing the HMO licensing or looking into complaints about parking allocations.

In fact, I had a conversation with one potential signatory to the Requête just before it was published. He was surprised to learn from me that the new Committee would have anything to do with social housing tenancies, for example. Its real centre of gravity, what I feel the requérants are keen to tackle above all else, is the supply of new homes and I am certainly not criticising that aspiration, in fact, I fully endorse it. As all of our work over this political term has made clear, accelerating the rate of housebuilding is fundamentally important in addressing many of the interdependent challenges our housing market is experiencing.

Now, as I explained earlier, creating a new Committee *for* Housing would exacerbate rather than address the concern that decision making is too diffuse and, potentially, disjointed because all of the Committees currently involved would still need to be involved in some form, with the additional complication of another Committee added into the mix. This is why the Committees consulted are concerned this proposed structure will add complexity and delay.

By contrast, however, a Housing Commission could be constituted so that the representatives of all of the key States' parties are around the same table alongside those external to the States, leading to much better co-ordination and speed of action on housing delivery, both within the States itself and more generally across relevant parts of industry and the community.

This amendment proposes establishing a Housing Commission at its core, a small, agile group of people with relevant experience, skills and expertise to achieve the States' objectives and deliver housing more expeditiously with a Chair or Lead who would become the Island's Housing Delivery Champion.

This is not a new idea. The compelling case for establishing a delivery vehicle has crystallised through our work on the Guernsey Housing Plan and when I floated the concept, including the role of a Housing Delivery Champion, in a series of *Press* articles in December, lots of people got in touch to express their support and make suggestions about who they thought would do a good job in such a role.

Deputy Cameron deserves particular credit for suggesting it in the specific format of a Housing Commission, an idea that the Committee was already giving serious thought to when it was independently suggested and supported at a meeting of the Housing Forum, a body representing many different housing stakeholders, especially from industry.

The vital importance of establishing a delivery vehicle that could bring together the main parties to get development done quicker was then stressed by the professionals who led the master

2135 planning process to facilitate the upcoming housing developments in St Sampson's at their excellent presentation a week or so ago.

I have been sounding the idea of a Housing Commission out with the people who are doing their absolute best to make more house building happen in the business world and it is a concept that has been very well received and supported. From my conversations with people involved in

2140 house building this is what they have actually been asking for.

The Housing Commission would be that single focal point for enabling the delivery of housing in the Island, bringing together representatives of and expertise drawn from developers and the construction sector, as well as funding agencies, investors and Government. It will provide, as the explanatory note sets out, the certainty and stability required for establishing new models of

2145 housing provision, such as build to rent and affordable private rent, as well as major house building projects.

Infrastructure projects like these do not fit neatly into political terms, which is why a Housing Commission is better placed to facilitate and co-ordinate development and provide continuity. Having spoken with an awful lot of people inside Government, in industry and in the community what I think most people want to see is a laser like focus on house building. That is not what the new Committee would be mandated to do under the Requête's original proposals.

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Indeed, a new Committee would be kept busy with all sorts of things that do not relate at all to housing delivery, like the introduction of a private rental market registry and HMO licensing, legislation around landlords' and tenants' rights, rent control measures potentially, downsizing

2155 initiatives, homelessness, support services, social rental maintenance, carpet policies, pet policies, parking allocations, energy efficiency retrofit policies, etc., whereas a Housing Commission would be focused specifically and exclusively on housing delivery by a group with a mandate for just that. That is why we are proposing a Housing Commission. Its *raison d'être* will be to focus on accelerating and facilitating housing delivery; nothing else.

The Commission also has the advantage of practicality and immediacy. Whereas a new Committee could only be established in July and would, in all likelihood, take some months from then to get their feet under the table, a Housing Commission could be established in the coming weeks and it could be in place to provide continuity over the coming election, so that the new States can keep that momentum and all the live work streams going. Going forward it would also give the

2160 Island that longer term stability and continuity and provide some protection against disruption from political upheavals.

2165

The Housing Commission proposed in this amendment also has a significant advantage over the Requête's original proposals in terms of resourcing implications. As the Requête makes clear the establishment of a new Committee would cost, in addition to the new policy officers already

2170 approved by the Assembly through the 2025 budget, the recruitment of a Committee secretary at £90,000 per annum, that is the cost of employment, a President's uplift of £15,000 per annum and non-States' Members pay of £5,000 per annum.

That is an additional £110,000, minimum, per year not taking into account the project manager role or similar, that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller proposed as part of her pitch for Amendment 2 and not including any additional administrative staff that would be necessary to recruit to support a

2175 Principal Committee, because one Committee secretary alone cannot fulfil all the administrative functions that need to be covered, all the other Principal Committees have at least two administrative officers.

So the costs set out in the Requête are, I believe, an understatement and that is also being

2180 generous and assuming that the Civil Service would not need to be restructured which, again, would come at a significant additional cost.

People who want to see the size and cost of Government swell for no particularly good reason, should absolutely get behind the Requête's original proposals. Those who would prefer to see the role of Government streamlined and those who are concerned about containing costs and

2185 headcount should support this amendment.

One further, final consideration on that theme, one of the newly installed President Trump's first executive orders has been to take the US out of the Global Tax Agreement and while we do not yet know the specific implications for Guernsey it, perhaps, makes the revenue we had anticipated from Pillar Two more uncertain.

2190 Now is not the time to be further increasing staff head count and adding hundreds of thousands of pounds annually to the States' pay costs. Laudable though job creation schemes are, I do not think now is a sensible time to increase the size and cost of Government when we could instead streamline Government by creating a Housing Commission and achieve far better outcomes on the ground.

2195 We do not need more politicians and more administrators and lots more paper moving between Committees in Sir Charles Frossard House, we need practical action that will facilitate and accelerate house building in the real world where we need it and we need that practical action now, not in nine or 12 months' time.

2200 This amendment is the fastest and most effective way of making a positive difference to Guernsey's housing supply. It is what the industry has been asking for and unlike the Requête's original proposals, it does not create an additional cost or administrative burden at a time we can ill afford it. For these reasons, I strongly encourage Members to support this amendment.

Thank you.

2205 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Soulsby, do you formally second Amendment 6?

**Deputy Soulsby:** Yes, sir, I do.

2210 **The Bailiff:** Thank you very much. Deputy Mahoney.

**Deputy Mahoney:** Thank you, sir.

As last-minute amendments go this is a real doozy, isn't it? (*Laughter*) It was so last-minute, in fact, that Deputy de Sausmarez herself had not even thought of it as helpfully pointed out by *The Guernsey Press* just in the last few days –

2215 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Point of correction.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy de Sausmarez.

2220 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I am glad Deputy Mahoney has raised this because, actually, if the editor of *The Guernsey Press* had actually read any of the articles that he kindly published, he would have noticed that this exact thing was mentioned and, actually, that was what generated all the good feedback from the community.

2225 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Mahoney.

**Deputy:** It appears the editor had not read them either then, that might say something about the quality of those articles. (*Interjection*) Now she had six full pages to put her views across –

2230 **Deputy St Pier:** Sir, a point of order.

**The Bailiff:** Point of order, Deputy St Pier.

2235 **Deputy St Pier:** Sir, I do think that the pejorative language used is simply unnecessary in debate.

**The Bailiff:** I think it is probably unnecessary isn't it, Deputy Mahoney, to make such a comment. Will you withdraw it?

**Deputy Mahoney:** I will withdraw it if that is what the Assembly requires, sir. Yes, thank you.

2240 **The Bailiff:** Thank you very much.

**Deputy Mahoney:** The Guernsey Construction Forum have written to us in the last couple of days, or yesterday, whenever it was, noting the lack of accountability for this proposed Commission which, obviously, is evident, which obviously the new Committee would not have a lack of  
2245 accountability, it would be accountable, sorry wrong way round.

It notes the lack of cohesion between the current system with P&R, E&I, ESS and the DPA and nothing would change there should this amendment be successful because, obviously, it is a lift and replace, effectively, cancel everything that is in there and replace it with the Commission rather than the Committee.

2250 Now they do note in that letter that both would be a really good idea, which is probably correct, but of course that is not what this amendment says. This amendment says kill one and replace with the current, what is in front of us in Amendment 6. So, we cannot have both and what the Guernsey Construction Forum most want is, given that it cannot have two, is the latter, which is the proposals set out in the Requête, to have a cohesive approach to this –

2255 I give way to Deputy Burford. I am sorry, I did not see you standing.

**Deputy Burford:** It is alright, I have only just stood up. Thank you for giving way.

Yes, I picked up on the point from the Construction Forum that they wanted both options, ideally and so I did have an exchange over a couple of emails to ask that if they could only have one, which  
2260 one would it be? Because, obviously, as you say, the way the amendment is termed that is going to be the outcome and they came back and said if they can only have one now it would be the Commission, although they did note that in future, they would like to see other changes to some of the ways the other Committees operate. So they did actually specify that in an email to me.

2265 **Deputy Mahoney:** Well, I thank you for that interjection, it is in direct contradiction to a conversation I had with them yesterday. So, that is very interesting and I hope and I assume, actually, members of that Forum are listening to this debate and I hope they will be emailing us right now to say or texting even, if they would like to, so that someone could interject at some point.

The quote from them, which as I say, that is thrown into confusion I suspect, the current issue of  
2270 four Committees having a say and being able to block and control certain elements of the building process must be addressed and under one jurisdiction. That is very clear and cannot be misinterpreted. That one jurisdiction that would have that responsibility is clearly the Committee, the new proposed Housing Committee, not a Housing Commission.

We already have the Guernsey Housing Forum which Deputy Moakes was instrumental in  
2275 putting together. I know they have been meeting regularly and that is, effectively, the Commission by a different name. So, in fact, if we had the Housing Committee and then the Guernsey Housing or Construction Forum, whatever name we give it, whether it is a forum or a Commission really makes no bones to anybody, it would be achieving the same thing.

It is a bunch of industry experts, no one is disputing that, which could feed into the Housing  
2280 Committee, as proposed in the requête, to then give the necessary advice and point in the right direction and that Committee is then under the cosh to actually get done building some houses. Currently, at the moment, everyone is pointing fingers at everybody else. It is no one's fault, we more than four years into this Assembly and, frankly, we have done, politely, very little about any of this.

2285 The proof is in the pudding. It has not worked, what we have been trying to do. It is no use saying we are nearly there. It has taken us four years to nearly get there; trust us now, at this last minute. It is not good enough, it has not worked, we need to change something. I urge Members to reject this amendment.

2290 **The Bailiff:** I think we might adjourn now until 2.30 p.m.

*The Assembly adjourned at 12.30 p.m.  
and resumed its sitting at 2.30 p.m.*

## RÉQUÊTE

### Establishment of the Committee for Housing – Debate continued

**The Bailiff:** Before I call Deputy Cameron, Deputy Dyke, is it your wish to be relevé?

**Deputy Dyke:** Yes please, sir. Thank you.

2295

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Cameron then.

**Deputy Cameron:** Thank you, sir.

2300 I rise in strong support of this amendment. As Deputy de Sausmarez and my colleagues on E&I will be well aware, I have been banging a drum for a Housing Commission for several months now. I have even pitched the concept to one of the requérants, Deputy Leadbeater, a few times, though admittedly I did not quite manage to win him over, to put it politely.

2305 That said, I do want to commend the requérants for bringing this issue forward. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) While I cannot support the Requête it has sparked valuable discussion, hopefully provided room for compromise and, ultimately, allowed us to develop a more effective and innovative solution with this amendment.

2310 The housing crisis is not new but it is now critical with a growing shortfall in affordable housing and an ageing population requiring tailored solutions. We need an approach that delivers tangible, expert driven results. This amendment provides exactly that. As Deputy Kazantseva-Miller so aptly said in a previous speech, if the housing crisis were a war we would set up a special department with military strategists and experts to tackle it. A Housing Commission is precisely the kind of expert driven, focused body we need to lead this fight. A Housing Committee, with its political constraints and slower processes, simply will not be equipped to act with the urgency and expertise this crisis demands.

2315 To address Deputy Mahoney's point, who is not actually here at the moment, that the Forum and the Commission could, essentially, serve the same purpose, I fundamentally disagree. The Forum is neither intended, expected, nor set up to be tasked by the Government with driving the delivery of new housing, which would be the core focus of the Commission.

2320 As a Director on the Sports Commission I have witnessed the power of their expertise first hand. The Commission brings together top sports people, many of whom have competed or coached at national or international levels and combines their knowledge to improve sports access and excellence on the Island. Similarly, the Health Improvement Commission has achieved remarkable success by attracting expertise from various sectors, making our Island healthier through innovative programs and partnerships. These Commissions show when you mix expertise with vision amazing things happen.

2325 The Housing Commission would do the same for housing. Its members would include professionals from construction, planning and financing alongside Government representation. This mix ensures informed, effective decision making, unlike the Committee proposed in the Requête, which would lack such technical depth.

2330 The Housing Commission would also act as a magnet for ethical and private investment by fostering partnerships with the private sector and social enterprises it can secure funding streams

that the States alone cannot. Initiatives like build to rent projects for key workers or housing for vulnerable people become viable when you pair public goals with private capital.

2335 A Commission has unique opportunities to generate income in ways the Committee simply could not. For instance, Energy Performance Certificates. Introducing EPCs for properties could provide a revenue stream while incentivising energy efficiency aligning with broader environmental goals. Independent housing and rental standards watchdog: a Commission could act as an independent regulator of our housing and rental standards, with fees for inspections or certifications creating another income source.

2340 Partnerships and joint ventures: the Commission could engage in joint ventures with developers, leveraging land or infrastructure investment to generate returns that can be reinvested in housing delivery. These revenue streams not only offset costs, but also ensure the Commission has independence and flexibility to pursue its mandate effectively.

2345 Unlike a States' Committee, the Housing Commission would operate independently, offering continuity beyond election cycles. This stability is critical for long term housing projects that cannot be delayed by political resets or changing priorities. As Deputy de Sausmarez has already stated, work could start on a Housing Commission immediately, but it could take months or years before a Housing Committee achieves anything, whilst diverting essential resources away from the current vital housing work streams.

2350 Another strength of Commissions is their exceptional value for money, both the Sports Commission and the Health Improvement Commission demonstrate this by leveraging public funds to attract private and philanthropic donations. The Housing Commission could follow this model, delivering more while using fewer Government resources.

2355 The amendment reallocates budgets to fund the Commission, avoiding significant additional costs of the requêtes proposed Committee. Establishing another States' Committee risks adding bureaucracy and political friction at a time when we need streamlined action. The Housing Commission is a leaner alternative, focusing solely on housing delivery and leaving policy making to the States. This clarity of roles will reduce delays and ensure faster progress.

2360 The Commission's work would extend to designing housing solutions for our ageing population enabling seniors to live independently for longer. Age friendly housing with energy efficient designs not only supports our elderly but also reduces pressure on healthcare and Social Services

2365 Members, the housing crisis demands bold, practical action. The success of other Commissions on this Island proves that expertise-driven, independent bodies deliver results. The Housing Commission offers a transformation solution that combines expertise, public-private collaboration and fiscal responsibility.

I thank Deputy de Sausmarez for her hard work bringing this amendment forward along with Deputy Soulsby. I also wish to thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and the requérants, whose efforts have given us this opportunity. I urge all Members, including the requérants, to support this amendment.

2370 Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Murray.

**Deputy Murray:** Thank you, sir.

2375 I wish I had the optimism that the panacea that Deputy Cameron has just described could actually deal with all the problems that we have got. I would have to suggest, actually, it is a far more fundamental the problem than setting up a Commission, but we will get back to that in a moment. Sir, I think we have got to stop kidding ourselves.

2380 For four years we have struggled with building any significant amount of homes. **(Several Members:** Hear, hear.) We have had a HAG, or maybe two, I have lost count, who bought up a lot of land which had challenges, chiefly flood risk. We spent nearly a whole Meeting, I am sure Members will remember arguing about building accommodation in our field at PEH.

We have developed a housing plan, an indicator that suggests we need somewhere towards 2,000 homes and, frankly, absolutely no chance of achieving that in the near future, or even the long term. E&I have, I believe, I think it is about 22 policy streams, I am sure I will be corrected if I am wrong, but they are taking a very long time to come to finality.

We have engaged several consultants to tell us what we already know; that our housing market is broken. We got rid of GP11 that made no difference. We already have a Housing Forum. We are now intending to create a Housing Commission, which is very likely to create, in my opinion, disunity between competing developers, builders and suppliers.

That is part of the problem with setting up what has been described, in my opinion, and I think we have only got to look, and I mean no criticism in this, to the Tourism Marketing Board or whatever it is now called because actually they cannot agree either and you are going to have the same problem with builders who are looking to make a profit and developers the same thing.

I cannot see how you can put these same people in a room with the best will and intention and actually not find them competing for whatever scraps are on the table. I do not believe that is going to be possible; I really do not. I wish it was, but I do not believe it and, sir, a good friend of mine, a long-time builder and developer who recently passed away unexpectedly, explained to me that our increasing demands for things in compliance, like biodiversity legislation, was crippling him and I have no have no reason to doubt it.

The reality is the cost of developing and building is prohibitive in Guernsey, as is the earnings to cost of mortgages relationship at 15 times. Is it any wonder people cannot afford to build, make a profit or afford to pay back a mortgage when that is the sort of marketplace that we are dealing with at this point in time and I do not believe for one minute those fundamentals will be changed by just a Commission, it is not going to happen.

We have a labour shortage that we are at least, finally, trying to address with the contractor village proposals that we have all agreed make a great deal of sense, but they are going to take time to come forward as well. Frankly, in my opinion, there are already too many cooks in the kitchen. That is the problem that this States faces continually. We have competing demands, competing mandates, and none of us are prepared to let go.

A single focused Committee granted with the relevant authority to remove these unnecessary barriers between mandates and blockages is absolutely the right way to go. **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** So, I am supportive of the housing Requête, even though I would have preferred it to be as part of a complete Machinery of Government overhaul, but I will take what I can get in the meantime. So I will not be supporting this amendment and I urge other Members not to do so either.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Brouard.

**Deputy Brouard:** Thank you, sir.

I am sure that, as Deputy Cameron very well advised us, a Commission in certain areas can do a lot of good and I understand the multiplying effect that the Commission has and can bring. But on this occasion. I am inclined not to go along with it. I must have missed the module where management speak was out and about because I am lost in the explanation on this amendment.

It says so much, but there is nothing I can get my fingers around and really understand. So when the people who are in favour of this Commission sum up, can they really give me some hard evidence of how it will actually work, because I do not understand this, a role as a delivery vehicle. You mean like a Ferryspeed van? *(Laughter)* What is it that it is? And liaison between industry? Do we not do that now? And facilitating joint – someone has just got the whole module and just put out each of the headings. Being a conduit now, that is what, drain pipes and stuff? Signposting and support, working with the States to prioritise, we have just prioritised housing.

What I would like to see on the list is where we are going to build, when and how. **(Several Members: Hear, hear.)** That is what I want to see. So I am, basically, just not able to, unless someone



2435 can really come up with some really good reasons exactly what this Commission will actually do. Where will they get their land from? Is SPU going to be handing over all of the States property assets that we have got that that contain housing or contain fields that could be housing? I just do not understand it.

2440 Also, be careful what you wish for. We may not like Health or we may not like Housing or whatever it is, but at least we, in this room, collectively can manage them or control them or help them. Once you have got a Commission set up and flying, there is very little chance of the States having any control, as we have seen with some of the Commissions we have set up in the past.

2445 They are set up independently for a reason. So you will lose control very quickly and I am concerned about that because, I think, it is something that we should be managing. I know we have not done very well, and I will come on to that in a minute, but we need to get a grip on our housing issue, both for locals and for those who we want to come here and work and for those who we want to come over here and serve us and look after us. So, at the moment, I am very much in favour of having a short, sharp focus by having a Housing Committee.

2450 Just take one instance, the key worker accommodation for permanent staff. Why do some Deputies in the media keep on with this myth that, somehow, we want it to house agency staff and that is why we wanted to build John Henry Court 2. John Henry Court, the vast majority of it is used for permanent staff here to help us. It is not for agency staff. So, why do some Deputies keep on with this myth? I do not know why.

2455 I was saying to my colleague Deputy Leadbeater on the way in, I just somehow feel that some people just do not want us to succeed. I hate to say that but that is sometimes how I feel. We could have had, if it was not for the requête that that poisoned the well, we could have had about now 160 homes, (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) not for agency, but for staff who are working here to serve the Island.

2460 We could have let the accommodation that was not used for nurses, we could have let it out to locals. That would have taken some pressure off our local market –

**Deputy Soulsby:** Point of correction, sir,

2465 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Soulsby.

**Deputy Soulsby:** I think I need to bust this myth that Deputy Brouard has used virtually every time we have ever spoken about the field at the PEH. The requête did not pass, it was actually amended it was nothing that stopped the bill. The reason why it never happened was because it was never going to happen, it had to pass so many hurdles and it would not have got permission through the DPA, which was made very clear to us when the new P&R got into office.

2470 Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Brouard.

2475 **Deputy Dyke:** Point of correction, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Dyke.

**Deputy Brouard:** But I will happily give way to Deputy Dyke, sir, if that helps.

2480

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Dyke then.

**Deputy Dyke:** I thank Deputy Brouard.

2485 In terms of the Hospital field, the requête was amended by the famous Inder amendment to set aside some set of fields to allow it to continue. A planning application was put in to Development & Planning, but before the Committee got to see it, for some reason, people were being told that

we would not approve it. We had not seen it. If P&R would like to bring it back tomorrow, we could put it high on the agenda and look at it.

Thank you, sir.

2490

**Deputy Brouard:** Thank you, Deputy Dyke, and that, basically, is the frustration that we have had for the last four years.

I find it a little bit hard to swallow when people are standing up here saying the fastest and most efficient way to build houses is this Commission today. No, the fastest and most efficient way to build houses was four years ago when we came into power. That was the fastest way to do it and we had a golden opportunity on the Hospital site to take some real pressure off the local market where our children and our families are suffering now because they cannot find accommodation.

But no, what do we do? I am going to be interested, I am going to be really interested, how many here in this Assembly are going to protest about the building of houses on a green field site at the Pitronnerie Road? How many requêtes and red ribbon campaigns are there going to be for that?

What happened at the golf course when many acres or vergées were just given over to recreation out of agriculture? Where were all the protests then? No, for some reason we had a very spiked requête for one field (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and it has clouded my last four years because it has made our job just that much more difficult. For what, for seven vergées of a very unsuitable field for agriculture, it is hard to plough, it is in a very steep valley.

But there are other fields that have all gone over, we even had somebody in this Assembly suggesting that we should build on old vinery sites. Well, old vinery sites, I have got no problem because, I declare an interest I have got a vinery site, but vinery sites are meant to be greenhouses or temporary structures on agricultural land. So, there is somebody then promoting building on, what is effectively, green fields but are quite happy to support a requête so that we cannot get our accommodation for our staff.

So, I am very much in favour, at the moment, of supporting Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's stall for a Housing Committee. I think that is going to be the easiest and everything can be put in place now. The people who are now working in E&I or ESS or in Planning there is nothing to stop you working together tomorrow towards that Housing Authority and put it in place. The fact that the people might change, who are actually going to populate it properly in the end, is neither here nor there. So I think I have said enough, sir.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

2520

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Ferbrache.

**Deputy Ferbrache:** Sir, I do not want to make this sound as though it is Rumpole's last speech because Rumpole is going to leave the bar because he won a four-horse accumulator having been recommended by one of his clients to Timsons. The trouble was the prison officer he entrusted to place the bet ran off to some hot clime so he never got the money. So, I will save my Rumpole's last speech to another time.

I was going to make my main speech when we came to the general debate but if this amendment is successful there will be no meaningful debate. So, therefore, I am making it now in relation to where we are. People do not want Commissions, they do not even really want Committees, they want houses, (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) they want homes and we and our predecessors have been pitiful in the way that we provided the opportunity for people to buy to build homes; absolutely pitiful.

I do not know the exact statistics for the calendar year 2024, but I think we were up to building less than 100 homes. The figures for 2023 were, I think, 91 homes. Now, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller in one of her several opening speeches that she had to make in relation to this Requête over the last few months, said we have got no chance at all, zero chance of meeting our targets for building houses between 2024 and 2027 and she is absolutely right.

2540 Now, I have just been somewhere for lunch where we looked over the Cobo Bay, just magnificent, absolutely magnificent. The beauty of this Island, the stability of this Island and the quality of life of this Island is second to none. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) But there are the three H's we ought to have in mind and two of them give rise, generally, to the third. Health and housing are the first two and if you have got good health and you have got good housing you have got a good chance at the third, which is happiness.

2545 Deputy Brouard and his colleagues, I think, have done a fantastic job in their last four or so years in trying to give us a good health system and I know there is a battle on as well whether it is going to be a two tier stage two of the hospital project or whatever it will be, he will keep battling for the next several months that he is still a Deputy and I commend him for that. He has been an excellent President of his Committee.

2550 But in relation to where we are, we mouth solutions but we do not actually do something. Deputy de Sausmarez, I know, has worked very hard indeed in relation to housing matters, so has Deputy Roffey and I worked closely with them on the Housing Action Group and we all had the same goal, which was to provide as many homes, they were generally social homes, as we possibly could.

2555 Well, we have failed so far. We bought the land and, I think, they would both agree that we were hoping that the spade would be in the ground, the cement mixers would be whirling round and houses would be built. Now, I know Deputy Roffey, in an update he gave a States' Meeting or two ago about housing said, look we are getting somewhere, I am précising his words they were not his exact words. Not getting anywhere quick enough.

2560 There is no magic in this. The UK has under built houses but we have problems, I do not really care about the UK, I care about Guernsey. Now, I was out for a meal with a friend of mine, Stuart Falla, a few weeks ago and because we were two elderly gentlemen we were going home rather early and as we as we were going home a young couple, well there were in their forties actually but that is young to me, my youngest is 42, so anybody at that age is young, stopped and said could I have a word with you Deputy Ferbrache, it will only take five minutes

2565 Well, we were there for 45 minutes and I was so pleased I was there with this couple. They had both gone to St Sampson's School, they were both archetypal good Guernsey people. They had a boy of 19 and a girl of 15, the girl is at St Sampson's School, the boy is an apprentice tiler, first or second year, I do not know how many years he has done.

2570 What a conversation I had with those people. He has got a small business in the marine type environment, which employs about six people. His wife works in a financial institution. Those are the kind of people that I was elected to represent. Those are the kind of people that we have failed. We have failed in so many ways.

2575 We have imposed a tax burden upon them, we have failed to build housing and they were telling me that they do not like, just wait, please Deputy Meerveld, they do not like GST, but they see no alternative to it. They do not like extra taxes, but they know they have got to come. For the first time in my life, my 73 years and six months of life, I am not feeling optimistic about Guernsey.

2580 I do not like saying that as a former senior politician and somebody who has held various States' Presidencies over the time and sat on many States' Committees, because we have got a system of Government that is inadequate. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) We do not perform well, we are not building, giving the opportunity for people to have housing, which is what they deserve, it is something that is an absolute entitlement, in my view. in relation to Guernsey, we have always had, generally, a high home owning community. Those figures have fallen back in recent years.

2585 I saw something, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner was on Laura Kuenssberg's programme probably a couple of months ago now and she was saying, look, the ratio of earnings to affordability of housing is out of kilter, completely out of kilter. I think it was 8.6 in the UK and as Deputy Trott has rightly said, it is about 15 or 16, something like that, in Guernsey, so nearly twice as much.

2590 That is unaffordable, unachievable and this couple, this thoroughly decent couple that I really enjoyed my 45 minutes with and they brought me a cup of coffee, so I thanked them for that, they are the future of Guernsey and their kids are the future of Guernsey and their children, they did not see that their children would ever be able to get on the housing market.

When I was 21, 22, okay I was living in the UK, I was absolutely confident I would be able to get on the housing market. I did not have a doubt that I would be able to get on the housing market and I was a lawyer and it was thought, in those days, that lawyers earned lots of money. Well, we know that is not true, but that was the thought.

2595 If you are a tiler in the building industry, you earn a good living but you will not earn fortunes. You will do a very valuable job for Guernsey. People like that should have a home. Now we had, and I respect both these people as politicians, we had Deputy Roffey and Deputy Soulsby looking wanly over a farm gate some months ago, their picture is in the *Press*, looking at a field that Deputy Brouard's already referred to.

2600 A field that was bought in 1930 at development land prices, a field that a few cows now go for their summer holidays for two or three weeks in July or August. That is all they ever do, the rest of the time that field is not used. We could have built on that and I can remember going to the presentation, Deputy Leadbeater and Deputy Brouard, some time ago now when I was on P&R, and I gave it my fulsome support from day one, that that field should have been built on. It would have  
2605 provided 150, 160 units for full-time nurses, if occasionally there were five vacancies and you had part-time temporary staff there, fine. But the ethos of it was it was going to be built. We turned that down because we wanted the grass to be protected of a second-rate field.

We also had, and some of my friends on that commission, the bonkers decision of listing the Castel Hospital. Somewhere, which will never have any money spent on it because we have not got the money to spend on maintaining it, it will fall into disuse, it will fall down. My second name is  
2610 Terence because he was one of my godfathers, because my father was the youngest of 14. Terence was his nephew but was the same age as I am now.

Now the Terences of this world, Terry worked in the building industry all his life. He and his partner laid blocks and they were stone masons, a two-man band. They had the opportunity in that  
2615 time of buying land at a reasonable price and because they were block layers, they had mates who were electricians and plumbers and tilers and all that and they had the opportunity of building their own homes. My godfather lived there till he died. All his life, for many years he lived in that property. We have not got the chance for those young people to do it now and that is a disgrace. We should be a society moving forward, not backwards.

2620 A Commission is another quango. I thought Deputy Cameron made an excellent speech, I have got to say, at 2.30 p.m. or whatever time he said it today and he is right about the Sports Commission, but there are horses for courses. The Sports Commission works well, it has got a different role and it has got lots of people, whether international or hopeless at sport but they know about sport. It is a brilliant Commission and I fully support what he said in that regard.

2625 But this amendment is a late amendment, I do not think it is intended to be a wrecking amendment, but it is and it is a quango. This would just be another quango. Commission is a step away from Government, we need focus on housing we need revolution, not evolution. I do not want to see generations of young Guernsey people never having the opportunity of having decent accommodation.

2630 We are taking away our integrity. We are taking away our initiative. We are taking away our hope. We are taking away our aspiration. This is a speech I hoped I would never have to give. Where I am saying that Guernsey is going backwards and this Government has failed, the previous Government failed.

2635 Now, it is a problem that exists everywhere, not everywhere, but in lots of places. We have too little housing, too little land, too much expenditure. The UK Government is already there, it is not going to achieve its aim. There are already councils saying you cannot build here; we have not got enough land or we are never going to be able to get the builders.

We have got to do something revolutionary. We have got to have a laser like, I think it was one of the phrases used on housing, because otherwise we are just going to slip backwards and  
2640 backwards and that is not the Guernsey that I want to see in the future. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) So please be aspirational, please do something that is revolutionary.

2645 This Requête is not going to solve all the problems, nothing will, but it is a big step forward. If you have got a Committee that is solely purposed for housing that has got more chance of pulling levers than a Commission or anything else, it is more directly at the centre of Government, it has got a chance. It might not work, but nothing else will work. So I ask people to vote for the Requête and reject the amendment.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Prow.

2650 **Deputy Prow:** Thank you, sir.

I shall not be voting for this amendment. Deputy Cameron, towards the end of his speech, he thanked the requérants for having the opportunity to place this amendment, which I found was quite curious, because if a Housing Commission is the be all and end all, why was this not introduced (A Member: Hear, hear.) at the beginning of this term? If this was the solution to sort out the issues that have not been sorted out, why is it now in this amendment that it comes to this Assembly, is 2655 that a rearguard action? I think it is.

Sir, when I spoke to the requêtes that we debated in our last meeting, I expressed my disappointment around the States not tackling key issues and parking them in the far too difficult to do tray. Reform of Government is one of those and the other is housing in all its many 2660 components. Simply not enough of them, not building them, affordability for Islanders and the lack of them for key workers, something that Deputy Brouard's excellent speech majored on and that is the key workers whether on Island or off Island.

The Requête under debate starts with a Committee reform and then joins up our combined political response and oversight on this major issue. The Commission concept does not. Sir, I learnt 2665 in a former life through many training and development programmes one of the key components for any organisation in terms of effectiveness is driving out duplication and fragmentation of effort.

The Requête clearly identifies and demonstrates those issues in spades. Our curious and unique committee Government system spreads the responsibility across three separate, uncoordinated but so-called Principal Committees and the Planning Authority. This will be addressed by the Requête 2670 but not by this amendment.

This silo working, despite a Government Work Plan identifying housing as a major issue, the progress has been lamentable. The efforts might be well meaning and resources deployed, but there is no co-ordination or collective responsibility and housing outcomes are just not being achieved. I shall not support this amendment; I shall be supporting the Requête.

2675 Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

2680 **Deputy Gollop:** A very strong speech from Deputy Prow and Deputy Ferbrache. Deputy Brouard and Deputy Murray, I do not know if it works the mic. It works a bit. , As I say, we have had strong speeches opposing this amendment really but the thing is, in a way, it is a *sursis* as well in a sense, but it is a *sursis motivé* because it creates an outcome.

Deputy Cameron said he did speak in strong support of it, mentioning the Sports Commission and, I suppose, my position is to speak in weak support of it because I can see there are some 2685 positive aspects here but, as Deputy Prow has pointed out, the advantages of this approach should and could have been looked at a long time ago and I regretted when we abolished the Housing Action Group, or at least it mutated into something else.

We heard a rather confusing set of views this morning from different speakers who conveyed a different interpretation to the message some of us had from a leading figure in the construction 2690 sector and different nuances on what they want. But the point I got out of it, I think, was that the building and construction sector they want more delivery, they want more accountability, they want more political action and they want anything that goes down that route.

I was entertained by Deputy Brouard talking about being signposting and a conduit and, of course, I used to be, for a while, a Disabled People's Champion or popularly called the Disability Champion. That was a curious role because you were neither one thing or the other, it was a States' Member but it was not an official role nor was it a role with a statutory dimension and, I think, champion can be a difficult word, perhaps, to interpret.

Deputy Brouard also made me think about a certain site in the Pitronnerie area. I remember opposing it when I was a backbencher because I have always felt that area should be ecologically protected, but I think it slipped through when I was at the DPA, we were so intent on preserving other sites in the area it made it onto the list. At the rate we have been going with housing, nothing has happened so the last few years it has been saved.

I think one thing we do want is action. I think it has to be said, I do not know if other Members of the States who have been involved with Planning or E&I will refer to this, but I think there has been a degree of concern, perhaps behind the scenes, that this new structure will lead to difficulties of bureaucracy and implementation. We may hear more from speakers of the DPA who are on both sides on that issue because my position currently is, actually, to support the housing Requête that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and her requérants have put forward.

But it is a bit like the GST debate, the lifeline we have been offered is this amendment and I will give the amendment the time of day. I actually agree with the remarks that we have already identified and, actually, I suspect the industries would like to see both and, I think, there is room for both and I am pleased to hear Deputy Moakes got on and did the job and got the Housing Forum set up with loads of people from different groups.

But again, a forum needs resources. When we look into the text of the amendment, I will agree and disagree with part of it, they say:

The creation of an additional Committee of the States, as proposed, would increase the size, cost, complexity and bureaucracy of Government, add to the States burden, administrative, and further draw responsibility into Government and away from the private sector.

Well, that comes back to the Machinery of Government issue that Deputy Inder and others have referred to, Deputy Murray. But if we are not capable, as politicians, what is our role? We argued last month whether we should have 38 or 28, maybe you only need eight of us because we seem to be the problem in getting things done and so there is something curious on an amendment like this basically saying the problem is the politicians and the answer is a champion who is not an elected person.

Well, as I said, I found resistance when I was Disabled People's Champion because I lacked the resources and the status and the power of a States' Committee. So, I say good luck to whoever is the Housing Delivery Champion. I was like a sign poster, but that did not mean I had any powers, it goes back to the points Deputy Brouard makes.

We would like to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness. Of course, a Housing Commission that was a small, agile group of people with relevant experience with delegated authority would be useful but I have found that even when we are trying, and we really have been working hard on Policy & Resources on looking at Leale's Yard and other sites, but when you start to get into technicalities, risk awareness, corporate governance, use of public money there are many constraints.

I cannot see how a new body would necessarily be able to get around those constraints just like that. The Sports Commission is an interesting parallel because Deputy Cameron, I am sorry I missed the sports awards, but he was a passionate champion for more money for the Sports Commission when there was a thinking that they were losing a bit last year and that is the problem sometimes with Commissions because they are at arm's length, they are less involved in delivery.

We formed the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for many great reasons because it needed to be outside Government. We have got all sorts of things, Health Improvement Commission, Arts Commission, even talk of a Heritage Commission. Why are we forming a Housing

2740 Commission that we think will do a political job better? I think it has a role but we need to work harder on this.

Delivery of new units of housing, well presumably that means making developmental decisions which involve resources and be more effective outside of Government. Well actually, of course, they would need to be in Government because you would have to go through the planning process and it would have to go through Environment & Infrastructure and it, obviously, would need funding from Policy & Resources.

I do not quite understand why it would only be £100,000 *per annum* because if it was employing any staff and at the calibre you would need for this sort of standalone body, I would think that kind of money would be used up pretty quickly and the money was to be used in a different way for researchers and Deputy de Sausmarez made an excellent case for the research but, presumably, that research would not be done.

I do not know if I agree that less officer time would be required. I think there is a philosophical point, and I am tempted to say an ideological point, from some people that they think we have to reduce the size of Government and, therefore, depoliticise things. Whereas, actually, I agree on occasion that political specialisation, five groups of people like we heard from the days of the older States, who were focused when they sat in a Committee room only on housing would be more focused than if they look across the across the whole *piste*.

One curiosity, everybody talks about –

I will give way to Deputy Oliver.

2760 **Deputy Oliver:** Thank you, Deputy Gollop.

It was just what you were saying before that, well you need this, you need this and we need a new specialist. Please remember that the Committee at the moment, Housing, is under E&I, so it is not like just we need all these new people, we do have people already there but they are over E&I and ESS.

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes, Deputy de Sausmarez did make a point that made me think – I give way.

2770 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I am really grateful to Deputy Gollop for giving way.

Just to clarify the point made by Deputy Oliver. She is quite right that existing staff working in Housing would move over but the point has to be made that at the moment that is an integrated Housing & Infrastructure team. So that is one point. So, that team would have to be shared, unless it is going to be duplicated, one for Housing and one for Infrastructure.

2775 So, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller suggested in Amendment 2 that would not be necessary, which is great for you then no longer have that vertical line of accountability because all of those officers would be equally under E&I and equally being called upon to work on Infrastructure projects if the need arose.

2780 But more to the point, setting up a new Committee, irrespective of policy officers, setting up a new Committee requires additional administrative officers in their own right. So, a Principal Committee requires a Committee Secretary and also at least one other person performing that administrative function.

2785 There is no other Principal Committee, that I am aware of certainly, that has simply a Committee secretary. The DPA, in fairness, is not a Principle Committee. So, there are no other Principal Committees that only have a Committee secretary, you do need someone who is able to take the minutes, for example, and support the other administrative roles and functions of a Committee. So it is not true to suggest, or it is not accurate to suggest, sorry, that all that is required in terms of resource, human resource, people, is to move people currently doing this job under E&I to under Housing. It literally just cannot work like that.

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**Deputy Gollop:** Yes, it all gets a bit complicated and a bit operational. I was aware when I served on the Transport Licensing Authority, which had a small function under me that we had an excellent officer but he did many other things as well. For older Members who hate to talk about nostalgia and what we did in 1997, but back in the day, and Deputy Trott will remember, we had a centralised Advisory & Finance Committee and we had a secretariat for smaller Committees and we had various people who were, effectively, Secretary for more than one Committee.

There is, perhaps, let us say we have a new Housing Committee, surely some of the roles could be part-time and part-time in other areas and the same arguments actually apply to the Commission because Deputy de Sausmarez's valid points about officers who work across the *piste* who have a role in Infrastructure & Environment and who are necessary to feed into Housing that, equally, applies to the Housing Commission.

As Deputy Brouard says, it is not entirely clear exactly what form this would take, but if it is to go anywhere useful and achieve the kind of impact Deputy Ferbrache and Deputy Prow and, probably, Deputy Inder would like to see, it has to have a Development Agency mentality and powers. It cannot just be a talking shop. It cannot just be bringing together politicians and officers and stakeholders. I do not think that is clear from this. It could be done, I believe there would be staffing costs whichever way.

I also am curious in another way, we always talk about four Principal Committees of housing, P&R, DPA, E&I and ESS. But, I think, a really important Committee in housing is the one Deputy Moakes is on, Economic Development. Economic Development is the Committee of the economy, it is the Committee of the construction industry, it is the Committee of the employment sector and it does need to have its views represented in this.

We have got a Housing Committee responsible to implement a strategic direction by facilitating development. Well, I have been saying for some time in the States that I was not entirely convinced that all of the Committees met developers often enough to get their concerns. I was reassured otherwise. But now, perhaps, the light is being shown with the Housing Commission that it could establish commercial partnerships and work with developers.

I was interested somebody made the point that it might cause rancour between developers. I would, perhaps, like to hear more about that. We are told it will provide certainty and stability for establishing new models of housing provision. I was stopped in the lunch hour by somebody who wanted modular build, we know that has been easier said than done, build to rent. Some of these models, of course, come out of the consultancy exercise.

So, where do I stand on this? A bit like the building developments, I think, we need both. I think we definitely need a change. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I will vote for Deputy Kazantseva-Miller if this falters. I think we need to give this, perhaps, the benefit of the doubt because at least we come away with something if this succeeds and it has to be said that we did have a Housing Committee in the past, of which I was a Member for a while, and it achieved a lot but not everything.

It was, again, possibly too focused as Deputy de Sausmarez mentioned, about landlord issues, tenancy issues and social landlords and we want a different vehicle. So, going back to housing would have a lot of advantages, politically, but it was not a panacea, it did not take us to the promise land and, maybe, a Commission, despite my reservations about what powers it would have, what resources and how it would relate to us in this Chamber as politicians, maybe, a Commission is something worth supporting because I support many of the ideas in this, I just do not know if we got the right vehicle.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

**Deputy Trott:** I intend to make half a dozen or so points and I am brought to my feet by the thoughtful speech of Deputy Ferbrache; I agree with much of what he said. But I would like to start with making a point that I have made in this Assembly on two previous occasions. I think the word affordable housing ownership has become and is increasingly becoming a pipe dream.



The truth is we have made very good efforts in trying to make it more affordable but, I think, that is about as good as we are likely to achieve and I will tell you why. Only yesterday morning at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting, I said that if there was an independent review undertaken into our behaviour, our efforts, the Policy & Resources Committees efforts over the last 13 months that we have been in the role, I am fairly certain the independent report would be supportive of the actions that have been taken and, I think, the same would be true of the previous Committee, but there have been really quite difficult headwinds.

The first is this so-called modern modular design. We genuinely believed a year ago that this was a part solution. The business that was producing these units of accommodation, despite being backed by one of the most significant investment banks in the City of London, went bust. You could not make it up.

We were told that GP11, get rid of GP11, and houses will spring out of the ground. In fact, one of my friends said that he was, I think, almost certain that would be the case. We have seen none of the GP11 sites materialised. We have done our best. When it comes to capacity within the industry, this Assembly has approved having a village, if necessary, full of foreign workers in an attempt to stimulate extra capacity.

We have not seen that come to light and I could go on and on. There are people who are guilty of land banking. We have sites we own, they are expansive sites but quite a lot of work is required in advance to facilitate them, to make them happen, and so on. It may sound like a whole list of excuses, but it is also the truth.

Now some references were made to when Deputy Ferbrache was a younger man, well I can tell you that my father built his first bungalow with the help of some friends, for less than £3,000 in the sixties. Guernsey was very different in the sixties. It was before the boom that financial services allowed; we were a horticulture- based society. It is nice to be nostalgic. It is nice to make comparisons, but the truth is they are not particularly helpful.

I mean, £3,000, to put it into reality that is about three hours of Deputy Advocate Ferbrache's efforts in *(Laughter)* the legal world. *(Interjection)* I beg your pardon it is maybe two hours, my apologies! The point is Guernsey was very different then. Now I can envisage a situation, I am optimistic about the future and I will explain why in a moment, but I can envisage a situation where house prices plummet. They become affordable, more affordable for some, but I do not want that scenario because if that scenario emerges this community will be in a recession and I do not want that.

So, I think that I am confident about the future. I think we have faced challenges of this type before and, I think, one of the advantages for the next Assembly, they are going to have some headwinds particularly about how much they can spend, but one of the advantages will be many of the sites that we put so much effort into procuring will become available as a consequence of this Assembly's efforts in the next term.

I am going to support this amendment and I will tell you why. We received some information this morning from Deputy Mahoney where he did not really think this was what the industry wanted and I am the first to admit that the industry's intelligence on these issues has not always been 100% accurate and I referenced some of those reasons earlier.

But they say that if you really want this to move go for the Commission now. The long-term solution is probably the Housing Department that is envisaged by Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and others. But if you really want to move the dial quickly, their advice is, create a Commission and do it now and for that reason, and primarily for that reason, I intend to support the amendment.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

First of all, I would just like to refer to Deputy Gollop's interesting, slightly meandering speech. He refers several times to the fact that we used to have a Housing Committee. We never had a Housing Committee anything like the type envisaged in the Requête. Actually, I served for donkeys'

2895 years on more than one, I was Vice-President of more than one Housing Committee; the vast majority of their work was, actually, administering the Housing Control Law. That was probably two thirds of their work.

They did not get involved at all in the private housing market, that was more or less left to do its own thing and obviously they ran the States' houses as well, but that was probably the other third of their work. Sir, I do not have any particular political skin in this game. What we are debating 2900 today is how the housing policy would be devised, how housing implementation will be overseen in the next Assembly and I will not be in the next Assembly.

But I do have skin in the game in the sense that I really want the failures of this Assembly to be put right and for us to start marching forward and even though I am not coming from the same place, I agree very much with what both Deputy Mahoney and Deputy Ferbrache have said about 2905 the big failure in this Assembly has not been housing, *per se*, it has been new housing development adding to our housing stock.

I feel, actually, a great deal of culpability there. Obviously, the vast majority of the new housing stock we are looking for will be in the private sector and I have not had any direct political involvement in that, but on the affordable housing, capital A capital H, subsidised housing, social 2910 rental and shared ownership, etc. I am the political leader and I am the first to admit they have come up really short.

I know it has not been because of any lack of political energy or attention. I am biased, but I think I have got a reasonable amount of political ability, but I have not been able – okay not very much but definitely you know – I confess I expected to achieve far more and I have got less across 2915 the line than I expected.

I do not actually think it is down to me. Maybe it is, but I think when Deputy Ferbrache was around with HAG and now Deputy Trott and Deputy Soulsby are very much involved with housing on behalf of P&R, they are seeing the enormous hurdles that we are trying to overcome. So, the question to me is, what is the best way of finding a way through?

I agree that some of the groundwork has been laid and one of the problems was we did not have sites at the beginning of this Assembly, although we still need quite a lot more. Not just in the affordable housing but also in the private sector housing, how do we overcome this logjam? People have said that E&I have been quite slow to come forward on solutions in the private housing sector and I do not think they are slow in working, I think, they were slow starting and that is because, 2925 traditionally, this Assembly has regarded it as a matter for the market, private housing.

Obviously DPA have had an involvement in the planning side of it but the actual, how do you take it from there and make it happen, we thought that was down to the private sector. But there has been a massive market failure and, therefore, this Assembly has decided that they have to get involved and it took a year or two into this term before, I think, that penny dropped and it really 2930 happened but I am very impressed with the speed at which E&I are now working.

But the question is, in my mind, and I have no other interest whatsoever in the outcome of this, is what would be the most effective way to make sure that the failure on developing new housing stock is not replicated in the next term? I think the problem is certainly the requérants and, perhaps, the industry, are saying, well, let us set up a new Committee and let us focus on just that.

But the Requête does not do that. It does not set up a new Committee that is focused on housing development and getting development across the line. It sets up a new Committee that will have to spend part of its time considering what breed of dogs States' house tenants are able to keep and, believe you me that is really quite controversial at times. Whether or not they should have carpets on the floor and when they come to the obvious answer that, yes, they should how do they 2940 get the money out of P&R to actually make it happen?

What level of income should people be allowed to have and still be able to move into States' housing and, conversely, at what level should they be expected to move on, something that is intricately tied, actually, with the Social Welfare Policy of ESS but that will disappear and that will go across to the new Committee.

2945 How many new Open Market inscriptions there should be and how that drives things forward. There is a myriad of things that they will be focused on other than the development of new housing sites and I actually think that I agree with the requérants, but I would want to take it further.

The focus I want is on our area of failure and our area of failure has been on developing new housing and if people want to blame me partly for that they can and I will take that. I have given it  
2950 my best shot and it has not produced what I had hoped to see. But that is where the focus needs to be and, therefore, I do not know, I understand the argument about quangos and I am not a great quango fan and I am not a great small Government, necessarily, fan like Deputy Gollop. I think there is a role, certainly on the policy side of it, maybe the practical delivery is another matter.

Maybe politicians are not the best at translating that policy into practical delivery with all of the  
2955 headwinds that Deputy Trott was talking about. You really need to know your way around, I think, the development process in order to maximise that. I really do want to hear more about what the shape and style of this Commission is going to be.

But the idea of a body which is 100% focused on how to get new houses built, which is not what  
2960 this Housing Committee that is being set up would do, is something that, I think, is probably the best way forward. I actually think, reading between the lines, that is what the industry wants but maybe think that this new Housing Committee will do it.

They also think it will be a sole responsibility of this Housing Committee and they will, therefore, have ownership and will have total accountability. But they will not, they will be referring to the planning policies of the DPA, they will be talking about the finances where P&R will get involved  
2965 and the States' Property Units are concerned. Yes, you will go down, I guess, from four Committees to three. Instead of ESS, E&I, DPA and P&R you will have Housing, DPA and P&R, but that Housing Committee will still be doing lots of other stuff which has got nothing to do with development.

I have just been around the block much too much it is time I went, I know it is. But I lived through the era where people sincerely, just like the requérants, sincerely felt that whenever you had an  
2970 intractable problem the magical solution was to set up a new political Committee to focus on it. That is why we ended up with 50 or 60 political Committees because over the years 50 or 60 very vital things came along and we had to have a Committee to deal with it.

I do not believe that is the right solution. I believe that the review team that looked at our system of Government, some time ago, were right to say we needed fewer and more powerful Committees.  
2975 I think there is less danger of everybody looking at each other if you have fewer Committees than if you have many.

Sir, I will live with whatever result we get today, I do not know if it will even be today, I will live with that. Not only because I am not going to be there but because I am sure it will be the sincere decision taken by the Assembly and the sincere intent to get the best result. But I am with Deputy  
2980 Cameron here I do think we need a body.

I think there is one lesson we should take from the last four years; we need a body that gets up in the morning and focuses on one thing, which is the development of new housing both affordable and private sector housing. A new Housing Committee would not remotely be doing that. It would just be a part of a very large mandate.

Now I have got questions about the political control. I do not want to control it too much  
2985 **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** because that is a damp hand but I also think there needs to be some policy control because the elected Assembly needs to be saying what the general policy is. I think that is doable, I am mindful to vote in favour of this as I told the Construction Forum, as you will have seen in my response.

But before I finally do, I would like to understand and I know the thinking must be quite advanced because Deputy de Sausmarez said really within weeks this can be up and running. I would like a summing up to explain a little bit more about exactly how it works so that, a bit like Deputy Brouard says he can get his hands around it and understands what it is actually going to do and what the value added is. But I think at the moment I am thinking the balance is we are more likely to check,  
2990 we all know we have to change from what we have done in this Assembly, we all know it has not worked and I think, actually, setting up a body that is completely focused on getting houses built  
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and developed is probably needed, which is not unfortunately what the Requête does, I think, is the best option and that is the way I am leaning at the moment.

3000       **The Bailiff:** Deputy Moakes.

**Deputy Moakes:** Thank you, sir.

          I am going to try, as well as doing the speech, to clear up a couple of myths that have come up during this debate. But let me start off now and I will proceed and let you know how I get on. Deputy  
3005 de Sausmarez's opening speech, at least in my opinion, was an attempt to rewrite history. The idea of a Housing Commission, Housing Forum, whatever you want to call it, is not new.

          Deputy Cameron stated that he came up with the idea two months ago and I would like to thank him for confirming that because since this amendment came out quite a few people have approached me and said, this looks almost identical to something that you proposed six or seven  
3010 months ago.

          The amendment states the following, obviously to delete the original Propositions and substitute therefore. But then it goes on to say:

To direct the Policy & Resources Committee, in consulta on with the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, the Committee for Employment & Social Security and the public-private Housing Forum ...

First time that has been mentioned.

... to establish before the end of this political term a Housing Commission tasked with facilitating and driving forward the delivery of housing in the Island, working with (inter alia) landowners, developers, investors and financiers, the construction industry, the Guernsey Development Agency, the Guernsey Housing Association and the States of Guernsey, and to review the effectiveness of the Housing Commission before the end of the 2025-29 political term.

3015       Fine. Six months ago I said, I propose that we create a Housing Sector Forum. Given that housing is quite rightly a top political priority, I believe that the Forum should report to the Policy & Resources Committee. The Forum itself will be made up of representatives from the construction industry covering private, social and key worker housing, everything. The States, the relevant Committees that is, and employers, that is business, public and private sector. Additional  
3020 representatives should be brought in to provide further advice and guidance. Does that sound familiar?

          The amendment goes on to say:

The establishment of an arm's-length Housing Commission, headed by a non-political Housing Delivery Champion, will provide a single focal point for enabling the delivery of housing in the Island, bringing together representatives of, and expertise drawn from, developers and the construction sector as well as funding agencies, investors and government. It will provide the certainty and stability required for establishing new models of housing provision ... and major housebuilding projects, which often do not fit neatly into political terms, facilitating be er co-ordinated development.

          Six months ago, I said: The forum would be tasked with finding ways to resolve the current housing crisis and to help deliver the Island's future housing policies by bringing all the relevant  
3025 stakeholders together. I believe that it will result in better communication, better consultation, better strategic planning and an opportunity to share ideas and best practices.

          Does that sound familiar? So six months ago, the States had already made housing a top priority but there was no group that brought together all the key stakeholders. There was then a sense that Committees worked in silos and did not effectively engage with key external stakeholders.

3030       Setting up a Housing Forum supported, initially, by the Guernsey Construction Forum and the wider business community, was designed to bring all of these stakeholders together, both people within Government and outside. At that time, in my opinion, before anyone stands up, I do not think either P&R or E&I were interested at all.

3035 P&R did not suddenly rush out to set up a Housing Sector Forum and the President of E&I published, I think, in total seven or eight full-page advertorials telling us that E&I had everything under control. No need to change anything. Despite that, given the strong support for setting up a Housing Sector Forum, I continued to engage with key stakeholders from the construction sector and the wider business community and I would like to thank them for all their support. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

3040 We agreed that the Forum should be independent of Government at that point and have an independent Chair and we continued to lobby the Committees and departments responsible for housing, asking them to join the Forum and, to be fair, some were very quick to want to join. Not so in all in all cases.

3045 It took, believe it or not, within a housing crisis six months to get a meeting; the first meeting and that was in December 2024. So it has happened. The Housing Sector Forum, as it became known, met for the very first time. It met for a second time in early January, literally a matter of weeks ago and I will say, it is early days but the right people are now all sat round the table and, again, does this sound familiar?

3050 The forum is currently made up of all the relevant Government Committees and bodies, all of them, representatives from the Guernsey Construction Forum, representatives from the wider business community and representatives from both the GDA and the GHA. It also has an independent Chair, as I said earlier, and it sits outside of Government. So it is truly an advisory body trying to help Government develop policies and build houses for goodness' sake.

3055 How it evolves remains to be seen. It is expected that more people will be invited to attend in due course. But the fact that the Forum already exists does beg a number of questions. For example, why is this amendment being laid now? Why was it not suggested six months ago when the idea of the Housing Forum was originally presented? Why would Members agree to delete the original Propositions and substitute them with something that already exists?

3060 You are being asked to get rid of something and what you are being offered in return it already exists; it is nothing new. The name may be different but, in principle, it exists and if working in collaboration with other Committees and key external stakeholders is so important, why did the President of E&I not mention the Housing Forum in any of her seven or eight full page advertorials?

3065 Was it an oversight? If engagement and consultation with the construction sector and the wider business community is so important, surely referencing that meeting would have demonstrated commitment and a willingness to embrace external support from across the construction sector, the wider business community and other groups with an interest in seeing more homes being built.

3070 And finally, what has this amendment got to do with creating a single Committee responsible for housing? And that is the point that I want to focus on next. If the amendment simply added a Proposition to the Requête recommending that the existing Housing Sector Forum should be reclassified as a Housing Commission, I suspect that Members of the existing Forum would be open to discussing the idea given that it would be, in all likelihood, the same people that sat on it.

3075 But that is not what this amendment proposes. Instead, it proposes to delete the original Propositions within the policy letter. In other words, there would be no single Committee responsible for housing we would, instead, retain the existing Committee structure. This is the structure that some of you already said works in silos and does not effectively engage with key stakeholders.

3080 Business as usual? No, because the Guernsey Construction Forum believes that a single Committee responsible for housing still remains the best way to streamline Government and drive engagement with external stakeholders. These people –

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Point of correction.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy de Sausmarez.

3085 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I believe that, actually, their view is that may be the case in the abstract, but not the type of restructuring that is being proposed by the Requête, that has been made very clear and they have also made clear that if they had to choose between the two their preference would be to get on with the Housing Commission now. They have made that point very clear and explicit.

3090 **Deputy Moakes:** I would like to thank Deputy de Sausmarez very much for that intervention because that is exactly the point I am about to come on to. I repeat what I just said because it leads into the point I was about to make. The Guernsey Construction Forum still believes that a single Committee responsible for housing remains the best way to streamline Government and drive engagement with external stakeholders. And again, these people should know because they are responsible for building the homes that the Island so desperately needs. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

3095 So, on that point, a number of people have raised the point about whether the Guernsey Construction Forum would prefer a single Housing Committee or a Housing Commission. Members will have received an email clarifying their position. They want both. Not one. It is not binary, they want both.

3100 When they say short term, they mean what can be set up within weeks; short term. When they talk about long term, they talk about things that might take a bit longer to set up, i.e. a separate Committee and let me just read what they actually said. There was a statement that they sent to every single one of you in this room today. This is, by the way, from the Chairman of the Guernsey Construction Forum:

I would like to reiterate that the industry and the GCF need a single Committee that has the power to make decisions and the accountability to make the right decisions to get the houses built that the Island needs right now. The devolved input and power that the four Committees have currently is not working as we fall further behind our own Government's targets by approximately 275 houses every year just to stand still.

3110 So do not believe me but that is what is being said. So carrying on, I ask Members to remember that this Requête proposes having one, rather than several, Committees responsible for housing. That is the choice that we should be discussing today. The Forum is completely separate, or the Commission whatever you want to call it, it is completely separate.

It is independent of Government and it brings together external stakeholders who want to work with Government, irrespective of whether there are multiple Committees or just one. Trying to link them in the way that this amendment does, in my opinion, is unhelpful and is counter-intuitive.

3115 The second point that I would like to draw your attention to is this, the amendment states the following:

This amendment proposes an alternative approach which has evolved from the meetings of the Public Private Housing Forum –

I assume that this means the Housing Sector Forum.

... and other stakeholder discussions. The idea of a Housing Commission was proposed at the Housing Forum, which includes developers, the construction industry and business representative bodies.

3120 I cannot comment on the other stakeholder discussions. I was not there, but I was at both meetings of the Housing Sector Forum and whilst a Housing Commission might have been mentioned in passing, I do not recall the Forum discussing it in any detail or agreeing that a Commission should be set up.

So this alternative approach might have evolved from a side conversation at the Housing Forum, but it was no more than a side conversation and if I am wrong, please stand up and challenge me. The idea that it was proposed to the Forum is therefore, in my opinion, a tad misleading.

3125 In addition, I do not believe that there was a discussion about having a Commission instead of a single Committee responsible for housing. That is, of course, what this amendment proposes. So

again, in my opinion, I think that the language used in this amendment could be misinterpreted and I would ask the proposer to confirm that there was no discussion about having a Commission instead of a single Committee responsible for housing –

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**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I can confirm that there absolutely was, yes. So to be clear, there was a discussion about the fact that it was one or the other.

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**Deputy Moakes:** Interesting. So, moving forwards, I recommend that the proposer of this amendment, who is of course, herself a Member of the Housing Forum, put the idea of reclassifying the Forum as a –

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**Deputy Oliver:** Sorry, I just want to say that I cannot remember that being mentioned in the Forum.

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**Deputy Moakes:** Well, as I said, it may well have been mentioned but I suspect if it was mentioned it was a side conversation and not part of the wider discussion with everybody. But I could be wrong. So moving forward, I recommend that the proposer of this amendment who is, of course, herself a Member of the Housing Forum, put the idea of reclassifying the Forum as a Commission on the agenda for the next Housing Forum meeting so it can be discussed properly.

A huge amount of work has gone into creating the Forum as it stands today. So, I think, it would be far more appropriate to seek its members' opinion and approval before coming to the States and trying to change it.

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In summary, I believe that this amendment is a desperate attempt to get rid of a proposal that proposer clearly does not want. In return, Members are being offered something that already exists. It is a truly terrible amendment. If the proposer of this amendment wants to reclassify the existing Housing Forum as a Commission, I recommend she takes it up with the existing Forum.

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Whether or not Members want to retain the existing Committees or reduce them to one, I strongly encourage Members to vote against this amendment. We can then focus on the matter at hand; do we want multiple Committees responsible for housing or just one? I want one laser focused or laser beam focused Committee focused on housing. No distractions, no conflicts, no excuses. Please vote against this amendment.

Thank you.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

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**Deputy Bury:** Thank you, sir.

I am far warmer to this amendment than I have been to the Requête. I have never really been warm to the Requête and it goes back to the very first conversations I had with Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and, I think, Deputy Roffey alluded to. It was really about the nub of the issue, which is delivery of building houses, that is our problem and it is our problem, I think primarily, because it is not something that Government does.

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It is not something we have done for a long time. It is not something we do well, obviously, and that is why it has been a failure, to Deputy Ferbrache's words and a slow burn in many ways. I do not think that the creation of the Committee proposed in the Requête solves that. There is nothing in there that talks about the delivery vehicle. Nothing changes.

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If I wanted to summarise it in a slightly facetious term, what we are going to do is take a bunch of people who have failed in separate Committees to deliver any built houses and get them to sit together. I do not know what new skills they will be bringing to the table there. So, yes, the Committee has not really won me over.

The proposal here in this amendment of the Commission has done slightly more and, I think, it was echoed in some brief conversations I had this morning with representatives from industry and

to go to the Commission is more separate. I am quite interested by Deputy Moakes' speech, to be honest. I hope we are all clear now that it was his idea and a very good one, I think.

3180 So it is quite bizarre that he does not seem supportive of formalising it in the way that is being proposed here because that is how I see this amendment and was what I took from the conversation this morning that I had, which was also to Deputy Prow's point, questioning why has this not been done at the done at the beginning of the term?

3185 Well, it says in the second paragraph of the explanatory note, and I had that echoed by a representative conversation this morning, that it has evolved out of the very good Housing Forum that appears to be working very well. So let us formalise it and, I think this is probably the bit where I support it the most, keep it away from Government. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

3190 We do have lots of Commissions that work very well, the Sports Commission, the Health Improvement Commission, the DDA doing their thing. They are working because they are away from Government. They can be more agile; they can be more flexible. So to that end, this does appeal to me more. Deputy Ferbrache used the word revolutionary. I am not sure that going back to how we used to do things is revolutionary (*Laughter*), but different views from different people.

3195 One of the things that I did take away, again, from the conversation this morning that I had, I am trying not to be too inflammatory. It was not complimentary about the work coming out of Planning, if I am honest, and the Committee is not going to change that. Planning, as far as I understand it will still remain as Planning, essentially, even if there is a Committee *for* Housing, you are not taking away responsibilities from Planning and what they do.

To be fair, not just Planning –

3200 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Point of correction.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

3205 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Within the explanatory order of the Requête, not in the original Propositions, there are proposals that a stronger SLA type deliverable framework should be established. While the Committee cannot take operational oversight because they have got to maintain independence because they assess many different planning applications, but there are absolutely proposals that the way we deal with Planning should be changed and the Committee will look into ensuring there is, actually, better delivery through Planning through their processes.

3210 So, I just wanted to make the correction that absolutely there is the intention that there will be change expected.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

3215 **Deputy Bury:** Okay, well I will thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for the interjection but I think fundamentally it still does not change operationally how the Committees would interact with each other. Perhaps the SLA, and I think I am having a ringing of a bell, this might be back to Deputy Taylor's speech some time ago, but do we know how that is going to work, how the resources around an SLA prioritising things that come through the Housing Committee? I do not know.

3220 While I have had conversations, albeit brief I must admit, but they were very useful and I am grateful to the to the industry representatives for being in touch with us and giving us their point of view. We have to think from other points of view as well. Obviously, they are very important, but being a Member of ESS and with us having the affordable housing, capital A capital H, mandate we have to think about that from a social and welfare point of view.

3225 To Deputy Roffey's point earlier, there are some real interdependencies around ESS policy and affordable housing. Separate those out, you have created a silo. So, there are other points of view to be thought from other than industry. But I completely understand and support why they would want one conduit point of contact and I do think that makes sense and, again, that is why I am quite warm to the Commission because, I think, that could be that place.



3230 While I do want to hear their points of view, they are the same people that did tell us that there were no houses being built because of GP11 and here we are several months later and all these houses have not sprung up because GP11 has now gone. So, I think, I probably will vote for the amendment but I am going to wait to see, because I would like as a few other Members have said, just to hear a bit more about how it will work.

3235 I think it gives a great opportunity to put on a more formal footing, obviously, the great work that has been put in to get the Housing Forum on the go and it is clearly working. The industry Members that I have spoken to like it; they were complimentary about the work that E&I are doing but they were talking about the speed that the Commission could work at more quickly. So that is where I am with this at the moment, likely to support the amendment but I will listen to the rest of the debate.

3240 Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

3245 **Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir.

I have just picked up a few points throughout debate that I will just comment on. Firstly, coming to Deputy Moakes, who said about this being a laser focused Committee but this is one of the problems that I have with the Requête because this is what has been trailed about it and what it is going to achieve.

3250 But it is not going to be laser focused. It is going to deal with all the minutiae that a lot of the existing Committees that it takes the mandate from have to deal with. All the reasons that Deputy Roffey outlined and no doubt many more which have not been highlighted. So, I think, it really is an exercise in moving the deck chairs.

3255 The Committee is still going to have to go to P&R for money. It is still going to have to deal with Planning. These things are not going to change because we have given it a different name and just moved a couple of chunks of other people's mandates into it. They really are not and I am very concerned that it will just be that three years down the line in the new Assembly we will be having all the same discussions over again and that really troubles me. What is missing, if anything, is delivery and, I think, that is where the Commission could really come into itself and be a development of the Forum that Deputy Moakes has spoken about.

3260 Something else that seems really strange in this debate is the people in this Assembly who I would, perhaps, normally think of as being on the right of the Assembly and who want smaller Government and less Government involvement and everything, seem to be the people championing this expansion of Committees and bureaucracy and that seems really quite remarkable. Perhaps I would be on the not so smaller Government side and yet here I am feeling that this would be a really good idea to have this Commission.

3265 We have discussed at length and I gave a contribution this morning in an interjection to Deputy Mahoney's speech, what the Construction Forum has actually said and it was very helpful that they circulated to everybody at lunchtime the email that they had actually sent to me saying if they could only have one, which one would it be?

3270 However, they only sent the first couple of lines and I would just like to read what it actually says because there is a qualification in it that has not been aired, and so the email reads: I am going to give you a political answer. Short term, the Commission, but longer term and for the future of Guernsey, the Committee, but this would have to have the power of the DPA rolled in with it.

3275 And that is the thing, that is not what we are offering through the requête. So, they are quite clear, this would have to have the power of the DPA rolled in it. This new Housing Committee is not going to have the DPA rolled in, it is not going to be an amalgamation of all the functions of the DPA, P&S and E&I and so it is not giving them what they want.

3280 Whether we ever get to a point where those things all go together, I do not know. I would not suggest that doing that with the DPA is sensible in any way, given its role as an Authority. But that is not the debate we are having today in any case. So, given that is not on the table and given that

they say that their first choice, in the short term, would be the Commission and we know that the Commission can get up and running this term, if we are listening to industry and there was also a piece in *The Guernsey Press* the other day from another developer who was in praise of the concept of the Commission, if we are listening to them, then we have our answer on this amendment –

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Point of correction, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, I feel that Deputies are choosing to quote different parts of what the construction industry has said and because I can only speak in the end, I think, it is really important that we actually quote the formal letter that has been sent to all Deputies to just really outline what has been said. I would like to take that time briefly to do that:

We believe that the only way we will achieve this is with a much more streamlined decision making. This coupled with a full review and consultation with the construction industry and others to assist with removing any blockers. The Requête proposed to establish a single Housing Committee within the States, which would bring a single point of accountability and decision making that the industry could liaise with to speed up delivery of additional accommodation. We have already gone to *Press* to support this requête in early December and our support for this remains in place today. The main issue we, the GCF, see is the lack of cohesion within the Committees that have direct influence and bearing on the delivery of housing. P&R, DPA, E&I, ESS and their inability to tie down accountability and responsibility in the same place with the right levels of authority and control to go with it. History and experience tells us this is the issue. The current issue of four Committees having a say and being able to block control certain elements of the building process must be addressed and brought under one jurisdiction within the Government and given the right levels of control and autonomy to deliver against any agreed plans.

We, if they do go ahead, also believe in the Housing Commission reporting into single housing entity would be a very useful method for the external bodies and industries to communicate with in the States. This Commission could report directly into the single entity responsible for housing. So having said that, is the Housing Commission really needed if we amalgamate the responsibility for the delivery of housing into one Committee? We have recently seen the formation of the Housing Forum, which has been representative –

Blah, blah.

If we only had one Committee to work with, this could eradicate the need for a Housing Commission. Finally, it is obvious the Island is in crisis as defined by the Government in three years and we can no longer just talk about this. It is time to be bold and to move on.

I think it is absolutely clear to me that because of the way this amendment is structured, which removes completely the original Propositions, it is unequivocal and I repeat, unequivocal support from industry that the Committee is absolutely still needed and the only way to achieve that, it does not remove the opportunity for something else to be set up and, in fact, it could be set up by E&I in the next couple of weeks anyway because they have got the mandate and budget to do it, they do not have this Resolution of the States to do it.

But the only way to achieve what, in my view, industry and others have said is that this amendment has to be absolutely soundly defeated so that we can debate the original Propositions, which is the only way to give the chance for the Committee to be set up, while the delivery vehicle could be set up through all sorts of other means outside of this debate and Requête.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Burford:** In her point of correction, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller reinforces my point because she read out in that very long extract a piece which highlights that the expectation from the Construction Forum is that the DPA is included in her new Committee. That is not what is going to happen. It is as simple as that.

So, moving on, how long before, if this new Committee does come into being, we get proposals from it to take some of the Infrastructure mandate when they realise that working with another

Committee that has the infrastructure which is linked inextricably into development, is not in their Committee.

3320 So, the Construction Forum is going to be working with E&I for infrastructure and with the new Housing Committee and with the DPA and then there is the issue of P&R for funding. This is just moving the deck chairs. It is not getting us any further. It is not possible to, unless you make just one Committee of the States, for this all to be in one Committee.

3325 There is one other point I would make in support of this Commission and I think it is a small point but, I think, it is a crucially important point and one that was behind the GDA, is this will go across political terms, a Housing Committee will not and, I think, that given the time lead into building houses I think that is a really important point and that really would sway me further in favour of the Commission over the Committee.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Leadbeater.

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**Deputy Leadbeater:** Thank you, sir.

3335 Over the last, well, certainly since we opened the debate on this issue last year, I have been looking in the media and anything housing related and picking up bits and pieces just to try and gauge the opinion and one thing I will point out is, I think, that Deputy Burford was completely disingenuous the way she made her intervention to Deputy Mahoney's speech this morning, saying that the Construction Forum would favour the Commission over the Committee because that is simply not true. (*Interjection*)

3340 I will just read out the email. I am not going to give way to anyone that wants to give way today, by the way, because I am just not in the mood. (*Laughter*) The email came back this was at lunchtime today after the interjection by Deputy Burford:

Good afternoon, all Deputies. I think the GCF, Guernsey Construction Forum, are being quoted quite a lot in your debate today. So, I just want to clarify what I said to a question about which option I would choose between a Commission and a Committee. Here is exactly what was written in the email I sent to that question. I am going to give a political answer –

With a smiley face.

Short term, the Commission but longer term, and for the future of Guernsey, the Committee.

It goes on to say:

3345

I would like to reiterate that the industry and the GCF need a single Committee that has the power to make decisions and the accountability to make the right decisions to get the houses built that the Island needs right now. The devolved input and power that the four Committees have currently is not working as we fall further behind our own Government's targets by approximately 275 houses every year just to stand still.

There is no mention of favouring a Commission over a Committee. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) No mention whatsoever. So, anyone that is quoting these words is saying that they prefer a Commission over Committee is absolutely wrong –

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**Deputy Burford:** Point of correction.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Burford.

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**Deputy Burford:** As I said in my speech just now, that was a copy of the email that was sent to me. I have the whole email in front of me it is timed at 8.24 a.m. this morning, so it is very current and it says:

... but longer term, and for the future of Guernsey, the Committee but this would have to have the power of the DPA rolled into it.

My point is that that is not what is on offer today.

3360 **Deputy Leadbeater:** Well, I think if anyone has read the Requête they would realise that. I do not think I am saying that or any of the requérants are saying that the power of the DPA was involved in these proposals because we are not. I regard myself as an expert in construction and development, having spent 30 years in the industry before I joined the States in 2016. My father was quite a sizeable developer, not in, you know, he is quite short right now, (*Laughter*) but we used to do quite a lot of big developments, like 10, 12, 16 houses.

3365 I know what it is like to deal with Planning. I know what it is like to deal with finances and banking and subcontractors and everything else that goes along with the construction industry and developing units of housing. I said in my manifesto, one of the key issues in my manifesto was the lack of housing we were building in 2016.

3370 I read recently in the paper from former Deputy Shane Langlois that was talking about the issue or trying to, because obviously he sat on ESS, I am not quite sure what else he did before I came along, he said, well nobody mentioned it in 2020, no one mentioned housing. Well, I did, I mentioned it again in 2020 because we have not been building enough units. But just because the collective 100-odd people that stood for election in 2020 did not focus in on housing, it does not mean we have not got a problem because we all recognise we have a problem, we have all committed to recognising that housing is our biggest issue. (**A Member:** It is.) It really winds me up.

3375 I have been going through with my head in my hands a lot of the time, just reading some of the stuff I am seeing in the media. I did read some of the stuff that that Deputy de Sausmarez had written, some of the articles that she had written, and I learnt nothing. I did not learn anything.

3380 Some of it I felt quite patronised because it tells me about what the fabric of the housing is and blah, blah and there are loads of words but no, I am not being disrespectful it may be coming across that way, I do not want it to be disrespectful because I like Deputy de Sausmarez and I like the Members of the Committee, but they do not understand the problem. (*Interjection*) It is my view that they do not understand the problem.

3385 Let us have a look at some, GP11, how many times have I heard, it has been six months since GP11 was scrapped and there has been no housing come along. Well, what do you expect? It takes a considerable amount of effort and organisation and dealing with finances and dealing with forward planning with the Planning Department to bring these things to fruition. You cannot just go, oh, there is a set of drawings let us build 100 houses there. I will bang those in tomorrow. It does not work that way. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It definitely does not work that way –

**Deputy Taylor:** Point of correction, sir.

3395 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** It is a bit of a disingenuous point of correction because I actually agree with Deputy Leadbeater. But as part of the GP11 requête, debate although it did not turn into a debate, the Guernsey Construction Forum, who have been much quoted today, actually told us that scrapping GP11 needed to be done now and it would result in an additional 400 houses built by 2028. So that was over a four-year period we would have seen an extra 100 per year by their calculations. So we should of, based on their promises, seen something by now.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Leadbeater.

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**Deputy Leadbeater:** If we have a look, the builders identify five sites for 250 truly affordable homes. Here we have quoted is the Guernsey Construction Forum's housing lead, somebody that the Guernsey Construction Forum has chosen to lead on housing, somebody who knows housing, somebody who knows how to develop and deliver housing.

3410 The States own figures clearly indicate the percentage of land that they need to zone to produce the number of homes that are required is over double their forecast. He said that the suspension of the GP11 planning policy, which required a defined percentage of larger housing sites to be built as affordable, would help to speed up building alone:

We are aware of four or five schemes totalling 180 units now coming forward that would not have been viable with GP11 in place.

**(A Member:** Hear, hear.)

3415 Has anyone not noticed that, did anyone not read that and did anyone not believe that the Housing Lead from the Guernsey Construction Forum, when he tells us this?

This will, obviously, take time –

He goes on to say:

This would obviously take time. But anyone saying that the removal of GP11 has not worked after only a few months does not understand property or how the construction industry works.

3420 And he is absolutely bang on because all of the people that are telling us this, there is nothing come along, do not understand the construction industry and it really grinds my gears, as you can probably tell. It talks about the ideas of how we can contribute towards, Deputy de Sausmarez does in one of her articles about delivering more units of accommodation, these are her words:

The original plan was that sufficiently large, profitable, private market developments would help to deliver the affordable housing development programme by contributing units through a policy mechanism called GP11. But as the States has agreed to zero rate that policy, we need to find a way to fill the sizeable delivery gap it left.

3425 It created the delivery gap it did not leave a gap. The removal of GP11 has closed that gap; it really has. I would like to see some, because GP11 came into effect in October 2016, the best part of nine years ago. No units were developed, we know that. How many times did we hear, I brought an amendment to the Merrett Requête trying to squash GP11.

3430 Deputy Roffey, I think it was and others standing up saying, we have units just around the corner. GP11 is just about to deliver, jam tomorrow, Deputy Gollop, jam tomorrow. But there was never any jam. *(Interjection)* It did not deliver any units. It is the same as the noisy motorcycles, how many times have heard, we have got a solution for this just around the corner. It is just not delivered, not developed whatsoever.

3435 There were some interesting things I saw, actually, because there are lookbacks to the different years and there was a look back to the 1970s and it says, States gets on top of housing crisis by building estates; which it did back then. People were saying, oh, the States cannot build houses, the States cannot do stuff. The States used to do that and do it pretty well. I know times have changed and, maybe, the type and configuration of properties that were built back then are not suitable for the modern day; but it was done.

3440 There was one thing that made me chuckle in here. It said there was a report called the Henschman Report that was produced by a group chaired by Deputy H. C. Henschman back then and set up to inquire into the housing crisis of lengthy waiting lists and chronic shortage of homes for families and it says, *The Guernsey Press* reporting at the time, I think, said:

It would now appear from the current position that the Island has every chance, in the next few years, of having adequate accommodation for all those in real need.

Would it not be great to hear *The Guernsey Press* Guernsey Press reporting that now?

After the completion of the Bouet estate, the Housing Authority should have an appreciable pause in its building programme.

3445 But not 55 years. (*Laughter*) That is not a pause, is it? This was 55 years ago. Since then we have had the units of the GHA have brought on board, but that is it. We have had 1,100 units, whatever it was, that the GHA brought online but apart from that, no social housing and I do not want to use affordable housing because I hate that term because it is just purely wrong and confuses everybody, including me.

3450 Now, I have been listening to other people's speeches today. Deputy de Sausmarez, the time for the new Committee for Housing to set up an additional vehicle would be next year and not this and she has had the ability to do this, I think we have pointed out, for quite a period of time. I am not giving away.

3455 Time for compromise, said Deputy Cameron and I think it is time for decisive action (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I do not think it is time for compromise. Deputy Kazantseva-Miller has done a considerable amount of sterling work on this and she is very thorough, as all of us know, and she has engaged with everybody and all of the stakeholders (*Interjection*) and she knows what she is talking about. She fundamentally understands the issues, and I credit her for that.

3460 Deputy Cameron, and maybe others have likened that the proposed Commission to the Sports Commission and I really cannot understand why because the Sports Commission is commissioned by ESC. ESC has the political mandate for sport. The accountability lies with Deputy Dudley-Owen. If the Commission does not deliver the line of accountability is straight to ESC, there is political accountability for sport. It is a different kettle of fish. It is funded to deliver sports stuff like sports education, etc. It is done in conjunction with the ESC, ES for sports, not schools, C. So I really cannot see that the correlation between the two Commissions.

3465 I think, I read it in here or Deputy de Sausmarez's, it might have been the explanatory note to the amendment, that the E&I had a spare £100,000 kicking round that they could give towards this Commission. I am not giving way. (*Interjection*) So cannot that £100,000 be diverted towards the Committee? That would be a good idea, would it not?

No, I am not going to give way I told you that.

3470 You could see the Commission proposed by this amendment is made up of professionals, experts in construction. The professionals and the experts in construction are telling us that they want a Committee for Housing. They want a political line of accountability. They want a one-stop-shop. This is what the experts that will be populating this Commission have asked us for.

3475 The same experts from Deputy Moakes' Housing Forum, the very same people and when I have spoken to people, these experts in the construction industry, because imagine this, imagine we set this Commission up tomorrow and then it goes away, then it comes back and it says, okay, we have got an idea, we know how to solve Deputy Brouard's problem with these key workers. We need to build on: Le Bordage Seath. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) that is where it should be, because that is what the construction industry has been saying. We missed a trick by not building on that site; we missed a massive trick.

3480 As Deputy Brouard pointed out, we could have had, say, 140, 150 units there. That would mean that the 50 units that are proposed for CI Tyre site could be given over to local people in desperate need of housing. So that will mean 100 units available up there and we could have emptied some of the other properties.

3485 49 properties, I think, we are renting with 200 odd units of accommodation within those properties. Those should not be rented by us those should be on the local market for local people. We should not have people kipping down the bathing pools and, if you saw the video on Facebook a couple of days ago which myself, Deputy Gollop and he is not in the Assembly now, but Deputy McKenna were tagged into.

3490 There are two people living down, there are flasks of coffee and stuff in our bus terminus because they have nowhere to live. We could have done something. We could have provided local people with accommodation and key workers with accommodation and people would say key workers do not want to live above a shop; absolute nonsense.

3495 The exit interviews for our ex-staff and the current staff coming in, they want to live in John Henry Court. They want to live on the shop, a lot of these people are coming on a short-term contract remember, they are not going to stay here forever. They do not want to buy a car, they want to be close to their work, they want to be on a bus route, they want all of these things and it actually works really well for them to live in a very high standard of accommodation, which is John Henry Court, and if we built John Henry Court II and III, they would be equally (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) high standard of accommodation and those people can look out of the beautiful oak tree in the bottom of the field. They can have this because that tree was never going anywhere. I think it was Deputy Mahoney who pointed that out, when we had that debate on that requête.

3500 I remember on HSC, it was only a short space of time in between, we had Deputy Roffey and the HAG come to us telling us that they wanted to build social housing down at the Castel Hospital. Then we had Deputy Mahoney from P&R coming to us saying that it was going to be private housing.

3505 The left hand did not know what the right hand was doing because it is so disjointed. It really is and the whole idea of this of putting it into one Committee is taking away that silo working, not creating silo working like the opposers of the Requête and the supporters of the amendment are saying. It is completely the opposite.

3510 I think Deputy de Sausmarez said they would be losing, these were her words, losing that vertical line of accountability. But that is exactly what this proposal would do because we are trying to create a vertical line of accountability. Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and the requérants, the signatories to her Requête, are trying to create that vertical single line of accountability.

3515 People must listen to the experts, not listening to the experts and read between the lines and hear what they want to hear from the experts but actually listen to the experts and take on board what they were saying because I can guarantee I will walk out of here today. If this amendment is successful, forget about the legacy of building housing for this Assembly, it is going to be a legacy of absolute nonsense and all we have done is gone backwards when it comes to housing.

3520 I think there were 145 units net increase in 2015. When I was looking at the stats when I first stood for election and I thought it was poor then, we were not meeting our target and it has gone down and down. I think, was it last year, the last figures were 90 odd units of private housing and 30 units of social housing.

3525 It is embarrassing, It is absolutely embarrassing that this is all we have managed to muster. It is great even the supporters of this amendment and the opponents of the Requête have said that we needed to have this debate and we have had to have this debate, but it has taken a Requête, seven Members to get together and bring a requête to have this debate because as it has been pointed out by many people, this argument that has been put forward now by the support of this amendment should have been put forward a considerable amount of years ago.

3530 It would have had far more credibility if this came at the start of the term, but it has not, it has come as a proper kneejerk reaction to the Requête. It is okay, right you are saying that I have not done a very good job, I am offended by that. What can we do? Right, let us have a think about this Commission, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller. Let us have a look at that.

3535 I absolutely despair and if we walk away today and the Propositions are replaced by what is proposed in this amendment, then what? I will sit down, sir, before I say something that I should not.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Vermeulen.

3540 **Deputy Vermeulen:** Thank you, sir.

Moving on from the theme of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. This debate reminds me a little bit in our attempts at housing of a piano concerto I once heard and, sir, it was on *The Morecambe and Wise Show* and it was conducted by Andre Previn, very famous conductor, little chap. The pianist beautifully attired, started playing and everything was going wrong and he tapped his baton and he said, no, no, no you are doing it all wrong and he said, well, what do you mean I am doing it all wrong? He said, you are playing all the wrong keys. Eric Morecambe pulled him by the lapels. He said, 'I think you will find I am playing all the right keys, but not necessarily in the right order.' (*Laughter*)

that is a little bit where we are with housing. Now, I am full of hope for Guernsey and I believe the best is yet to come, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) but not if we keep doing what we have always done. We have got to look at where we are, where we have been in the past, you cannot change the past, where we are now, currently, and where you want to get to, the future.

So, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and I spent an afternoon with the Construction Forum going over her plans and it had, and still does have, full support. They were fully behind it. It was a breath of fresh air, had to be, sir. This was a *Ronseal* approach; it does what it says on the tin; housing. So, on that forum, they are professional people. There are engineers, there are architects, there are builders, plumbers, developers. There is everything. Really experienced people that know the barriers which we are up against. It is not just housing in construction it is also the bigger projects.

A common problem is the pipeline from the States, almost the wherewithal, here is a Sixth Form College, get on and build it, that type of thing. Where it might be the nurses' accommodation at the Hospital on site, here it is, get on and do it. But no, we pontificate, we pull back from decisions we make and we end up doing really very little.

I am grateful that we are putting in the new College of Further Education and we are putting a base for the Sixth Form College, but we could not get any further. I worry about our Hospital, our Hospital extension because, I have got to say, sir, I do not think that is at all viable without any staff accommodation on site and that is where we are.

Deputy Brouard said he feels like people are working against him. What he explained was, quite, literally the rug being pulled from under his feet. You had agreement, there was a solution and we were just about to do something and then it was all changed and we do nothing. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

So how do you enable housing to be built? What is the enabling development that this States can actually give it going forward? Perhaps it is development zones where you could give planning fees, which have just gone up I understand, you could give them for free for example, you could give discounts on TRP, you could promise all sorts of other benefits to help those sites be developed. But we are not particularly good at that, but that is the way you get things done.

We did have lockdown and we did have a shortage of building materials, well there were no building materials at one stage during the last four years coming into the Island, and when lockdown ended there was a shortage of cement, plasterboard, three quarter inch, as I call it, or 19mm shuttering ply. It was like gold dust. So these things were really difficult to source prices shoot up.

We have also made things more expensive, 13% more on the minimum wage, 10% more on bringing stuff in, freight into the harbours. All this has a constant knock-on effect of making things, the end product, more expensive. I shall not be supporting this amendment. I will be supporting the original Requête because it is new thinking. It is where we need to get to in the future.

It is the decision we have got to make now we have got to make the right decision we have got to hit all the right keys at the right time. Not the right keys at the wrong time, that does not work and that is what we have been doing. So, I urge Members to follow my lead, not support this amendment but support the original Requête.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Le Tocq.



**Deputy Le Tocq:** Thank you, sir.

3595 And sir, I forego my right to speak in general debate if I am likely to wander a little. Sir, I just want to commend Deputy Leadbeater, first of all, for his passionate and informed speech. Probably the best speech I have heard from him in his terms and it has, I think, almost swayed me. I was not minded to vote for either this amendment or the original Requête, however, I am rethinking that on that basis, but I have some reservations.

3600 First of all, on this particular amendment, I can understand and sympathise with the layers of the amendment in coming up with the idea of a Commission, the idea of an arm's length body that is not affected by the things that have been mentioned that we are, as politicians, affected by in the constructs that we have within Government.

I can understand why that is a good reason to do so, probably even more now because we are  
3605 entering into an election season and, as a result, one of the problems with Governments and decision making is that there will be a lull. There will be a time when we have not got the energies and the resources before the election and after the election as well. So, I can understand that.

However, I cannot support it because, well, I will not go over them, but for all the reasons that have been mentioned already but also because a Commission, whilst it has those advantages, has  
3610 to focus on everything particularly, it has to be completely at arm's length and part of the problem here, as others have mentioned, is our Development & Planning Authority, which would not be included in that and so it would still involve Government and there would still be delays and we know that is a particular problem.

However, this touches, this issue, sir, and how to resolve the things that Government can be  
3615 responsible for and I would urge the Assembly to think carefully. We cannot solve every issue. Government cannot do that everywhere. There are some issues, even relating to the problems we have with housing that are beyond our ability. We are not sovereign in that area over all sorts of other forces at work, so we need to be realistic about it.

But one of the issues with regard to the Machinery of Government is the fact that we have an  
3620 inflexible system and it was one of the things that the subcommittee that I chaired for a while that was initially set up by Deputy Soulsby, looked at. We need to be more fleet of foot in this day. We should be able to create a Department and uncreate a Department far more quickly than we can and that needs, certainly, to be looked at in the next review and we have put some suggestions forward where that might be possible.

I say that, sir, particularly with regard to housing because in my experience, I remember coming  
3625 into this Assembly when I was a sixth former at Elizabeth College and sitting at the back in the early 80s and there was a bit of a housing crisis then, because house prices were suddenly increasing as the financial services industry took off in Guernsey, there had been a doubling of house prices in a very short amount of time and people were struggling, particularly the lower paid to find property  
3630 to live in and all those sorts of things and so some focus on housing was done by the then Housing Committee at the time.

But then afterwards there was a lull, as it were. There was not, really, another crisis of that nature until probably the 1990's. It came to a head when I was first elected in 2000, where the late great  
3635 Dave Jones brought a requête, I think, one of the first things he did as he entered into this Assembly. I was certainly a supporter of that and that brought in things and changes that moved towards the setting up of the Guernsey Housing Association.

But I know that, certainly during the time that I was Chief Minister, Deputy Jones was a Member of the Policy Council at the time and largely Housing were twiddling their thumbs during that period because there was not a lot, certainly not a crisis, in that time. So, that is why I am glad that the  
3640 requérants have included a Proposition that it should be reviewed, if there is a Committee that is set up.

I am not saying, absolutely I am going to vote for this at the moment, but at the moment that is the one thing that would give me some degree of comfort because if we establish something that is set up forever and a day, I think, what happens after there has been a focus on it the problem is  
3645 solved and then we have a part of Government that has to justify its existence.

So, the reservations I have about the Propositions in the Requête as they currently are, is that with Government being responsible for things there is always that tendency for empire building, for costs that are beyond, the last thing we want to do is to set up a whole load of new civil servants and established staff that feel like they need to justify their existence (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) and that is a problem here. But we are not able to act very quickly.

We can see. We spent the whole of this day basically and we are not going to finish tonight. I do not think, debating whether we should set up a one body or another, that is the problem we have. We are not fleet of foot. But we have got a housing crisis, we are agreed to that and in the future, we need to recognise that when we have these sorts of things, we need to have a mechanism whereby we can act far more swiftly. So I cannot support this amendment, but I am sympathetic towards Requête.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Dudley-Owen.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you, sir.

We have covered quite a lot of ground this afternoon, I think, I have been making notes and listening to both sides of the debate as we have gone through. This is not an area that I have worked on this term at all. I have been an observer, a very keen observer, and somewhat sceptical about rhetoric that we hear a lot and well-intentioned that we are in a housing crisis and the reason I am sceptical is because I just have not seen the reaction to a crisis from the people that are saying that we are in a housing crisis.

We had a crisis over the pandemic. I saw very clear, quick action around that. It looks nothing like we have seen this term in reaction to what, I think, is a cyclical issue and, therefore, we need to be looking at a long-term solution to this, not a quick fix in the next few weeks. So, whilst I really commend the creative thinking around a Housing Commission, one of my questions had been about why this has not happened earlier and that has been answered, but what a shame.

What a real shame, actually, that this did not come forward earlier. Deputy Moakes called me last year and spoke about his ideas. I know that we had that very badly named Housing Action Group, the HAG, some years ago, and it just feels like we have not really got further forward than talking, which is really lamentable given that we know that there is an affordability issue in the Island.

I was very interested to hear Deputy Murray's take on this and it got me to thinking, in addition to certain comments about drawing analogies between existing Commissions, about this potential to create disunity and I thought that was really interesting, actually, because that is not the intention at all of this Commission, but it could be a very unfortunate side effect, a consequence that materialises.

That leads me back to my discomfort hearing people saying, well we have got the Sports Commission, we have got the Arts Commission, we have got the Guernsey Language Commission we have got all these other different Commissions, Health Improvement Commission they are not the same. To try and make them analogous is not correct.

Housing is an integral infrastructure requirement; (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) absolutely integral infrastructure requirement. So, to commission it out as a service whilst, actually, a public service, actually innovative and creative in its thinking, I think, needs to be worked up in a lot more detail than has been allowed for here and to enable Members to have those ideas socialised, to get to grips with thinking about how it could work, what it could look like, but we just simply have not had the time.

The nature of this amendment coming, as it has done, without any further detail around it from Deputy de Sausmarez and, indeed, Employment & Social Security, I think, is really unfortunate because it is these types of innovative ideas that do need further investigation by us as an Assembly to say, actually, yes, great let us see how this can work.

But at the moment we have got so little information about it. Deputy de Sausmarez is not going to be able to do it justice in her summing up, she really is not. This is the sort of thing that we do

need Deputy Inder's wax crayons for a little bit longer thinking. Well, we really do. I am reluctant to give way because I do not want to have a prolonged, actually, I am not going to give way and I am very sorry to Deputy de Sausmarez she has got an opportunity to sum up. and she can wax lyrical then.

But I think that there are a lot of questions that people want answers to and it is certainly one of the areas that I will be very interested to hear about and that is what do the key performance indicators look like for this particular commission? What is the content of a service level agreement? Because those are the things that we work really hard on with the Commission services that we have dealings with and, of course, these Commission services exist to take part of the mandate of the Committee.

So, having worked in this environment on this Committee that I sit on now and in the previous term as well I am really struggling to see how this will work in practice when it is needing to take on social housing from ESS and general housing policy from E&I. That is what I have taken from the website about what the purpose and responsibilities, the mandated responsibilities of those two particular Committees are. How is it going to do it? Because at the moment what has been drafted in the explanatory note really just looks like an information share, a talking shop, potentially a conduit and the Housing Forum already exists.

So, ergo, why would we, therefore, need to set up an arm's length Commission when really what the GCF has said is that they would like just a consolidated political focal point to be able to deal with. I am really interested to hear what comes out of the debate. I would caution people very strongly about saying, well, we have got Commissions that exist, they are doing their job brilliantly. Yes, they are but, actually, they are not the same as this. This is a different kettle of fish that we are talking about here. The areas of the mandate, the areas of policy that those Commissions are tasked with delivering are completely different than housing.

I would like to know more about service level agreements and KPIs, those really hard, tangible things that we measure successes on because, at the moment, there is far too little information in the amendment and it looks, I am afraid, as though it has been hastily constructed without much view to socialising this with Members.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Thank you, sir.

The Deputy is correct about the efforts of both P&Rs and it is incredibly disappointing that the promise of modular building from one supplier has had a setback. Where, I think, he is incorrect is the assumption that all housing is becoming completely unaffordable. (*Interjection*) What is clear is that the notion of large sites, either mixed use or social, are simply not going to happen in the short term, we do not have the capacity for the large sites.

There are solutions and it is within the gift of the DPA, actually, but I will save that for the manifesto; mine actually or his actually, I could help him. Like Deputy Leadbeater, I first mentioned housing in my campaign in 2016. The difference between Deputy Leadbeater and myself is that he got a seat and I did not.

He goes on to talk about the experts and I saw some Deputies laughing at him, in what was a very good speech and, not for the first time, he has done some exceptionally good speeches; one was only the last Meeting. Well, post mid-May of this year, those who put themselves forward will be listening to the experts will they not?

The experts on the Electoral Roll who will decide what you did for Guernsey over the last four-and-a-bit years: what did you build, what did you do for my son and my daughter? Thirty million pounds spent on land; why no homes? The answer might be if we agree this amendment and do not support the Requête: I left Government that has not delivered any homes in four years in exactly the same place as I found it. Please vote for me. Well, slow hand clap.

Deputy Le Tocq makes mention of the late 1980s crisis and suggests that they do come and go and I think he is correct, but, and that argument seems to follow that so will this one. But there is a difference between the eighties and the 2020s it is quite stark. Private housing was going up like billy-oh. Small and large vinery sites were being built in a lot of places and that is the significant difference.

Back in the late 1980s, the small vinery sites were coming down, because I was helping pulling them down and the smaller estates and the larger estates that is a significant difference. But there has been very little built in the 2020s, but I will just leave it at that just for people to mull over because it sounds like Deputy Le Tocq is starting to move in the right direction.

I concur entirely and, hopefully, Deputy Gollop will as well, because I concur entirely with Deputies Murray, Brouard, Ferbrache and Prow. Insightfully, Deputy Prow points out that the Housing Commission, if housing was such a hot idea, why did not the Committee suggest it at the beginning of the term? That has been repeated again and again. They could have just got on with it.

The failure to deliver on the Machinery of Government has benefited the bureaucracy, but it has not benefited the requirement for Government to reform and the delivery of housing and, almost certainly, had we had a debate on an improved Machinery of Government, a Housing Committee would have formed almost certainly.

With something that is likely to be a touchstone issue in the election and Deputy Roffey accepting, yes this is failure to deliver, then why not set up one now? If you have not delivered over the last four years, why does anyone think carrying on doing the same thing is a good idea? What are we waiting for? And it is jointly, I am part of Government, I have been able to vote, I probably could have done more, I was waiting for more to happen that will be my get out clause.

We have done nothing in four years. So, the answer is do nothing at all, let us not do anything for the next six months and so where is the logic in that? Make Guernsey the same again? Congratulations. The bureaucracy will carry on as normal, the irritating politicians will go away and the politicians are like strategy over delivery, carry on not delivering.

But the issue stretches back further than this Assembly, and I will repeat what I said in the Assembly some months ago. We have medieval Laws in a Victorian system trying to deliver 21st Century solutions. It simply cannot work and it will not work under this system of Government.

Sir, Members, an example of how housing could have worked had a Housing Committee been set up some moons ago, actually as part of the original Machinery of Government, and I will explain how the Dairy might have unlocked the Hospital and I make reference to, I think, some of the comments made by Deputy Leadbeater and Deputy Brouard.

This is how, with a reasonable leadership who understands what the housing problem, this is the difference and this is critical for Members to listen to, not those who may have been falling for Stockholm Syndrome because they think what they have not delivered is a really good idea, so I will carry on not delivering something.

This is about leadership. Back in 2016 or it might have been 2017-18, it was Deputy Ferbrache or it was possibly Deputy Roffey, who brought a Proposition to the States to move the Dairy site, I think at the time, I cannot remember which Deputy it was, it was Deputy Ferbrache. Now that was put into the States in isolation.

Now, imagine if you had a Housing Committee at the time. STSB along with ESS or possibly even Health could have made a greater argument and that might have actually gone through the Assembly, if they had actually had a decent argument. They would have all got together, there would be something called a Housing Minister, they would have gone to that leadership and said look, I tell you what, if you support the removal of the Dairy what that immediately does is unlock housing after housing for Health; that entirely what have happened.

We would have had one Committee with one overview, not three or four different Committees with disparate views and what that would have meant Deputy Roffey, now, would have probably had a Dairy up at the Brickfield because the argument was beyond whether we improve the Dairy, whether we improve the farming, it is what that unlocks.

There was no single strategy or drive for that and had that – I am not giving way – because this is about leadership Deputy Roffey this is how people approach things differently (*Interjection*) and had that happened by now the Dairy would have been at the Brickfield, probably, the site would have been cleared, HSC would never have come up with the field in the first place because they would have had a site because they would have spoken to the Housing Minister back in 2017 or 2018, who would have identified that as such.

We would probably be building up now. There would not have been a requête, I would not have put an amendment and nothing happened anyway. But that is what something different looks like. But carrying on doing exactly the same thing is simply not progress. That is why a Housing Ministry or similar –

**Deputy Roffey:** Point of correction.

**Deputy Inder:** This will be interesting.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Deputy Inder is trying to suggest to the Assembly that the argument in relation to the Dairy did not involve the fact that it would allow key worker housing to be built on the vacated site. That argument was made very strongly and repeatedly. It was very much in front of the Assembly. So, it is not what different looks like it is exactly what happened. It still did not win the day.

**Deputy Inder:** Yes, and I think if I remember correctly, it was made quite badly because it lost. (*Laughter*) What we are witnessing is a difference in politics and style. It is as simple as that. Deputy Roffey wants the big social housing estates and I know that there are many Deputies that do not and rightly so. Importantly, many of the people I represent want full ownership. They want full ownership of their properties and they do not want to be tenants of the States. They simply do not want to be tenants of the States.

The responses, I have to say, from E&I, with great respect, are actually quite defeatist. Deputy Trott may laugh but, I think, housing is fairly fundamental and, as I said, when we go to the polls in a few months' time I would really like people to tell the world, honestly, what they did for housing because that will be one of the most significant touchstone issues in the election. It will not be just windmills and GST, what did you do to ensure that our children are not sofa surfing, not lying at the Valette, what did you do? And this is important.

So, why is the Requête better? Well, I think, that argument is likely to have been made and, I think, we are in the position where you can almost 26(1) this because we have just got the technocrats who just want exactly the same and nothing to change at all. We want the people to move the conversation on. That is the division that we have got in the States at the moment.

The Requête, as described, it is not perfect but it is certainly better, it is absolutely better. You have a single point of contact. You have one single responsibility. You have an ability to challenge and, importantly, you have ability to rid yourselves of failure and under this system of Government, through failure and the delivery of housing failed, you would have to get rid of four Committees. That is what you would have to do. Put the responsibility in one place. If you are going to be the Housing Minister, put your hat in the ring, choose your team and deliver and if you do not deliver, leave, because right now, we cannot get rid of failure.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Queripel.

**Deputy Queripel:** One of the worst decisions the States ever made, in my view, is to stop building social housing (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and hand the whole issue over to GHA and expect

them to keep up with demand. The GHA do a tremendous job but it was completely unrealistic to expect them to keep up with demand, in my view.

3855 What the States should have done was carry on building in tandem with the GHA. If they had done that, we would not be in the mess we are in now. But we are where we should not be and we need to do something drastic to get out of this mess.

3860 So, even though the vast majority of my speech is going to be in favour of the amendment, I did tell the requérants a few weeks ago if they can provide me with an evidence-based guarantee that putting a Housing Committee in place is going to accelerate the provision of housing here in Island, then I will support the Requête. If they can provide me with that evidence-based guarantee during this debate, then I will vote against the amendment.

3865 In an attempt to be helpful I did suggest to the requérants they get hold of the latest update on our affordable housing program. So, I hope they did that because in that update there is a whole list of the sites we own and alongside several of them is a list of reasons why they cannot currently be developed. If the requérants have not seen that update then I would strongly suggest that they try to get hold of one as soon as possible because they need to see all that information.

3870 So, as I said, I am going to speak in favour of the amendment but I am not an immovable object and if the requérants can provide me with an evidence-based guarantee that a committee is the answer, then I will support the Requête.

Way back in 1965, Roger Miller had a massive worldwide hit with a song entitled King of the Road and there is a line in that song that goes like this:

Two hours of pushing broom buys an eight by 12, four-bit room.

3875 Well, were those not the days, sir? Because nowadays it would take at least 22 hours pushing a broom to pay for an eight by 12 room here in Guernsey and it is us, the politicians, who need to understand why that has happened and do something about it.

It is us, the politicians, who need to accelerate the provision of housing here in the Island. It is us, the politicians, who need to do all we possibly can to help our young people get on the property ladder and it is us, the politicians, who need to provide homes for fellow Islanders who are currently inappropriately housed or on the waiting list.

3880 I believe I am right in saying, I stand to be corrected, there are almost 400 on the waiting list right now. That is a lot of people waiting for something that is not going to happen for several years, by the way things are going. It is us, the politicians, who need to provide homes for fellow Islanders in need of care.

3885 The only way I can see us doing any of that is by supporting this amendment. It looks to me like it is the best offer on the table and I am not saying that because I am a Member of the Committee responsible for affordable housing. I am not saying that to appease or placate my colleagues on ESS. I have never been afraid to disagree with a colleague on a Committee, I have done it several times. I accept that I am going to be outvoted four to one, but at least I have said what I thought needed to be said.

3890 I will challenge anyone, any colleague, even the Chief Minister, if I think it is the right thing to do on behalf of the community. At the moment, I am thinking of supporting this amendment because it relays and displays exactly the kind of proactive and forward-thinking type of approach we desperately need to adopt if we are to have any hope whatsoever of solving our housing problems.

3895 I urge colleagues to support it and I include the requérants in that because they have done a tremendous job raising the focus on housing over the last few months. So, I applaud them for doing that. I think it was Deputy Leadbeater and Deputy Cameron, maybe one or two others who said the only reason we are even discussing this now is because this Requête has been laid in front of us and I commend the requérants for doing that. It has given all of us the kick up the backside we needed.

3900 The problem with the Requête, as far as I can see, is it is fundamentally flawed. It is fundamentally flawed because it is based on opinion. It is primarily a list of well-intended aspirations. That is not a

criticism, sir, I hasten to add it is my observation. I never criticise colleagues for putting forward ways in which they feel are going to benefit our community.

3905 But to say that putting a Housing Committee in place will enhance capacity, speed and effectiveness is an opinion, it is not fact, it is an opinion. To say that having so many Deputies and Committees involved in housing causes confusion as well as disagreement, in a sense, is also an opinion.

I am only too aware of Committees that only have three Members and even with only three Members, confusion reigns and disagreements abound. So, surely it is completely misleading to say  
3910 that the more Deputies and the more Committees that are involved, the more confusion and disagreement will occur.

As far as I can see that claim has no substance. It does not seem to me as though putting a Housing Committee in place is going to actually work because the requérants have put forward a Requête that is fundamentally flawed. It is more opinion than fact but it seems to me the work that  
3915 this Commission will be undertaking will guarantee positive outcomes.

It provides the Assembly with the opportunity to accelerate delivery on the Island's housing priorities in what, I think, is the most efficient, the most effective –

Oh sorry, I have had people walk out when I was speaking, sir, but not yawn, that is the first time anyone has ever yawned. But I am not far off the end of this speech and I will yawn then (*laughter*)  
3920 and heckle others when they speak and see how they react to that sort of treatment. But it seems to me, as I said, that the Commission is the way forward.

I will move to a close with a question for the requérants and Deputy de Sausmarez which focuses on the extortionate increase in the cost of housing. Before I ask the question, I want to pick up on what Deputy Trott said earlier. He said something like affordable housing is a pipe dream. He is  
3925 absolutely right because, in my view, it is the wrong terminology anyway. The terminology is absolute nonsense. Affordable housing is only affordable to those who can afford it; to state the obvious. The correct term would be unaffordable housing, in my view.

On to my question, before anyone else yawns. Thirty-six years ago, my former wife and I sold a house, a three-bedroom house with a garage and a lovely garden, front and back for £70,000. A  
3930 year or so ago the same house was sold for £750,000. So, in 35 years the cost of that house increased by 800%, yet salaries have only increased by a little over 100% in that time.

That is the way I work it out. If you take inflation 3%, 4% or 5% at the most a year, I might be totally wrong there, but that is the way I see it. So, my question to the requérants and Deputy de Sausmarez is this: will your Committee be able to put a halt to the extortionate increase in the  
3935 cost of housing? And to the Deputy de Sausmarez, will a Commission be able to put a halt to the extortionate increase in the cost of housing? I will leave it there. I am probably risking someone else yawning.

Thank you, sir.

3940 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

I am going to start my speech with a question that might get me laughed at, but even if Members want to laugh, I hope they will actually think on this question overnight when they are lying in bed.  
3945 The question is, what problem are we trying to solve? (**A Member:** The housing crisis.) Yes, it is an easy one, isn't it? I asked that, sir, because in my view the solutions in front of us, whether the Requête or this amendment do not make it immediately obvious what problem we are trying to solve. I think that is important to bring to the fore and certainly from this debate it is absolutely unclear what the problem is.

3950 But I think Deputy Murray has probably come closest to actually identifying the problems that we are facing and Deputy Ferbrache as well, he is looking at me so I have to give him credit, because the problem we are facing is the delivery of housing and that problem which, I think, Deputy Murray broke down slightly more, I do not think these were his exact examples, but I am sure he would

3955 agree. You could break the delivery of housing down into the cost of land, the cost of materials, the  
availability of labour and the availability of funding. Which are points that, I think, Deputy  
Leadbeater did bring up as well.

3960 So, yes Deputy Ferbrache did mention, I think his words were, people want houses. He is right  
but people want air, there are lots of easy statements we can make like that. But the trouble, I think,  
where we have gone wrong in this debate, or several Members have gone wrong, is their speeches  
just seem to drift into the blame game.

3965 Deputy Brouard was certainly guilty of that and I feel like he and Deputy Ferbrache took the laser  
memo and they decided to guide their way through a dark night using a laser and then they got  
blinded by Deputy Inder's fog lights, which are rather bright. But altogether, none of them have  
really addressed the problem that we are looking at. It is just looking at previous decisions and  
seeking to pass blame.

3970 Whereas Deputy Trott, sir, did actually highlight many of the realities that we are facing, this is a  
slow burn. It is a big beast, I suppose the phrase often used, is it is a tanker. A tanker takes a long  
time to change direction. I agree with him on the comments he made about, I do not know if it was  
leaked directly to the Guernsey Construction Forum, but professionals generally, where their advice  
can sometimes drift a little bit. It can certainly be contradictory and I could read quite a few of those  
contradictory comments out, but I will not.

3975 But I will read one comment from the Guernsey Construction Forum, which was given to us by  
way of an open letter during the GP11 Requête, and the Guernsey Construction Forum stated in the  
public domain, it is only the private sector which has the resources and capacity to mobilise at speed  
and to increase the housing supply.

They did not caveat that with but we need another Committee, we need the DPA to be merged  
with ESS, there were no other caveats. They told us it was only them that can mobilise at speed. The  
problem is we have not got the capacity to build more houses. They told us they had the solution  
and I do not think they have delivered on that so far. So I do want to bring that up.

3980 Where I do disagree with Deputy Trott and this is where I will shoot myself in the foot because I  
like to play the blame game as well, (*Laughter*) it is only fair when else does it why cannot I? So  
where I disagree with Deputy Trott is he seems to feel a bit let down by this failure with modern  
methods of construction.

3985 In my view, the writing was on the wall before we even agreed to get anywhere near modern  
methods of construction. You only had to do an open-source search on Google to see how many  
big players had gone bust. So, if I was going to play the blame game on why we have not delivered  
houses, it is because we put £35 million of our allocated funds in the wrong basket that has not  
delivered. But I will leave the blame game at that.

3990 But before I go, I will give way to Deputy Trott.

**Deputy Trott:** You will not regret it, because I agree with you. A lot of these modern modular  
design businesses have fallen on hard times. The difference was with the one that had been chosen  
by this constructor, this developer was backed by Goldman Sachs. What was unusual was for this  
business to collapse, despite that investment and that input. That made it exceptional and that  
surprised me and I referenced that point in the speech as my friend Deputy Taylor will recall.

4000 **Deputy Taylor:** Too big to fail, perhaps, were they? There seems to be a bit of a split  
interpretation on the Guernsey Construction Forum on this particular point. I think the point has  
been put forward by Deputy Burford, countered by Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and Deputy  
Leadbeater. Then there is this bit of confusion, I think, that has come up, I think Deputy Bury  
mentioned it about Deputy Moakes not really supporting this, which I find is a bit surprising.

I understand that he is one of the requérants and the initial part of this amendment is to delete  
all Propositions. So I can understand him being a bit tetchy about that, but the idea, irrespective of  
who thought of it, it very much ties in with what he was seeking to achieve.–

4005 I will give way to him.



**Deputy Moakes:** Sir, I will keep this quick because I have spoken already. But I did not disagree with it at all. What I actually said was I disagreed with the manner in which it was being done. What I disagreed with was the fact it was being done through an amendment, which would have got rid of the original Propositions.

4010 What I suggested was that proposer went to the current and existing Housing Forum and presented the idea to them to see whether they wanted to rename it as a Housing Commission. At no point in my speech did I say I disagreed with it. I simply said, talk to the Forum, see what it is they want to do.

4015 **Deputy Taylor:** I am grateful for that interjection, or the clarification. So, I think, Deputy Moakes is supportive of the proposal but just the way it is done, the way it is enacted. So, I think, you will be supporting this. But yes, whichever way you do it, whether it is renaming his current group or creating a new group this is almost adding the official status to his idea, if you want to call it his idea and I thought he would be largely in support of that. If his Committee only had or his group  
4020 has only had one meeting it is not going to be –

No I am not giving away again –

**Deputy Moakes:** Point of correction in that case.

4025 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction. Deputy Moakes.

**Deputy Moakes:** You just asked me whether I was against it and I responded and said I was not against it and then you have just said, well, he is for it then, as though I am now for it. Can I just reiterate, I have said that I do not support the amendment. I do not support the amendment  
4030 because it takes away the original Propositions immediately and replaces them with the Housing Commission.

So, I think, that what the debate should be about, we get rid of this amendment – we already have a Housing Forum in place. So, get rid of this amendment, that the debate moves onto should we or should we not have a Housing Committee and people can make their own minds up about  
4035 that. Whether or not the Housing Forum, becomes a Housing Commission is a separate matter and as I have said already, that is something that I suggested if the proposer wants to do, then that could be presented to the Housing Forum, which already exists, to see if that is the way they want to go. It has already been said it would take a couple of weeks to set up, if that is what they want to happen that is the right way forwards, I think.

4040 Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** I will just keep my mouth closed. He supports the Commission but does not  
4045 support this Commission. I do not know, but I will leave it at that and I will not pass any other comment. So, in favour of the Requête, the original Propositions, really the main reasons that have come up in support of the Requête during this debate is that it is a single point of contact and you have got this accountability.

That feels like we would go to an awful lot of work to get a single point of contact because from  
4050 my experience where we have interacted with developers or the Guernsey Construction Forum on the DPA, there are other workstreams that Government is going on. You could consider us all under the Government umbrella and are meeting with those people for just multiple reasons.

So, there is a degree of inevitability that even with a single Committee there will be multiple different civil servant staff or politicians going to ask different questions about different things at  
4055 different times. So I do not think that single contact is the be all and end all and on a States' side, I have got a fairly good idea of where responsibilities lie and if I am unsure, you can just speak to the President.

I pass Deputy Roffey most mornings in the Lanes, I see him all the time. If I had a question, is this in your mandate, I want to ask a question? I could just speak to him. Guernsey is a pretty small place. But on that particular point, if we are so hot on accountability for housing, there has not been that many questions lodged about them. There have been a few questions lodged more recently, which in a sense, to support the creation of the Committee, I do not want to say loaded questions, that is a bit unfair, but questions which have just been to support the reasoning behind this Committee.

But over the four-year term or four years we have been in, it has not been questions every week, someone is interested in housing, it has just come up now. There is plenty of opportunity for accountability that has been skipped over by most of us in this Assembly. There have been very few questions asked on it.

So, these two, the single contact or accountability is not particularly an issue for me. I feel comfortable that I have spoken to Deputy de Sausmarez on multiple things over the time. Most of the time it is quite informal and she can give me an answer and I am satisfied. I suppose, in summary, the problem if we were to address it and that is what I am looking at, is how we would address the problem I would have to go to the wording of the amendment and there is one part of a sentence, it says a:

... Housing Commission tasked with facilitating and driving forward the delivery of housing in the Island.

That is pretty explicit.

Whether or not I am confident that will actually make any difference, I mean that is a different discussion. But, faced with the question of which route I think is better would I want to delete the original Propositions and insert that, I think, that gives far more direction to achieve or resolve some of the problems, because if you are tasked with facilitating and driving forward the delivery of housing, you will have to address those four bullet points that I linked between myself and Deputy Murray –

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Point of correction.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I would like to remind Deputy Taylor that, actually, the original Propositions of the Requête have very similar wording. Proposition 2, in which we are saying, to agree that additional funding is allocated to accelerate housing delivery through additional resources, blah, blah, So, there is exactly a specific reason and absolutely the core of the whole Requête is focused on exactly accelerating delivery of housing. This is in the actual original Propositions of the Requête.

Thank you.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you.

I do not think that is a point of correction, I think, I am perfectly entitled to be of the view that the wording in the amendment is more explicit. I think it is more direct and I stick with that. As to timing, I think, one point that has come up a few times in debate, I think Deputy Prow, Deputy Inder, where was this idea four years ago? Maybe it is a fair question to ask, but I think it is perfectly reasonable to just say, well it had not been considered.

So I want to end with a Chinese proverb. The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, but the second-best time is now. So, you could replace a tree with Housing Commission and four years ago or now, just for some Members if they did not get that, Housing Commission. So, if the Housing Commission was a good idea at the start of the term, it stands to reason it would be a pretty good idea now so I would hope Members will support this amendment.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gabriel.

**Deputy Gabriel:** Thank you, sir.

4110 I will try and be under five minutes so those that are yawning can get home to their comfy beds.  
I would like to draw on what Deputy Ferbrache said earlier and the thrust of his very good speech  
was about failure, unfortunately. Members may know that I have got three children in their early  
thirties or approaching their thirties. One of them still lives at home with his mother. The other one  
is just about to buy his first house at age 33 and that saddens me. My daughter has moved away  
4115 from the Island for various reasons, one being love, but another being the financial state and that  
she could not buy a house here with her partner.

Deputy Ferbrache went on to say, and I commend his speech, that it is very much horses for  
courses. But, of course, we know that horses can be bred and change direction. We have Shire  
horses; Shetland horses and race horses and you would not put them all up against each other  
4120 doing one job.

It seems to me that most of what we heard today and most of what industry wants and the  
public is accountability and to me a Committee cannot, necessarily, be held to account with that  
accountability. Whereas a Commission, which is what Deputy Dudley-Owen picked up on, can have  
a service level agreement and it can have key performance indicators put onto it which will ensure  
4125 that we can deliver.

Some people said that we need a one-stop-shop, but that one-stop-shop will then have to  
negotiate and consult with other Committees on transport matters, key worker housing issues, land  
use, planning all of which come under different mandates of different Committees such as E&I, DPA,  
HSC, ESC, Home, Economic Development because those last four, certainly, will need key worker  
4130 housing for their key workers such as teachers, police officers, teachers. etc.

So Deputy Gollop mentioned something quite pertinent which struck a chord with me that we  
need a Housing Delivery Champion. But in my view, we should all be Housing Delivery Champions.  
It should be our *raison d'être*, after all, it is in our Government Work Plan. It is our number one  
category in our Government Work Plan to have housing at our key focus.

4135 Building on what Deputy Inder says, what have we done? Well, I would urge him to reread the  
Guernsey Housing Plan, which E&I, along with others, has developed 26 different workstreams  
which we are about to deliver (*Interjection*) some items in there. (*Laughter*) Not all 26 because, as  
Members have picked up, housing is a behemoth. It is not a snap your fingers and off we go building  
some houses because there is land use, transport issues, etc., school issues. You cannot just go and  
4140 plonk a thousand houses on one field because there are many things to consider, including the  
capacity of the industry as well.

Which is why, I think, it is important that a Commission is developed building on the works that,  
and I do not mind who thought of the idea, Deputy Moakes, Deputy Cameron, anyone, it is an idea,  
we are Government, let us get on with it and commission it and build on the works of the Forum  
and give power to the elbow of a Commission because, let us face it, Government sometimes gets  
4145 in the way.

We have been trying to talk about this, and all credit to Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and the  
requérants, they probably came up with the genus of this idea in June last year and here we are,  
January. Government is getting in the way of some discussions. A Commission can act with agility  
and actually run something and let us face it, sometimes we cannot even run a bath. So with that,  
4150 sir, I will sit down and let Members close and get to their comfy beds.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, we will now adjourn until 9.30 in the morning.

*The Assembly adjourned at 5.31 p.m.*