



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION

OF THE

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Wednesday, 19th March 2025

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Present:

Sir R. J. McMahon, Esq., Bailiff and Presiding Officer

Law Officers

R. M. Titterington, K.C. (H.M. Comptroller)

People's Deputies

S. E. Aldwell	A. Kazantseva-Miller
C. P. A Blin	C. J. Le Tissier
A. H. Brouard	J. P. Le Tocq
Y. Burford	M. P. Leadbeater
T. L. Bury	A. D. S. Matthews
A. Cameron	L. J. McKenna
D. de G. de Lisle	C. P. Meerveld
H. L. de Sausmarez	N. G. Moakes
A. C. Dudley-Owen	R. C. Murray
J. F. Dyke	V. S. Oliver
S. P. Fairclough	C. N. K. Parkinson
S. J. Falla	R. G. Prow
P. T. R. Ferbrache	L. C. Queripel
A. Gabriel	P. J. Roffey
J. A. B. Gollop	G. A. St Pier
S. P. Haskins	A. W. Taylor
M. A. J. Helyar	L. S. Trott OBE
N. R. Inder	S. P. J. Vermeulen

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 Mahoney (*relevé à 12h 35*); Deputy Soulsby MBE (*relevée à 9h 44*)

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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 VII 2025. 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, 19th March 2025 at 9.30 a.m. to consider the items listed in this Billet d'État which have been submitted for debate.

Statements

Under Rule 10(3) —

Statement by the President of the Policy & Resources Committee

The Bailiff: Good morning, Members of the States. The first item of business today is a Statement on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee. I will invite Deputy Trott to give that Statement please.

Deputy Trott: Thank you, sir.

I am pleased to be able to share with Members the provisional 2024 financial results for General Revenue. These results remain provisional as they are subject to any adjustments in finalising the accounts and are, as yet, unaudited.

The headline results are that we had a General Revenue operating deficit for the year of over £9 million and will need to cover trading entity losses of some £6 million. However, after adjusting for depreciation, the cost of non-capital project expenditure, interest and depreciation in the value of our investments, the General Revenue deficit is nearly £31 million.

Now I appreciate that a statement in which I share multiple numbers can be difficult to follow, so in going into more detail I will focus only on the material drivers of the results.

Firstly, income. 2024 has produced a mixed result in our revenue income lines, which are £21 million below the budget overall. However, as Members will recall from previous Statements, an exceptional £29 million tax adjustment relating to one bank impacted these results. While there are other variances this is by far the largest and the single factor driving a revenue deficit.

ETI receipts, which are the best real-time indicator of economic performance, were short of our budget by almost £5 million, or just under 2% in percentage terms. This was driven by a modest lag in median earnings growth compared to inflation. This lag has been offset by an increase in the number of people working in Guernsey's private sector, which is great news for future revenue.

Document Duty ended the year with receipts of £23 million, which is 28% ahead of the budget, helped by a handful of very notable transactions. The fourth quarter was the strongest in the open market since 2022, and saw a 26% increase on 2023 in local market conveyances.

Customs duties ended the year short of budget by £3 million, or nearly 7%. This was driven by alcohol duty receipts staying flat on 2023 in real terms, despite the 2% real terms increase in rates. Tobacco duties being £3.9 million adverse to budget and significantly down on 2023, partially driven by the timing of imports. Total revenue income was just short of £601 million, which is level with 2023 in nominal terms, and £21 million less than budgeted.

Turning to expenditure, the majority of Committees spent within the cash limit allocated by the States, and all but two spent within 0.5% or £500,000, above or below the allocated limit.

As forecast throughout the year, the Committee for Health & Social Care exceeded its budget. The final variance was £6.4 million, or just under 3%, due to a combination of ongoing general demand pressures across the service and specific challenges relating to off-Island intensive and wraparound care. These procedures accelerated at the end of the year, leading to a spending being higher than forecast.

The only other area with a variance of over 0.5% of a million was Corporate Services, which had an underspend of £1.3 million, or 1.5%, largely driven by the difficulties in recruiting to vacant posts. So recruitment remains challenging in some services and professions.

Pay costs for the year totalled £336 million, which is just over 1% under the budget. However, this hides the fact that there were nearly 400 vacancies on average over the year, which equates to 7% of the total workforce. Many of these vacancies have had to be covered through overtime or agency staff, which cost more than full-time employees. This means that the average hourly cost spread across all employees was 6% higher than budgeted. So all Committees had vacancies through the year, with the Home Affairs Department having 114 full-time equivalents, which represented 17% of their budget, and Corporate Services, 96 full-time equivalent vacancies, which is 13%, having the most significant recruitment challenges, I think it is fair to say.

Compared to 2023, the total workforce increased by 123 to 5,162. The increase being mostly, in fact overwhelmingly, in health and care services, as approved by this Assembly through budget allocation increases. This is a similar picture to the increase in 2023, which was 142 full-time equivalents, about half of which were health and care professionals. We have employed less people during 2024. The majority of them were health and social care staff.

Pressures on the Budget Reserve during the year, particularly in relation to sea link contingency planning, meant that it was exhausted. A significant underspend on Government work plan initiatives over the year helped mitigate these short-term cost pressures. However, Members should be mindful that in many cases, this underspending simply slows the realisation of our Government work plan initiatives.

Overall, there was a marginal overspend when all Committees and Central Reserves are taken together, amounting to around £700,000, which is 0.1% of the budget.

I am going to turn now to the overall position. The combination of the shortfall on revenue income and the expenditure pressures results in a net revenue deficit of £9 million, which is a shortfall of some £21 million against the budget. In addition, we expect the unincorporated trading entities to require support of £6 million based on draft figures, as I mentioned earlier.

Capital-related cash and non-cash costs of depreciation, disposal proceeds and revenue expressed major projects total £57 million, some £20 million higher than budgeted. This is mainly due to a higher proportion of the major portfolio spend being expensed than expected. Although this worsens the in-year position, it has no impact on cash as the spend was planned, and that is important.

After making these adjustments, the result is a General Revenue deficit in total of £72 million. Now the final adjustment is for investment appreciation over the year, which I should stress, and I know we all realise, is an unrealised gain based on market valuations on 31st December and markets have had a soft start to 2025.

But performance during 2024 was strong and substantially above our budget estimates, and returns attributable to General Revenue in the year totalled £41 million. The overall result is a General Revenue deficit of £31 million, nearly £19 million adverse to budget. While this is the result for the year, and we should not shy away from this, it is worth reminding Members of the £23 million previous year adjustment. Without which, we would have been much more in line with the Budget overall, with an overall General Revenue deficit of under £10 million. There is no question that this exceptional item, this single bank, has had a material impact. I think we all expected that.

I will close by saying that although we felt it was important to provide this Assembly with the draft results as soon as they were available, the final numbers for the year will be published following audit on 23rd June this year. If previous experiences are anything to go by, they will not be adjusted materially.

It should be noted that these accounts will be fully compliant with international public sector accounting standards for the first time. The annual report of the States Investment Board will be published at the same time.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Soulsby, is it your wish to be relevéd?

Deputy Soulsby: Yes, please.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much.

Before I invite Members to ask questions within the context of this statement, I am simply going to explain at the outset in respect of all the statements that you will hear during the course of the morning, that there will be no extension of time and therefore Members might like to think about the principal question that they would like to ask, rather than thinking there might be an opportunity to ask more than one question.

Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir.

My principal question, sir, Deputy Trott has referred to the investment returns exceeding budget. Is he able to advise us how those investment returns compared against target? Is it above the target return or below the target return?

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: It is a very good question and I should have anticipated a question of that type from Deputy St Pier. I could guess, I am not going to; I will get that information to him very quickly.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Sir, thank you; and Chief Minister, for the update.

Chief Minister, and I think I have got this quite right, reported trading asset losses of around £6 million. I think that is what he said in his update. It is fairly clear that Aurigny is going to have lost substantial amounts of money in 2024. Has STSB reported those figures or given any indication to P&R, as the principal Committee, and what those losses are likely to be and could he give that indication to the Assembly?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Yes, I do not recall precisely what Aurigny's losses for 2024 are but I know that we start a round of presentations by Aurigny next week, where I am certain this accurate information for 2024 will be part of the presentations, and if it is not, I will be surprised.

But there is no doubt that Aurigny experienced an annus horribilis in terms of the black swan events that it suffered, and we have been warned that its losses will be material as a consequence of that disruption. But the £6 million represents the losses across the trading entities, so there will be losses associated with the Airport as well as with Aurigny and so on.

But next week I am sure that information will be revealed with clarity.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, sir.

Not great news, is it? I wish in some ways that we could express the numbers more simply, but I do understand why Deputy Trott has to go through them in a cascade as he has. My question is: the exceptional banking losses, we keep using the word 'exceptional' to describe them, it is probably quite right to say when we first found out about them they were exceptional.

My understanding is the calculation is now embedded and therefore there will be losses carried forward. Should we perhaps now move away from using the term 'exceptional' to describe that loss to our income?

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Yes, I am pleased that Deputy Helyar recognises the format for this presentation because it is very similar, although not identical, to updates that he delivered while he had this responsibility.

Yes, it is a good point because we have been reassured by this particular bank that this was a one-off and is a prior year correction, and that their particular business model remains strong. In terms of the impact moving forward, it is extremely unlikely to be anything other than positive. So I think it is fair to describe it as exceptional in the sense that it is a one-off but the point he makes is well made and I accept it.

The Bailiff: Deputy Queripel

Deputy Queripel: In his statement, Deputy Trott said recruitment is a real challenge; 400 vacancies within the States right now. I assume it would be totally unrealistic to expect those vacancies to be filled by residents of the Island, which means we have to continue to look overseas for future employees.

Which brings me on to the issue of relocation allowances provided to people coming to work for the States. I appreciate those are essential if we are going to attract people from overseas. But I am concerned about the sums that are being paid out. On that note, I believe I am right in saying P&R are intending reviewing the relocation allowances issue. So if that is the case, can Deputy Trott please tell me what stage P&R are at currently with that whole issue?

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: I am not absolutely certain. What I do know is that P&R suffers from a staff resource issue at the Corporate Services level to the same extent, if not greater, than other Committees of the States. but it is constantly being reviewed.

It is an important question because the overall package of using people that are temporary, and temporary people need to relocate as well as those who are permanent, is material. These vacancies

that we have are nothing to be proud of because the cost of employing temporary staff, particularly within the Health & Social Care Department, is extraordinary. It really is. My colleagues on HSE are well aware of how material they are.

185 There is an ongoing review, quite when there will be anything published on this matter I am unclear of, so I will seek clarity on that and report back to him and others.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

190 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I just wanted to seek clarification from the Chief Minister, because we have been now talking about the one-off correction, but we have suffered it in 2023, which was an equivalent to £23 million and, as per the update today, another correction of £29 million in 2024. So it is no longer one-off, it has been in two years, it has been two-off corrections.

195 Can we get a confirmation that effectively the baseline for projections for Corporate Tax has now been adjusted and that we will no longer be using the excuse of another one-off correction in 2025 as part of the Budget that was approved in November.

The question is: has this correction been permanently now embedded and we will not be using that as an excuse this year?

Thank you.

200 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Yes, sir, it is, is the answer. There has been no ongoing impact. Let us be clear, it is an adjustment, I believe over two years, but its quantity, it is a one-off £20-plus million adjustment. It is not an ongoing adjustment.

205 My understanding is that this was first reported to the States in 2024. It relates to prior years, but it was during the accounting period 2024 that the States was made aware of this. It relates to a number of previous years, but it is a single £20-plus million aggregate figure.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ferbrache.

210 **Deputy Ferbrache:** I am grateful to Deputy Trott for his analysis. He has made the point that is commonly made about the shortfall of States' employees, and he has adjusted it to take account of agency costs and other costs. But my very quick arithmetic, having regard to the points that he has made, is that if there was full employment of States' employees, and even making adjustments that he had, we would have another deficit of another £20 million. In other words, our revenue deficit would not be £31 million, it would be over £50 million. Are those the kind of figures that he recognises?

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

220 **Deputy Trott:** No, I do not think you can look at it quite like that, because the cost of employing a permanent staff member is materially less than employing a full-time employee. There is also the issue of the positive impact that those additional staff have on the delivery of initiatives that this Assembly has approved that drive the cost of public services down. I am grateful for the intervention because it enables me to remind the Assembly, and importantly our community, that we have the lowest Civil Service per capita.

225 We spend the least on public services, even after suffering these increased costs of agency staff than any of our material competitors. In other words, we start from a low base, but our citizens, particularly our taxpayers, need to understand that we are all constantly trying to drive that figure down. We start from a much stronger position in terms of our spend than our competitors do. We must not lose sight of that very material fact.

230

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

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

Would the President of P&R agree with me that the figures that he has spelled out this morning and the data that he has revealed, makes it patently clear that it would be highly irresponsible for any Member of this Assembly or candidate in the forthcoming election, to advocate U-turning on the tax package that has been approved by this Assembly (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) unless they are able to put in place an alternative which raises at least as much money.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

245 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Unless they are able to put in place an alternative that raises at least the same amount of money, I wholeheartedly agree with Deputy Roffey.

250 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Vermeulen

Deputy Vermeulen: I thank the President for the update.

I note in the UK they are short of money in their government and there are currently cuts to the welfare system. Could the President envisage the same thing happening in Guernsey?

255 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: One of the huge success stories of Guernsey's economy over the last 30 or 40 years has been the very low levels of unemployment, and the relatively speaking very low levels of people who are on benefits. That is a very pleasing thing to be able to say.

260 My view, after nearly 25 years of sitting this Assembly, is that our welfare system is fair. Fair to the taxpayer and fair to the recipient. Personally, I would not like to see any material changes, but it will be for a future Assembly to determine.

265 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Thank you.

I would just like to follow on from Deputy Roffey's question to say that in terms of a tax package, would the President also agree with me that any such alternate tax package ought to be able to be realised within the timescale of the existing one as well?

270 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

275 **Deputy Trott:** The short answer is I would, but the import of that question is that the problem is real and it needs to be addressed expeditiously. It is not something I think we can put off two years, three years, four years. I am not even sure it is something that we can put off by a few – it will take a few months for the new Assembly to bed in, but the new Assembly will have to confirm the decision of this Assembly in very good order.

280 The Policy & Resources Committee is continuing to make the necessary provisions for the introduction of a new Goods and Services Tax in line with this Assembly's wishes. It is well-known that there are some of us in the Assembly who do not prefer that solution, but we have democratically decided that that is the solution this Assembly wants, and I personally very much hope that the next Assembly accepts the wisdom of this Assembly and moves forward swiftly.

When I say swiftly, I have already advised the Assembly that the Policy & Resources Committee believes that the earliest that a new Goods and Services Tax will be incorporated will be

285 1st July 2027. That is a delay that we wish we did not have to advise the States on, but it is a practical and realistic start date.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

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

With regard to the exceptional losses that Deputy Helyar referred to, Deputy Trott will be aware that there is a significant difference between Guernsey's Zero-10 system and Jersey's Zero-10 system. In Guernsey we tax profit streams, in other words the profits from types of business, while in Jersey they tax regulated entities.

295 In light of the experience, we have had of losses being experienced as a result of effectively the misallocation of profits between profit streams, has P&R or will P&R give consideration to moving to a Jersey methodology in relation to the taxation of profits under the Zero-10 regime?

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

300

Deputy Trott: The answer is that the matter has been considered. In fact, I think we may have debated it while the very able Deputy St Pier and I, together I believe with Deputy Parkinson and others, were on P&R's tax sub-committee.

305 I think P&R has an extraordinarily busy agenda for the remainder of this term, but it is something that we will make clear in our handover document to the next P&R that it should be revisited because it is a valid point. The truth is, there is much that Jersey gets right, but there is much that we get right that Jersey does not. I think it is an important point to make.

The Bailiff: Okay, this is going to be the last question now, so Deputy Dyke.

310

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

I thank Deputy Trott for all his work in getting these accounts together. We will look forward to seeing them.

315 Could I ask Deputy Trott if he has noted that in both the US and the UK, measures are now being taken to try to streamline services, management structures in Government and all sorts of things across the board. Does he see any scope here of doing anything to streamline our Civil Service structure and the management of our incorporated entities, and generally have a look at this sort of thing?

Thank you.

320

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: The answer to that question is yes, of course. There are always improvements to efficiencies, but the hard fact is that we deliver public services already significantly more efficiently in terms of cost than either of our most similar competitors but also more broadly than that.

325 The Policy & Resources Committee has advised the Assembly that it will be carrying out a fundamental services review. As part of that fundamental services review, how amalgamations, consolidations, whatever form, whatever structural changes may take, can be brought about to deliver greater efficiencies, will be a consideration of that work.

330 I hope that gives him the comfort that he was hoping for from the question, and that is that there is a constant focus on driving down costs and expenditure and on improving efficiencies. But he must accept – I know that he struggles with this concept despite being a very capable man – that we start from the best position of any of our competitors, not the middle or the worst, but the best position. That is a fact and we all have a responsibility to ensure that our community understands that detail.

335

A Member: Hear, hear.

**General Update —
Statement by the President of the Committee for Employment & Social Security**

The Bailiff: The next Statement this morning, Members of the States, will be on behalf of the
340 Committee for Employment & Social Security. I will invite Deputy Roffey to deliver that Statement,
after which there will be questions.

Deputy Roffey: Sir, this is the last President's Update that I will have the privilege to give as ESS
345 President, so I would like to mention some of the Committee's main achievements during this
political term.

Top of the pile, in my view, is the implementation of the Secondary Pensions Law 2023, which
came into force on 1st October 2023. This places a statutory obligation on all employers in Guernsey
and Alderney to automatically enrol their employees in a workplace pension scheme. Unless they
opt-out, employees will build up pension through their contributions and those of their employer.

350 The auto-enrolment duty is being phased in by employer size between July 2024 and October
this year. The minimum amounts employers and employees are required to contribute are also
being phased in, reaching their full amount of 10% of earnings in 2032.

I may be biased, but I think this is one of the most significant achievements of the Assembly this
term, noting that the groundwork was laid by my predecessors, former Deputies Allister Langlois
355 and Michelle Le Clerc, and their Committees. The equivalent policy in the UK, introduced from 2012
has led to a tenfold increase in total membership of defined contribution occupational schemes.

I have no doubt that the provision of a second-pillar pension in Guernsey and Alderney will both
lead to more comfortable and secure retirements and reduce future reliance on taxpayer-funded
income support.

360 The approval of Guernsey's Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance in 2022 was also a big
achievement for this Assembly, and one which had been promised for many years. It prohibits
discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of race, disability, carer status, sexual
orientation and religion or belief in both the workplace and wider society. The Committee recently
carried out an interim review of the Ordinance plus proposals to prohibit age discrimination, it will
365 be published on Monday for consideration in April.

When the Law came into force the Employment Relations Service morphed into the Employment
and Equal Opportunities Service, or the EEOS. This is Guernsey's independent authority for
providing advice, guidance, and dispute resolution services in the fields of both employment and
discrimination Law.

370 The first annual report of the Director of the EEOS will also be published next Monday and it
makes for interesting reading. It demonstrates that this legislation is definitely required, but that
concerns it would 'open the floodgates' to many opportunistic employees and members of the
public filing complaints which might be frivolous or malicious, were completely misplaced.

375 Almost 50% of complaints have been resolved through conciliation, demonstrating the
important role of alternative dispute resolution. Sixteen formal complaints were lodged with the
Tribunal under the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance during the 15-month period covered by
the report.

Moving on to the Affordable Housing Development Programme. The States of Guernsey,
working in partnership with the GHA, has been successful during this term in securing a pipeline of
380 land for the development of Affordable Housing in future, but the number of properties constructed
has been disappointing, although progress is now accelerating. Since the start of this political term
72 units of affordable housing have been completed across seven different sites. A further 29 are
currently under construction.

Of course, we would have liked to have built many more than 101 units of affordable housing units during this term, but the pace of the programme has, I am afraid, been affected by a number of factors outside our control. We continue to work closely with the GHA to deliver additional affordable housing units, and work is also underway by E&I to develop alternative delivery approaches to supplement the GHA's capacity.

Housing development by its nature takes time due to the need to identify the right sites, purchase them and then plan the sites, with a lot of this type of work having been undertaken during this term, which should allow for a major acceleration over the next few years.

One of the keys to making that a reality is the St Sampson's Strategic Delivery Framework, which the Committee commissioned from Savills Urban Design Studio. This will be signed off during this term and provides a holistic approach for delivering the allocated housing sites in the area of Guernsey, which puts sustainable living at its core.

The sites covered by the framework have the potential for around 1,000 new homes, which are expected to be a mixture of private and affordable housing tenures. The framework's approach sets out to create safe and well-connected communities; and diverse neighbourhoods where people want to live, work, and spend time.

Lastly in relation to housing, I would just like to highlight the important role played by Action for Children's Guernsey Youth Housing Project, which is funded by my Committee. The Action for Children team do fantastic work to support individuals under the age of 25 who are facing homelessness. By tackling the root causes of youth homelessness such as substance abuse, social isolation, leaving from care, employability, and the lack of independent living skills, they have made substantial progress in preventing homelessness among young people before it happens.

During this term of Government, and against a backdrop of unusually high inflation, the Committee has focused on policies to improve the financial position of Guernsey's low-income households.

The arbitrary limit on the weekly income for people living in the community and in receipt of income support has been scrapped. This provision had a major impact on larger families, which in some cases led to significant childhood poverty, or parents going without essentials themselves. Frankly, it was a real stain in Guernsey's social policy and I am so pleased that the States voted overwhelmingly to rescind it.

Also, on the theme of helping those on the lowest incomes, emergency and interim increases to income support rates were implemented in October 2022 and August 2023 to support low-income households facing financial pressures during what was an extended period of high inflation. Again, I thank the States for their support.

Although delayed because of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the States approved targets for the rates of the adult and young persons' minimum wage were achieved with effect from 1st October 2024. Over a period of six years, the adult minimum wage rate has increased from £7.75 per hour in 2018, which was the equivalent of 50.7% of median earnings based on a 40-hour working week, to £12.00 per hour, which is the equivalent to 60% of median earnings. The Committee has also taken measures to better target non-contributory benefits at those who most need them.

Family allowance, which was a universal benefit until the end of 2021, changed with effect from 1st January 2022, an annual household income limit of £120,000, now £125,000. Savings arising from the introduction of that cap are used to fund the provision of children's services, including subsidised primary care appointments, an annual free dental check-up, and cultural enrichment activities in schools.

Targeted additional financial support for low-income informal carers has been implemented through income support, and the scope of the scheme that provides support to people who are just outside the reach of income support with assistance with their medical and paramedical expenses.

A compensation scheme for people with asbestosis which is caused by exposure to asbestos, was introduced, on a non-statutory basis, in January 2021.

It's absolutely essential, against a backdrop of an ageing population and an increasing dependency ratio, to maximise participation in work. The Committee has made some policy changes intended to nudge parents back to work in a way that is sensitive to the important role of parents of young children.

440 From September 2024, single parents in receipt of income support, or a member of a couple in receipt of income support who is primarily responsible for the childcare, are expected to work part-time when their youngest child turns three; this was previously five.

445 From January 2025, the upper age limit of a child in respect of whom an individual is eligible to receive family allowance credits was reduced from under 16 years to under 12 years, except in certain specified circumstances.

My Committee has also increased investment in targeted support services, delivered by third sector organisations, for people who have various barriers to work.

450 The Committee entered into a 10-year index-linked funding arrangement with GROW. This provided a strong foundation on which the charity was able to raise the significant amount of money, which was necessary to develop their fantastic new training facility at Verte Rue.

The Committee also has substantially increased its grant funding to the Guernsey Employment Trust, which does fantastic work to support disabled and disadvantaged people to prepare for, find and maintain work in Guernsey.

455 Successful partnerships have also been developed with Guernsey Caring for Ex-Offenders, GO, the GSPCA, Unlimited and Les Cotils. Grants enable these organisations to provide tailored support, training and supervision to individuals referred to them by the Job Centre, to help them secure suitable and sustainable employment.

460 I know that the outcomes have been positive for many individuals but it also has been for the public purse, with the value of the grants paid being more than offset by the benefit savings arising from individuals entering employment. Not to mention the other, more difficult to quantify, benefits for the individuals concerned and society as a whole, such as improved mental and physical health, reduced reoffending, etc.

465 The Supporting Occupational Health & Wellbeing Programme, or SOHWELL, has also made great progress during this term. The SOHWELL Programme was instigated by the former Committee in response to what was then a rising trend in long-term incapacity benefit claims. The programme recognised that to stem this rising trend, there was a need to transform the way in which short-term sickness claims were managed to reduce the number that went on to become long term.

470 The programme is founded on the principle that, in most cases, it is better for a person's long-term health and wellbeing to be in work. This ensures that, where appropriate, people who have an illness, injury or disability are supported early to help them stay in work or get back to work more quickly. The programme therefore has had a strong focus on occupational health, prevention, and early intervention.

475 Phase one delivered a redesigned medical certificate and work capability assessment, and resulted in case managers and doctors working in a different way and with a greater emphasis on occupational health and vocational rehabilitation.

Phase two focused on employer engagement and raising awareness of the important relationship between work and health.

480 Phase three, which has progressed during this political term, aims to create a roadmap to enhance and maximise the effectiveness of services that increase workforce participation. A key aspect of this is to focus on prevention and early intervention initiatives while raising community awareness and understanding of the aims of occupational health. The product of this work, a Work and Wellbeing Strategy, is expected to be published by the Committee before the end of quarter two; so please watch this space.

485 At an operational level, a number of large-scale change programmes have been successfully implemented. Through the, now closed, MyGov Programme, the Customer Hub was formed at Edward T Wheadon House during 2022 delivering a range of services, including some on behalf of ESS.

Following a period of live running, a restructure of the Customer Hub and Committee services has taken place and been implemented from January this year. For those services for which ESS is responsible, this restructure is expected to strengthen customer service through more efficient decision-making and an even greater focus on return-to-work initiatives and support.

During 2024, the Revenue Service Transformation Programme migrated all Contribution Records, Life Events, Status and Financial Records off the Legacy Contributions mainframe system. This involved over 130 million records being extracted, prepared, signed off by the Service and loaded on to new systems.

This move removed a significant number of risks to contribution data while they were held in legacy servers, and increased automation and speed of contributions processes will provide new opportunities for policy enhancements.

The Committee has taken proactive measures to improve the financial position of the Guernsey Insurance Fund and the Long-term Care Insurance Fund. In late 2021, the Committee secured in-principle States' approval to gradually increase social security contribution rates. Four annual increases have been implemented since this time.

On 1st January 2021, the balance of the Guernsey Insurance Fund was £705.3 million, which was equivalent to about 4.4 times annual expenditure. By the end of 2024, the balance had increased to £763.9 million, although it is important to note that expenditure cover had reduced to 3.8 times annual expenditure, reflecting the significant financial pressure being experienced by the fund principally due to the ageing population.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey, I am afraid the time for delivering the statement has already lapsed.

Deputy Roffey: Okay.

The Bailiff: It is now an opportunity to ask questions within the mandate of the Committee. Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I am just going to read briefly press release from 2022:

JHA submits planning application for 91 homes at Fontaine Vinery.

It goes on to say:

If planning application is done within six months they are expecting those houses to be built by 2024.

It is now 2025. Why does Deputy Roffey believe that the housing action looks like success?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply.

Deputy Roffey: I did not catch all of that but I think the question was about Fontaine Vinery and why it has not proceeded.

I regret that, but P&R have made a submission to the IDP review suggesting that Fontaine Vinery be redesignated from housing into an industrial site. Clearly, to plough on regardless of spending large amounts of money on the detailed planning and implementation, if that is likely to be a core policy of this Assembly, and we do not know yet but I have not picked up a lot of pushback on that, would have been highly irresponsible.

I certainly did not say that the Affordable Housing Development Programme had been an unmitigated success. Far from it. I am the first to say that 101 units either being completed or commenced during this political term is woefully short of what we ought to have done. It is not the zero that some Members keep mentioning, but it is not enough and it must accelerate.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Tissier.

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

I wondered if Deputy Roffey could help me. It is a question about tenants in States' houses. If there is a couple and they are living in a States' house with two school-age children, and if they exceed the maximum income limit, I think they will be subject to a review and possibly asked to leave the States' housing. But next door, there might be a couple that have an income below the

545 threshold, but they have got two adult children that work and earn an income. Undoubtedly, they pay board to their parents.

The couple with a family income in excess of this income threshold are asked to leave, or may be asked to leave, but the couple with adult children earning, they are allowed to stay.

Thank you, sir.

550

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply.

Deputy Roffey: I admire Deputy Le Tissier's confidence that 18-year-olds will always pay board to their parents. That has not always been my experience, but they ought to.

555 The answer is of course yes, in theory, this is correct, but at the moment we are acutely aware of the shortages in the private rental sector, so even when a family with two school-aged children do hit the income limit, and do not forget that was suspended for a couple of years and we provided grandfather rights for anybody whose income exceeded it during those periods, all it would do would have a review of their tenancy. In the current climate, the idea that we would ask a family

560 with children of school age to quit where there is nowhere to go, it is just not happening and I cannot see it happening.

On the adult children business, yes, Deputy Le Tissier. A previous Committee back in 2018 decided that they would no longer take into account the income of the adult children but there are graduated income limits according to family status and therefore the income limit for a family with

565 two dependent children is higher than the family who do not have any dependent children, which would be the case if they were adult and working. It is not a question of the same limit being applied and the two being treated very differently.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

570

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

In regards to the Affordable Housing Delivery Programme or social housing, building on Deputy Inder's question, what does success look like for Deputy Roffey and for the Committee in regard to delivery of social housing?

575 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey:

580 **Deputy Roffey:** Well, I think we are running out of road for us to deliver what I see as success, and it will be over to the successors of our mandate, which will not be ESS, but the new Housing Committee.

I personally believe that certainly with the current level of migration to Guernsey that we need circa 1,000 new units of affordable housing over the next five to 10 years.

585 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Following the topic of the Affordable Housing Programme, the President mentioned that they did kick-start the efforts to buy land, and the pipeline of land

necessary to build affordable homes, which there was not any pipeline that was inherited from previous Assemblies.

My question is that in the purchasing of those pieces of land, which would have been the Guernsey Business Park, Parc Le Lacheur and others, were there any viability assessments actually conducted before such purchases were made, which would have signalled the actual deliverability and the cost of delivery of those sites?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: My understanding is that in every case commercial valuations were commissioned, which would have taken that into account. The painful fact is that most of the large sites still available in Guernsey and zoned as a possibility for housing carry with them significant problems, often the infrastructural problems. But I am afraid that if we ignore those sites, there is no way that we are going to be able to deliver the number of units that we want to, unless we want to start building on greenfield sites across the Island, which I do not believe is the desire of this Assembly.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

I thank Deputy Roffey for all his efforts. A specific question again on housing and delivery. To my mind, the Guernsey Housing Association is a competent and efficient organisation. It seems to be getting on to a role now of doing private sector, social sector partnerships, which is a very good thing, and it is a role that I think can be carried forward. But Deputy Roffey mentioned setting up another delivery unit.

Would he consider, rather than that, where we have got something that seems to be efficient, what it actually needs is for the current Guernsey Housing Association to have a secure site of future funding so that it can continue on its development programme, which does seem to be getting us somewhere, although it has been a slow start.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I think it is almost three questions in there. Yes, I very much welcome the joint venture path that the GHA are going down. I think it has a dual benefit. It helps deliver the affordable housing units we need at a lower cost in terms of grant funding. But also very often the pre-sale, if you like, of a number of units on a development will help a private development become more viable and will help with lenders.

I agree about the GHA and I think after a period of hiatus they are now again in a more expansionist mindset, but I think we have to be realistic. They currently have about 1,000 units and to expect them to potentially double that over a limited number of years, which in my answer to Deputy Gabriel I intimated was probably necessary, I think it is probably unrealistic and they would welcome the fact that there was perhaps another delivery method going on alongside them in order to help the Island actually meet their requirements for affordable housing.

Deputy Soulsby: I am grateful to Deputy Roffey for highlighting the success of the SOHWELL project. It is something that began at the end of last term and those problems were identified. It is a good example of where Guernsey has found success.

Now on the back of Deputy Vermeulen's question to Deputy Trott earlier, does he think that such an initiative, and bearing in mind the problems in the UK, is something that our larger neighbour might well have some interest in?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

645 **Deputy Roffey:** Yes, and indeed one of my staff is in the UK today trying to tell them exactly how to go about it. I do think we are ahead of the UK in this way and it has been impressive the success of SOHWELL. Particular things like gradual return to work rather than all or nothing has really helped to reduce the conversion of short-term sickness claims into long-term benefit claims, and I think it is absolutely essential.

650 The demographics of this Island means we have to make sure that everybody who can work does work, and SOHWELL is providing a very important strand to that works group.

The Bailiff: Deputy Taylor.

655 **Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.
Apologies to re-cover ground, but it is a point that I think is of significance so needs to be repeated. I believe I heard Deputy Roffey state that 82 affordable homes have been completed this term. Using basic vape packet maths, against a four-year period averaging 100 total homes built per year, 80 homes would represent approximately 20% of total house building on the Island.

660 So while there is undoubtedly room for increasing that provision, would Deputy Roffey agree with me that this statistic is quite different to the often peddled narrative that Government have built no houses?

A Member: Hear, hear.

665 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: Yes, but I can understand how the narrative came about because what happens when we were finishing off sites that we already had, there was a significant number completed early on in this term. Then we had a couple of years where virtually nothing was happening because, 670 as Deputy Kazantseva-Miller said, we just had nowhere to build. Then we have started again and therefore we now have a couple of sites under construction.

675 So there was a hiatus in the middle where basically things ground to a halt. But, yes, 101 units will have either been completed or currently under construction during this term. But, as I say, I am not pushing back on anybody that is critical of that, because I personally believe that that is a significant failure of this Assembly.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

680 **Deputy Helyar:** Thank you, sir.
Thank you to Deputy Roffey for his update. I appreciate this is a question he may not be able to answer on the spot. He mentioned 16 complaints, I believe, in relation to discrimination. I wonder if he would be able to give the Assembly a little bit more granularity; are these general inquiries, are they hearings, how many have been successful and so on?

685 **Deputy Roffey:** I do not have that at the tip of my fingers but what I will say is that our initial review of phase 1 and the first annual report of the Director of the service are both going to be published on Monday and the review will be debated – well, if we can get all our work done during this term – during this term, so I will be able to address that in more detail at that time.

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

Deputy de Lisle: Thank you, sir.

I thank the President for his update. One of the achievements, in fact the major achievement, was secondary pay and pensions. What actually is the cost to Government of introducing that programme and is it going to add considerably to the deficit?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I am not sure what costs Deputy de Lisle is referring to. The actual admin costs are, of course, not for the States of Guernsey, they are outsourced. Sovereign are delivering the YIP, but the YIP is not the only way you can satisfy the requirements of the Law. Any of the existing pension schemes can do that.

Clearly, it is taking some money out of the economy at this time and that was always going to be the case. There is never a good time to introduce this sort of scheme – or there is, it is always 20 years ago – because eventually that money will start to come back into the economy when pensioners have more spending power in future.

Yes, I think in the short term it does put a squeeze on economic activity but I think the long-term gain outweighs that and it is absolutely essential that we did this. I am so pleased that we did.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oliver.

Deputy Oliver: Thank you, sir.

Last year, we agreed the planning application for CI Tyres and I was just wondering, because when we were doing it in the midst of it, it was like we want to get on with this as soon as possible, but I have noticed nothing much has happened. Could you please give an update on that?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I can. I do not want to steal the GHA's thunder who will no doubt want to make an announcement about this very soon.

Yes, I appeared at the open planning inquiry or open planning meeting and urged the DPA to pass the plans. I have to say they have been looked at again and there will be some variation to those plans being proposed, which will create significantly more units on that site and reduce the cost of construction. I think the GHA will be making that public over the next few weeks.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I generally do not know the answer to this question, which is normally a first. Of the 80 houses that the ESS have claimed have been completed this term, I wonder if Deputy Roffey could confirm how many of those houses have actually started this term. There is a significant difference between completing and starting, and if you could go on to – and he does not need to answer the question now. Could he tell the Members how many affordable housing have started this term? What I mean by starting this term, I mean getting out of the ground.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I think 30 units have started this term, the rest were started during the term that I was also a member of the ESS previously. Just the nature of construction is – you are talking here, it is very rare for everything to be consigned during one political term because you are talking about a couple of years often.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, the current taxpayer subsidy per unit of affordable homes is £123,000. The President mentioned that we are likely to need about 1,000 units of affordable homes in the next five years. That would equate to a subsidy of £123 million, that kind of level of capital expenditure subsidy is not even included in the rate of overall capital expenditure we have got to spend going forward, given the significant levels of under-investment.

Would the President agree that this level of subsidy is completely unsustainable given our current financial circumstances, even with potential tax reform, and that new models of delivering affordable houses are absolutely essential to reduce that per home subsidy down to as much as zero, which may include looking at sites where you can deliver affordable housing at a significant discount, which may include, unfortunately, the building on greenhouse sites?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply, please.

Deputy Roffey: There are quite a few questions in there. There is about £30 million at the moment that is available for grant funding. We will certainly, in the capital bid programme, be putting in for more, sorry, Deputy Trott, but I think the statistics that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller raised really reinforces Deputy Dyke's point that very often in joint initiatives with the private sector there is the possibility to reduce the grant funding a mechanism. I am not convinced that glasshouse sites always do reduce the cost of development. There are some inherent sunk costs in glasshouse sites that often, I think developers would tell you, can actually put up the cost.

So, yes, quite a lot of money. I think to make housing affordable, it means it is going to be charging less than the general market and some sort of subsidy is going to be needed. I think that that is just the reality that the next Assembly are going to have to grapple with.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Just a quick question. Would the President agree with me that the language of affordable housing should be modified by this Assembly and the knowledge of recent questions and answers to more affordable housing?

Deputy Roffey: I quite like the suggestion that was, I think, put forward by Deputy de Sausmarez once, that it should be subsidised housing. Because what affordable housing, capital A, capital H, means is that there is some form of state subsidy, whether that is in grant funding to make the rental affordable or in partial ownership, that the rental part of it is subsidised. So we are talking about subsidised housing.

The problems with subsidised housing is, 'Where do you live?' 'I live in a subsidised housing estate' just sounds maybe a little bit patronising, but at the same time I know there is confusion between affordable housing, small a, small h, and what is meant by the term when it has got capitals.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Recently we gave additional security to the Supported Living and Ageing Well Scheme by making the funding streams perhaps more resilient, but is the Committee aware and working towards additional reviews on the capability of the Island to provide extra care, sheltered housing and other models that maybe provide a different kind of approach for the demographic challenge?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

795 **Deputy Roffey:** Yes, the problem with extra care sheltered housing is that there is a division under my mandate, which is the GHA would probably provide the actual units, but the care package tends to be provided by HSC, and obviously they would have to prioritise providing those care packages with all the other very considerable demands that I know are on their budget.

Yes, I think it is a model that can work but it is not free, it is quite an expensive form of provision.

**General update –
Statement by the President of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care**

800

The Bailiff: Well, that concludes questions to the President. We turn to the final of the three statements and that will be on behalf of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care. I invite the President, Deputy Brouard, to deliver that statement.

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Deputy Brouard: Thank you, sir.

Before I deliver my final statement as the President of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care, I would first like to express my appreciation to States' Members for the support that you have provided in this challenging role over this term. So, my thanks to you.

810 My most sincere thanks must go to the other HSC Committee Members, both past and present. In addition, I would like to thank our non-voting member, Dr George Oswald, whose knowledge and experience in the medical profession has provided invaluable insight. Finally, I want to thank all the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to deliver our health and social care services.

815 We should not forget that at the beginning of this term the Committee had to respond to the significant challenges that arose from the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, I gave my first update statement as President in December 2020, the day before the first COVID vaccine in the Bailiwick was administered, and I think about how far we have come since that time. This was the biggest challenge the health and care system had faced in living memory, but it also showed our health and social care systems at their very best; the dedication and skill of staff, the flexibility of providers to work beyond traditional organisational boundaries and the ability for the whole Island to come together to protect our health and well-being.

820 While the extended period of disruption to health and care cannot be underestimated, it is pleasing to note that the subsequent investment into a series of recovery initiatives, such as the establishment of de Havilland Ward dedicated to elective orthopaedic procedures, an endoscopy initiative in gastroenterology and in ophthalmology have had a noticeable positive impact on reducing waiting lists.

The States' Assembly's decision to upgrade the hospital site through phase 1 of the Our Hospital Modernisation programme was essential to meet and future-proof Islanders' health and care needs, both now and in the future.

830 We hope to officially open the Post Anaesthetic Care and Critical Care Units within the next few months. We had hoped to open in April so naturally we are disappointed, but it is crucial that we get this right for patients and staff given the benefits that the new units will bring and that will be our focus for the next few weeks.

835 Turning now to the next phase of the Hospital Modernisation Programme. We are planning to refine our business case for the next phase of work. This is predominantly new-build construction and will address key issues, including providing much needed additional theatre capacity, the development of a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit/Special Care Baby Unit and improvements in maternity services, as well as improvements to wards and outpatient services.

840 The Committee will bring this business case back to the Assembly later this year. While I would not have predicted this at the time, the phased approach to hospital modernisation will ultimately lead to better outcomes for both patients and clinicians.

The Electronic Patient Record replacement programme continues to receive positive clinical feedback for the significant transformational benefits it will bring. Work is now moving into the phases of testing and preparing for the initial go-live this summer. This process includes testing with all the other integrated hospital systems, building training materials, and rehearsing for the swap over from existing systems.

As I have previously advised, this is a complex programme, and the programme team continue to actively monitor timelines, progress and risks. This includes providing regular progress reports to both the Governance Board and the Committee. There continues to be some challenges with both resources and complexity. While we now expect a short delay to the initial go-live date of approximately one month, the current projections remains for overall programme delivery as planned in June 2026, within the funding provided.

Moving on to 'Our Community Services' projects. As Members will be aware, it is our intention to redevelop Raymond Falla House and co-locate existing Community Health and Social Care services to provide a Children & Families Hub. This will provide an improved environment for the multi-service delivery for children and their families, in addition to increased efficiency in our estate utilisation. We anticipate that the Business Case for this redevelopment will be presented early in the next political term.

La Vieille Plage is the specialist residential development currently being built by the States of Guernsey, the Guernsey Housing Association, and local construction partners to meet the needs of members of our community living with varying levels of learning and physical disabilities. I am pleased to report that construction has progressed well and is currently on track for delivery this summer.

I would now like to highlight the significant progress made to deliver some key policy and legislative workstreams during this political term.

Through the Government Work Plan, the Strategic Portfolio for Health and Social Care has been established, building on the strategic vision set out in the Partnership of Purpose, and we have continued to lay important foundations for the long-term transformation of health and social care.

Early in the term, the Committee finalised the new 'opt out' arrangements in respect of organ donation, implemented new arrangements to give effect to an updated Abortion Law and, working closely with External Relations, we also implemented the new Reciprocal Health Arrangement with the UK.

In support of our ongoing commitment to prevention and early intervention and the delivery of the Combined Substance Use Strategy, the Committee has implemented new legislation to improve community health and well-being, particularly for our younger generations. For example, we have introduced legislation making it a criminal offence to smoke in cars carrying children and worked with the States of Jersey to introduce regulations to implement plain packaging of tobacco products with appropriate health warnings.

Further, in deliverance of our commitment to establish a framework to define and regulate vapes, the enabling Law on vaping products was presented to and approved by the Assembly in November 2024.

When elected, I made it clear that health is a cross-Committee responsibility and in fulfilling our promise to work together, we have completed a cross-Committee piece of work to complete a full refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan that sets out how the States and partner agencies will work to support children and families across the Bailiwick.

With regards to the introduction of the Capacity Law, the much-anticipated Lasting Powers of Attorney was successfully brought into effect in 2022 and work has continued to progress the phased introduction of this Law.

With your support, we have also reached a key milestone in establishing a new framework for care regulation. I would just like to mention that one of my regrets is that the States has not made more progress in relation to the provision of key worker housing that I mentioned in the last update.

I am also pleased to advise of the forthcoming publication of the 2024 Key Performance Indicators report in relation to the Secondary Healthcare Contract. This positive report highlights

the progress undertaken and ongoing efforts for continuous improvement to deliver a high standard of care. I would like to recognise the contribution of our many partners, key stakeholders and volunteers who make an essential contribution to the health and well-being of our community.

As you all know, demand for health and social care provision is increasing and there will be continuous and considerable pressures to manage the provision of the necessary services within limited resources. By way of example, in 2024 there were 24,500 emergency department attendances which represents a 21% increase in attendances between 2021 and 2024; that is just on our watch. In addition, in 2024, 1,500 full-time equivalent nurses, and other staff on agenda for change contracts, provided approximately 2.5 million hours of care.

Finally, I would like to make some comments for the record. The budget for the Committee for Health & Social Care is not out of control. The pressure on the budget reflects the ongoing and increasing demand for health and social care services. This in turn is driven by the demand for new drugs, acute care, better regulation and the Bailiwick's changing demographics. Those Members who are looking for a quick fix or pretty soundbites need to look elsewhere.

Health and social care services will continue to expand and will continue to require increasing resources, as is reflected in other western economies. The real issue is who pays and what services are provided free at the point of access. I sincerely hope that we do not get to a position where Islanders will have few options for their care; demand is going to continue to rise, who pays is the question.

While I have mentioned just a few highlights, I hope that Members will agree that the Committee has made some real and tangible progress during this political term. It has been a privilege to serve on the Committee and I look forward to answering, or taking away, any questions Members may have.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla.

Deputy Falla: Thank you, sir.

I may be on the wrong track here, but am I right in thinking that when La Vieille Plage is completed, the patients currently in the Duchess of Kent will move to that premises? Am I also right in thinking that at that point, it will only be civil servants occupying the Duchess of Kent building?

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you for that question.

Yes, that is absolutely true. I think Sunnybrook is the name of the residential home; they are in unsuitable accommodation. Yes, part of the reason for the building of the La Vieille Plage is to give that specialist place for them to have a better home. That will mean that we have a substantial asset to build the Duchess of Kent again, and the whole of that build will cost many millions. It is being used by civil servants to work in social care. It is also exceptionally useful as a decant as we continue to modernise the hospital.

So my suggestion, and it will not be for me to do, there may be some people who would like to knock it down, I think that would be a waste of all those resources that are being put into it. I think it is certainly going to play a useful part for the next 10 years as a decant and a facility for the Island's civil servants. But thank you for the question.

The Bailiff: Deputy Moakes.

Deputy Moakes: Thank you, sir.

I would like to thank the President for his update. I think it was a good update, and I would also like to thank the Committee for all the good work that they have done over this term.

I have one question, though, and it is a question I have raised previously. That is that I believe there are currently around about 180 open positions within the Department. Could be slightly different, but that was the number it was last time I asked the question. I also remember being told that once phase 2 has been completed, there will be an incremental 180 or so open positions. Again, that number may be slightly different, but that is the number I remember.

As I said before, I think there is always a risk that with that number of open positions, we may end up having built phase 2 with the most wonderful facilities, but they sit empty because we have shortages in staff. Those are predominantly due, as we have been told previously, to shortages of accommodation for the staff. So I will ask the question I have asked previously, which is: what is the ESC doing to ensure that it can hire the 360 or so additional staff that we will need –

The Bailiff: Time for asking the question has passed. Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you.

Deputy Moakes asked a very relevant question. We, at the moment, would love more accommodation for key workers and you will need more accommodation for key workers going forward. Whether those key workers are from abroad or local people, that is one of the issues you are going to need to do as you define what a key worker is.

The issue at the hospital is we have got staff working overtime and we have got agency staff covering those vacancies. So that is the issue. We are in hotels and in unsuitable places at the moment with our staff. That is one part.

When we start to solve the key worker housing issue, we also start to solve our staffing issues. The other bit is, build it and they will come is slightly true because we have been able to staff up the new facilities we have got because people want to come and work in a first-rate hospital, and that is what we have been able to provide with the provision of phase 1. So phase 1 is basically fully staffed, as I understand it, because we have got a fantastic opportunity for staff to work in a state-of-the-art place.

I am going to run out of time in a second, but you will have a situation, if you do not have Islanders looked after in the hospital, where are you going to have them looked after? You are going to have to pay another country vast amount of money to have our patients looked after there.

The Bailiff: Deputy Queripel.

Deputy Queripel: Sir, parking at the PEH has been an issue for a long time now. People having to park on yellow lines in order to be able to get to their appointments on time. Recently, a relative and a friend of mine were not able to park at the PEH, even though they got there half an hour before their allotted appointment time. They could not park on the yellow lines, even if they wanted to, because there are an abundance of cars already parked on those yellow lines. So they both missed out on that appointment, which caused them a lot of stress. They had to arrange appointments for another time and live in hope they will be able to find a parking place that time around.

Can the President please tell me where HSC are currently at in relation to improving parking at the PEH?

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you, sir.

It is an issue. I must admit I did a double drive around yesterday when I was trying to park at the hospital. We are working with E&I with regard to travel plans for the hospital and we have spotted a few areas on the fringes of the site which could also be brought into use as car parking. But, of course, one of the issues we have had with car parking is of course we have had massive construction going on, which has also caused disruption.

But it is an issue both for staff and for patients who want to go there. My suggestion is where you can use public transport, there are numerous bus services come right through the PEH facility. But it is an issue that will continue to be looked at, especially with the modernisation of phase 2A and B when it comes onstream.

1000 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, sir.

1005 The NHS has recently made substantial cuts in their operating model, reducing burdensome layers of bureaucracy, making sure there are clear lines of accountability and reducing duplications. Are there similar opportunities within HSC to make those savings in the management?

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

1010

Deputy Brouard: I thank Deputy Vermeulen for that question.

There are obviously, especially when staff resources allow, savings to be made in HSC, absolutely. The model that the English Government has got with the NHS is they are at arm's length. The NHS is a separate unit and it has cost a fortune. Jersey have moved to a similar model and it has cost a fortune and they are well over budget. Isle of Man has moved to a similar unit and they are well over budget. We are not.

1015

We do not have that layer of bureaucracy between politicians and the hospital, and the care staff, that layer is removed. But if you want to put in a board of directors and all the rest of it in between, then please add to the cost.

1020

I think we have got a simple model. I think it works well. I think it can be improved and I wish my successor success with that, because there are things that we can do to be better. But we do need those resources to be put in to make that happen.

But I would not change the model. Other places elsewhere where they are at arm's reach, you will find that you will just lose control.

1025

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

1030

There is an old adage that prevention is always better than a cure, and to be proactive is always better to be than reactive. Again, an old wives tale, a stitch in time saves nine. Could Deputy Brouard tell us what current initiatives are in place to reflect that in relation to health, as one of the largest causes we know of adverse health is diabetes, poor heart health and also smoking. So what initiatives are currently in place and what will be in his handover documents to enhance those initiatives for the next term?

1035

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you.

1040

Again, slightly off tangent, one of my regrets, I think we perhaps should have done more in our term on prevention. We have focused, and rightly so, but with COVID and a few other issues on the acute, on the what is in front of us now. We have actually now got some funding through the budget to Dr Brink and Public Health to try and catch people further upstream before they get to that position.

1045

We have put a lot of money in, we have put them on a very strong footing with the Health Improvement Commission. They are in a really much stronger position now with their funding and they have done some tremendous work in school. We have now also funded up the Bailiwick social

1050 prescribing, which again goes right to the heart and gets people involved. Health is not just my responsibility, it is your responsibility. You have got poor housing, you have got people living in cars, you have got no job, all those things. If you have been to school and you have missed big chunks of your schooling, all of those things do not bode well for your health. We as a whole community need to come together with it.

1055 We have done our bit: on vapes, we have now put in some legislation; we have got smoking down from 13% down to 9%, I think is the latest; we are moving some of the obesity dial for some of our younger children? Yes, it is a continuous programme, but my recommendation is we need to do both. You need to cure the people that are in front of you with a broken leg, but we also need to put more resources in.

1060 **The Bailiff:** The time for replying has passed. Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1065 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, recently the Committee has increased its commitment to the provision of services through the third sector, most notably through extending the partnership with Guernsey Mind, but also Bright Beginnings. Does the President believe that more could be done and what would be the areas where the Committee would like to see more commissioning of services to the third sector?

1070 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Brouard.

1075 **Deputy Brouard:** Thank you for the question.

1080 I think our track record speaks for itself. We put HIC, the Health Improvement Commission, on a firm footing, as I mentioned just for the last question, Bailiwick prescribing, and of course you have mentioned Bright Beginning. We are working in that direction.

1085 There probably are some other areas where we can work together. The only thing is you have to be very sure that these organisations can deliver because that is one of the most important things. What we do not want to do is to go forward and then find we have to roll back. So it is quite a lengthy process to make sure that that provision is something that we do want and that the organisation has the depth and resource to actually provide it.

1090 But it is a very good point, and I think the more, as I mentioned in the answer to the last question, we come together as a community to look after our health, not only from prevention but also all the sports and all the other activities that go with it to keep ourselves healthy.

1095 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

1100 **Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

1105 Following on from the question from Deputy Gabriel, there is no doubt that a large part of the impressive reduction in smoking rates over the last couple of decades has been driven by legislative changes. So I wondered if HSC have any plans for any further legislative changes to encourage people not to smoke where possible.

1110 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Brouard.

1115 **Deputy Brouard:** Thank you very much.

1120 A very timely question because I think in the local media recently the survey results of people's attitudes to smoking has been published. I think one of the highlights, just picking one of them is, do you want to have people smoking in children's playgrounds? The answer came back very sensibly, no. Do you want to go to outdoor restaurants and have smoking? The answer came back very strongly, no. All those will be presented to the Health & Social Care Committee to decide which of those we think this Assembly would be happy to support and, of course, any Member here who does smoke, my suggestion to them is stop. *(Laughter)*

1100

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, sir.

1105

I would like to thank the President for his statement in spite of the last comments. *(Laughter)* But what the President has done throughout this term has been very keen and hard working to find accommodation for nurses, which is a key part. There was one point we felt very excited that Bray Lodge was being looked at as a nursing home. There are other situations being scuppered, as we all know, in the past. What does he believe happened there and is that totally gone because the property is still there?

1110

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

1115

Deputy Brouard: Thank you.

Although we are the customer of key worker accommodation, as you know, the provider is, of course, Employment and Social Security, who are the drivers there. I am aware of some issues with regard to Bray Lodge. They are probably commercially sensitive at this present time but I would leave my colleague, Deputy Roffey, if he wishes to pick it up, to advise Deputy Blin what the situation is at the moment, perhaps privately.

1120

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

1125

Deputy Trott: Thank you, sir.

Deputy Brouard was a reluctant President of HSC. He is justifiably proud of his Committee's achievements since that time, but has he enjoyed his role after all? That is the question. *(Laughter)*

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

1130

Deputy Brouard: Thank you.

I have got to pick my words carefully now. It was always going to be a tough gig. It was always going to be a tough gig. We have had some bumps along the way. But, no, it has been enjoyable. It has been really interesting, I have seen another slice of Island life. We have had a really good team on the Committee side. We have had some humour, some dark humour at times, and we have had some pretty awful disasters. But it has been really interesting and I would not have missed it.

1135

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

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Deputy Cameron: During his last update statement, Deputy Brouard assured me that an assessment of wi-fi access would be carried out across the States' residential care and other HSC settings. However, wi-fi access still seems to be either non-existent or woefully inadequate in several locations. Could I request an update on this, please?

1145

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you very much for that question.

Absolutely. I think everybody knows that we are having challenges with regard to our electronic provision, as it were, shall we say. But I will get a formal answer to Deputy Cameron on that particular issue.

1150

I just literally do not know exactly how far we have got with getting our homes into that position. But, yes, a very good point.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

Could I ask Deputy Brouard a question regarding waiting times for MRI scans? Obviously, the scans are a central part of modern medicine. I note that we now have several companies on the Island, or at least two, that seem to offer the service of various scanning services, and they seem to be growing. Is there scope for us to offload some cases to speed up the waiting list to some of these private enterprises?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: We have had discussions with some of the private enterprises who provide MRI scans. We do not have an issue at the moment with regard to the MRI scans. We have issues with some of the other areas, which is what happens after the MRI scan. With regard to orthopaedics, we still have some delays. But the actual scanning process, as far as I am aware, we are progressing pretty well. So, yes, there are no issues there.

The waiting lists have come down. They are not where I want them to be, but over the last couple of years we have made some significant progress. I just looked at the numbers last night and they have come down by about 500-odd from where we were. We are moving in the right direction.

But as we clear Mrs Le Page, her sister comes on to the list, so it is a continuously evolving picture, but we are desperately trying to get that waiting list down.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Sir, a bit of mirth has been had with the few remaining people in the Assembly that smoke. I happen to be one of them and so is Deputy Gollop. But in all seriousness, I am just going to read something:

Alcohol use has been reported as a factor by two thirds of domestic abuse victims. Moderate drinkers are more frequently engaged in intimate violence than are light drinkers and abstainers.

Would the President agree with me that the rise in the consumption of alcohol is having an impact on domestic abuse and violence around town? Could he ever remember a time when someone was ever arrested for having five cigarettes at the taxi rank where plenty of people have been arrested for over-drinking in the Island?

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you.

I think Deputy Inder raises a good point. Alcohol is one of the issues that we also have to deal with at Health. Drinking in moderation is sometimes difficult for some people to achieve. I think if you asked any of our health professionals that they would say resist and stick to the 14 units per week or less.

The other thing we can do as a legislative body is increase the rate on alcohol. I know that may not sit well with the hotels and restaurants, but I was disappointed this year in the Budget when it was not increased as it could have been.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Last question, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1205 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, we have innovative health service providers such as First Contact Health and others that enter the market, invest significant amounts of money to provide innovative healthcare solutions. Does the Committee have a framework through which they can engage with new service providers and explore new ways of delivering services such as with First Contact Health.

1210 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Brouard to reply, please.

1215 **Deputy Brouard:** Yes, indeed. Taking that particular company, we have had continuous discussions with them with regard to the provision of health care, their access to facilities and where they have specialties in orthopaedics, how they can access the MSG without going through a doctor, etc. So this is happening all the time. There's an ongoing conversation. Again, with any other health provider, we have had some interest with regard to ophthalmic for people to come in and help in that particular marketplace. But we will work with anybody.

1220 We also have to make sure that we have a decent provision provided in the Island overall for our healthcare.

Questions for Oral Answer

COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY

Bathing Pools and Regulation – La Valette Pool

The Bailiff: Well, we are now moving to Question Time proper. There are four sets of questions. The first set comes from Deputy Dyke to the President of the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security.

1225 Deputy Dyke, your first question, please.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

My first question. Concerning the bathing pools and regulation, what if incidents or accidents were identified by the Health and Safety Executive in ordering the closure of the diving board that related to the height of the diving board versus the depth of the pool below it?

1230

The Bailiff: The President, Deputy Roffey to reply, please.

Deputy Roffey: The Health and Safety Executive received a report relating to an injury sustained at the diving platform in November 2023. There was no indication from that accident that there were issues for the height of the platform or the depth of the water. But the report led the Health and Safety Executive to make officer-level inquiries of the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure in respect of the risk assessment for the La Valette pools. That risk assessment identified issues with the condition of the diving board, together with other factors including depth of the water and height of the platform.

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The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Yes, thank you, sir.

Given that there was no accident caused by the depth of the water what exactly was it that prompted the closure of the diving board at this time or two years after 2023?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I think it is important to stress that the HSE's initial approach was not to try and bring about the closure of the diving boards, but to address the issues that were highlighted in E&I's own risk assessment for La Valette. My understanding, and I need to check this with E&I, is that a lack of funding available to make the sort of adjustments that were needed was what brought the matter to a head.

1250

I am now personally convinced that where there is a will, there is a way, and that these issues are, very thankfully for me as a frequent user of La Valette, going to be overcome.

1255

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Yes, please, sir.

I am relatively sure the President of E&I made some – which probably inspired these questions, that there were incidents related to the diving board but I think Deputy Roffey has just confirmed there was no incident directly related to the height of the board or the depth of the water. I think that is what he said.

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1265 Then he went on to say risk assessment concerns. Is it fair to say that basically HSE have just gone looking for work and have upset a lot of people for no apparent reason because there was no specific incidents related to the height of the board or the depth of the water. Have HSE gone looking for work and gone around upsetting people for no good whatsoever?

1270 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: No, they have definitely not gone looking for work. When an incident is reported to them, they are obliged to investigate. They investigate and as part of that, they ask, as they always would, the officers at E&I for their risk assessments on La Valette. In that risk assessment was highlighted issues concerning the height of the board and the depth of the water.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1280 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, I just wanted to get absolute clarity, black and white. My understanding of what the President said in his response is that there has not been any incident reported that is directly attributable to the diving board, correct?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

1285 **Deputy Roffey:** I think I said very clearly in my opening that there has been an accident relating to the diving board. I am not going to go into any more detail because I think there is still a possibility of legal action in that respect.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, supplementary.

1290 **Deputy Gollop:** This is all a bit confusing but there is a report in the paper, the *Press*, today of E&I feedback which states that there have been eight incidents but they refuse to give timelines. Is the difficult here not the correlation of material between the structural statutory role ESS had and E&I in being clear on what the problem is and how it can be resolved?

1295 **The Bailiff:** Very difficult for Deputy Roffey to answer on behalf of a different Committee in relation to that. So I am going to say that that is not to be answered.

Your second question to the President, please, Deputy Dyke.

1300 **Deputy Dyke:** My second question to the President.

Reference was made in an official press release to changing international standards. Which standards are they and from which jurisdiction?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply, please.

1305 **Deputy Roffey:** The relevant standard is BS EN 13451-10:2018 Swimming Pool Equipment - part 10: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for diving platforms diving springboards and associated equipment.

1310 This is a British standard and the technical aspects including the depths of water, height and sizes of platforms, etc., were agreed by the British Standard Institution Committee, SW/136/8 – Swimming Pools and Aquatic Equipment.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Dyke?

1315 **Deputy Dyke:** Yes, thank you, sir.

I did have a pre-answer to the question, obviously. The principal document is dated 2018, so we are now in 2025. Has something happened this year that has put our diving board and its pool in breach of these regulations? I can see why you would look at them, but has anything recently happened that has put us in breach of what they are, what they say.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey, are you able to answer that?

Deputy Roffey: I think as I explained in answer to question 1, the HSE were only brought in to look at the situation with the diving boards in relation to an accident which happened there, and at that time they then asked for the risk assessment to be carried out and it was clear from that risk assessment that this standard was not being maintained.

I am very hopeful that we can actually overcome that issue and I think all the focus, rather than looking backwards, should be looking forwards and achieving that, but that was what sparked it. I presume we had actually been in a breach of this since 2018, however HSE do not have an army of people going around looking for work, so it was only when they were called in that this became apparent.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, the President quoted the standards as being those for swimming pools. Does a bathing pool with granite in terms of what we have got actually fall under those standards? Is there not a case that potentially we need to be looking at alternative standards because this is clearly not a swimming pool as one might know it.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I am reluctant to claim a knowledge of the Law that I do not have. I assume it is a swimming pool, so I presume it comes under the swimming pool section, but because we delegate most of our powers to the HSE to actually implement this particular piece of legislation, I have not lived and breathed this investigation.

Nevertheless, this is a British standard relating to swimming pools and La Valette is a swimming pool. It is a lido but it is still a swimming pool.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez, supplementary.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

Is the President aware that the Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure* in fact, gave that very rigorous challenge back along the lines of what Deputy Kazantseva-Miller has just suggested. The answer was that that standard was indeed the applicable standard. So we did investigate that with some considerable thoroughness.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I was not fully aware of that, but it does not surprise me. It is exactly what I would have done in E&I's position, and I thank the Deputy for the information.

The Bailiff: Deputy McKenna, supplementary.

Deputy McKenna: Sir, I do not know if this would help. On Friday, Elizabeth College sent their environmental section down, years 11 to 13, and they reduced the life-threatening depth of the pool by 3 metres. So whatever the problem was before, it is now 3 metres lower. I think personally, and I am sure there is quite a few of us, I would gladly put a bit of hammarite around the diving

board and put some new wooden platforms across. As I say, thanks to Elizabeth College, they have reduced the depth 3 metres, sir. So actually, by 3 metres – there is plenty of people will support this. There is obviously quite a lot will want to speak after me, but it has been reduced by 3 metres. So whatever the situation was before, it is not the situation now.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: No, I am not, because we are not responsible for the bathing pool, so if that has happened, I am sure that the relevant Committee will be very thankful.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez, second supplementary.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Would the President be interested to hear that the information that Deputy McKenna has just provided is not, I am afraid, accurate at all. It has not been deepened by an additional 3 metres. I am afraid Deputy McKenna is mistaken in that respect. That is work that is —

Deputy McKenna: Point of correction, sir.

The Bailiff: Just continue, please, Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I think he is mistaking some of the figures that have been provided through that, but I can categorically assure him that an additional 3 metres of depth has not been achieved. We know this because this is the work that we are undertaking as part of that community government effort. We are very closely involved with that work. We are very, very grateful to all the people that have volunteered their time and effort. But I am afraid that I did have to stand to correct those numbers because that is not correct.

That was the first phase of some exploratory and preparatory work, and there are more phases to come, but we will be providing accurate information once we know.

The Bailiff: Time is up, Deputy de Sausmarez, for the question. Deputy Roffey, do you wish to answer that?

Deputy Roffey: I feel I am rather caught in the middle of somebody else's argument here. But I think what I would say is the sooner that the bottom of the swimming pool can be cleared out to make it deeper, the diving board itself can be renovated to make it safer, and that work can be done so that this jewel in the crown is not blighted by water going out of it on every low tide and, in particular, at neap tides when it is not filled up again, becoming very much lower, then the sooner I think we can all move on from this unfortunate incident and enjoy just jumping and doing a bombshell into the water again.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Haskins.

Deputy Haskins: Yes, thank you, sir.

So I just wondered if the President can answer what the obligation Guernsey has on following BS EN 1345-10:2018.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Well, Deputy Roffey, that is going to be the answer to the next question, so you might just want to wait and raise that then.

1420 Your third question to the President, please, Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

I think the third question has really been covered by what we have already discussed, so shall I go on with my fourth question?

1425

The Bailiff: No, you have to ask the third question.

Deputy Dyke: Oh, the third question. *(Laughter)*

1430

The Bailiff: So that the answer can be given and then we can see if there are any supplementaries to that answer.

Deputy Dyke: Yes, sir.

1435 Question 3, as drafted. How was that jurisdiction chosen and by whom, i.e. in terms of where the regulations come from?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply.

Deputy Roffey: Thank you, sir.

1440

Guernsey's health and safety legislation is in fact wholly based on the UK health and safety legislation and therefore the policy of the previous States' Labour and Welfare Committee back in 1987 and subsequently the Commerce and Employment Department and now the Committee for Employment & Social Security has always been to align health and safety requirements in Guernsey to those that apply in the UK.

1445

This has the additional advantage of meaning that English case law tends to be treated as persuasive in the Guernsey Courts.

The Bailiff: Supplementary on this, Deputy Dyke?

1450

Deputy Dyke: Yes, sir, I would like a supplementary. We are following these regulations and we are told – it has been hinted that there is a problem with the depth of our pool. What do these regulations say the depth of our pool should be with the diving board relative to what it is? Do we have some actual analysis?

1455

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey, are you able to answer that?

Deputy Roffey: No, but that information will be available and it will no doubt be made available from the Health and Safety Executive to E&I, and obviously there is a correlation between the height of the diving board and the depth of the pool. That is set out in the standard.

1460

I am sorry I do not have BS EN etc. engraved on my heart to the extent to be able to give you an answer in feet and inches.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, supplementary.

1465

Deputy Gollop: I want solutions as much as anyone, but is it not the case that the Health and Safety Executive have to see as material incidents that have occurred and analyse them for relevance, but they also have a duty to preview possible problems? So if they professionally identify a situation which they consider to be potentially unsafe, they have a duty to put out an improvement notice or effectively a condemnation notice.

1470

Regardless of the Law, surely they do in fact have a professional duty to advise and make appropriate decisions?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

1475 **Deputy Roffey:** I think that is pretty much what I said in the answer to the first question. They were brought in and it was referred to them because of an accident at the pool. But once they are brought in, they have a duty to look at the whole situation and to offer advice accordingly.

The Bailiff: Your fourth and final question then to the President, please, Deputy Dyke.

1480

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

Question 4. In view of the controversy and public disquiet arising from the decision by the Health and Safety Executive. Will ESS reconsider its decision to sub-delegate its powers not to confirm such decisions and to execute this power at the Committee level to ensure proper accountability and proportionality?

1485

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply, please.

Deputy Roffey: Yes, sir.

1490

I would think the new Committee would almost certainly review at the start of next term which of its powers it wishes to continue to delegate to officials, just as the current Committee did at the start of this term. It is important to note that should the Committee cease to delegate its power to confirm directions contained in a prohibition notice, this would not apply to the serving of the prohibition notices themselves since those powers are clearly bestowed on health and safety inspectors under section 19(2) of the Health and Safety at Work (General) (Guernsey) Ordinance 1987.

1495

It is also important to stress that the role of the Committee in confirming directions in prohibition notices would not be a political one. Members would need to act in a quasi-judicial role.

1500

The Bailiff: Okay. Is there a supplementary?

Deputy Dyke: One supplementary.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke, leap to your feet and I will call you to ask a supplementary. Supplementary, Deputy Dyke.

1505

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

Well, in view of the questions that remain outstanding as to what exactly the problem is, would perhaps Deputy Roffey and his Committee go back to the Health and Safety Executive to discuss this and to check whether their direction should in fact stand so that the thing can be looked at between the two organisations?

1510

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

1515

Deputy Roffey: I am not sure that arises out of whether we should cease the delegation of powers. What I would say is that this incident with the diving board is really unusual, that 95%, 99% of the incidences that would be involved in prohibition notices would be to do with some practice in an industrial workplace. I think it might look very strange if the political members of the Board were to be becoming involved in those particular instances, just as it would be if HSC political members got involved with Environmental Health taking action regarding a restaurant kitchen or whatever.

1520

But yes, we have, of course, spoken to the Chief Officer of the Health and Safety Executive and we are encouraging a pragmatic approach. Our focus is really not on what happened in the past. We knew nothing about it until the emails started arriving. We are really focused on trying to work with other Committees to make sure this situation can be resolved to everybody's satisfaction.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Taylor.

Deputy Taylor: Thank you, sir.

I am wondering if Deputy Roffey might be able to consider or give a view of the Committee if they would have any concerns that should this role be fulfilled by politicians that decisions might be open to potential bias in favour of electioneering over genuine safety concerns.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: Not with my current Committee, but I take his point about others because you know – no, sorry, that was a flippant remark.

I do think, as I say, that the majority of situations where confirming a prohibition notice is concerned will be about industrial workplaces. I do question personally whether having political decisions concerning those would be appropriate. However, I am very soon to be yesterday's man and the next Committee will be able to take a view on whether or not they want to continue to delegate that authority or not.

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Decision to Cease Cheese Production

The Bailiff: So the next set of questions is going to be asked by Deputy Gollop to the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure. So your first question, please, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Thank you very much, sir, and to Environment & Infrastructure for replying.

My first question is, the States in February almost unanimously voted for increased support for the dairy farming community as we recognised the important contribution the Guernsey cow plays in our heritage, community, ecology and identity. But has the sudden decision by the Dairy to cease producing cheese been a setback to the strategy or was it pre-known at the time the policy letter was prepared and presented to us?

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

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

The decision to cease cheese production was made by the Guernsey Dairy due to operational and commercial reasons. While it was not pre-known, it has no bearing on the strategic direction and we have no reason to believe that this decision will impact the ability of the dairy industry to deliver the wider public benefits discussed in the Assembly in February.

The Bailiff: Supplementary is it, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: Yes.

While acknowledging it will not, hopefully, materially affect the benefit to the community in conserving the heritage breed and the countryside, have we not already potentially lost one of the public benefits, which was a prize-winning and popular local cheese industry?

1570

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I think I can only reiterate that it really does not have a bearing on the strategy. That is an operational consideration.

1575

The Bailiff: Your second question to the President, please, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Yes.

1580 Would the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure be actively supportive in encouraging local farmers, entrepreneurs and smallholders, Guernsey food producers, etc., to acquire cheese-making equipment to reinstate production of this tasty, niche and much loved product?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez to reply, please.

1585

Deputy de Sausmarez: The Committee *for* Economic Development is responsible for business development, but my Committee would certainly welcome new enterprises which support the dairy industry or, more widely, Guernsey's landscape and environment.

1590

The Bailiff: Is there a supplementary, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: Yes.

1595 I welcome the Deputy's response, but feel there is a policy lacuna gap between Economic Development, E&I and other Committees in supporting the local Guernsey food production industry. So can we not maybe in another term do more to encourage the cottage – or the cottage cheese – industries? (*Laughter*)

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

1600

Deputy de Sausmarez: Sir, I cannot speak for what future iterations of the Committee *for* Economic Development or the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure may seek to do, but certainly I would like to think that they will act in accordance with the principles that have been agreed through the recent decision on the dairy sector. I think we would all welcome any kind of reasonable and viable support for things that provide or enterprises that provide wider benefits.

STATES' TRADING SUPERVISORY BOARD

1605

Cheese Production

The Bailiff: Right. Your second set of questions, Deputy Gollop, are going to the President of the States' Trading Supervisory Board, similarly on a cheese theme. (*Laughter*) But your first question then, please, to the President.

1610

Deputy Gollop: Thank you very much.

1615 Will the STSB, the States' Trading Supervisory Board, endeavour to encourage the renewed production of the prize-winning Guernsey cheese range, including chili garlic, thyme and oregano, the brand flavours, as soon as operational space permits, given it has a special position in Island life?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply to the question, please.

1620 **Deputy Roffey:** No, I am afraid not. Stopping cheese production will provide space within the current dairy that is vitally needed to maintain more critical operations, namely the production of liquid milk. That is central to the whole function and purpose of the Guernsey Dairy and the continuation of local dairy farming.

1625 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Yes. I accept that there were perhaps sound operational reasons for the relocation at the moment, but I was given to understand the space was needed temporarily and maybe other space would be released. Is the Deputy saying that is unlikely to happen or very unlikely to happen?

1630 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I can only confirm that we have no plans to recommence making cheese.

1635 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Thank you, sir.

From memory – and I am happy to be disabused of this – back in 2018, 2019, former States' Members were taken for a tour of the Dairy. From memory, and that is never a good thing, I believe the production of cheese – sorry, it was more expensive to manufacture cheese than it was to actually sell it. So the price of production was higher per kilo than it was selling, so effectively the Dairy was making a loss. Is that correct? If it is correct, that is not necessarily a reason to stop it. Would he agree that the STSB should make every effort to try to ensure that dairy farmers or artisans are actually producing cheese, rather than just losing it completely from our shelf?

1645 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: The second part of that question will be covered by a question from Deputy Gollop later on, so rather than pre-empting and taking Deputy Gollop's thunder, I will answer it then.

1650 But the first part is absolutely correct. While cheese is a useful possible way of using up surplus liquid milk, the reality is that with the price that is being paid for Guernsey farmers for the raw product, which is milk, trying to compete against dairies that do nothing but produce cheese and paying a fraction for the actual cost of their raw product coming through the door has meant that cheese has over the years consistently been a loss-making product.

1655 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, sir.

1660 Sir, as the President mentioned that the main concern regarding the stopping of production was the availability of space in the Dairy, could a business case be put together to look at manufacturing on another site such as Brickfield House, for example, which STSB has previously advocated as a potential site for the Dairy, and splitting production across two sites in that way and whether that could be possible?

1665 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

1670 **Deputy Roffey:** No, I am afraid no such business case is practical. Indeed, in the answer to the next question I will make clear that even if the Dairy is relocated root and branch to Brickfield House, cheese making would not be a part of that because the space that would be demanded and the extra costs that would be involved is just no way justified by the returns on cheese.

The Bailiff: Your second question to the President, please, Deputy Gollop.

1675 **Deputy Gollop:** Thank you very much, and to the Committee for replying to my questions. Assuming the new dairy is still an active project, will the replacement dairy ideally take full advantage of cheese, yoghurt and other brands to maximise our cultural identity, international brand recognition and food self-sufficiency?

1680 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey to reply, please.

1685 **Deputy Roffey:** I shall start by saying it very much is an active project as far as the STSB is concerned. I can say that the outline business case for the replacement dairy has considered the optimum product range, and that may well include yoghurt but does not include cheese. To enable cheese production within such a new facility would require a large amount of additional space and, therefore, would add considerably to the capital cost. That is not considered a wise investment, particularly bearing in mind that cheese sales accounted for just 1.2% of the Guernsey Dairy's revenues during 2024.

1690 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

1695 **Deputy Gollop:** I have two supplementaries here. My first is, I am surprised that the new dairy plans in the latest iteration do not have any space for the cheese because they were priced at what, £19 million, £20 million and £35 million, even £40 million. Surely a micro dairy of that scale should have the opportunity to have a full range of products to really make the Guernsey dairy sector work for us. Why is it not included?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey, please.

1700 **Deputy Roffey:** Because it would then cost a lot more. Guernsey Dairy is really unusual in actually producing such a wide range of products. Most dairies in the UK will specialise in cheese manufacture, butter manufacture, liquid milk. It is really only when you have small-scale dairies serving a whole community that they attempt to have the product range that Guernsey Dairy does.

1705 At the risk of being regarded as booted out of the Island for disloyalty, while our Guernsey cheese is a very good cheddar and, as Deputy Gollop has said, has won awards, it does not have, I think, the head and shoulders above or the competition status that our milk, our cream and our butter enjoy. Therefore, we are going to focus on what we think really matters, and which also take up an awful lot less space.

1710 **The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

1715 **Deputy Gollop:** Guernsey ice-cream is produced on some farms as well as perhaps from the Dairy. Could consideration when the new dairy was being planned be given to outsourcing the cheese brand to another provider, hopefully on the Island or in the Bailiwick?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: I think Deputy Gollop is almost asking his third question as a supplementary to the second.

1720 We do not outsource the making of ice cream. We very much support artisan ice-cream makers
as a supplement to the ice-cream manufacturing we do ourselves. We have always when they have
been around – for instance, was it Fort Grey, I think, very much supported artisan cheese makers as
well, and we will continue to do so. But that is not the same as outsourcing the manufacture of
1725 Guernsey cheese. That is supporting artisan undertakings and it is something that we absolutely
pledge to continue doing.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Oliver.

Deputy Oliver: Thank you.

1730 Going back to your original question, the original answer saying that there would not be enough
room or it would cost a lot more money, how much more room is required to do the production of
cheese? Because I would not have thought it would have been that much.

The Bailiff: That is really a supplementary to the answer to the first question, but I will permit it,
1735 so Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: Deputy Oliver is just wrong. It is a lot of extra money. I think I would invite her
in to speak to the Dairy team, who can explain just why such a lot of space is needed for cheese
production.

1740 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Blin, supplementary.

Deputy Blin: Continuing on the same vein, surely we are going to be looking for £36 million,
£37 million for a dairy. Surely we should be looking at maximising the potential of a dairy rather
1745 than cutting things now. I have always had the question that is it the Dairy or is it the cow. If it is
the Dairy and we are looking at the board, we should be including all of the products, whether it be
collagen or powdered milk, all the things there. So I feel it is very closed that we cut something
down but we are going to ask for more money. How could you clarify or explain that, please?

1750 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: Well, we have worked closely with expert consultants to look at the optimum
range that will be in and obviously the scale of building – constructing buildings for food production
standards is incredibly expensive. The bigger you make them and the more you produce, then the
1755 far more expensive it is. That extra cost in relation to facilitating cheese manufacture to allow a
loss-making product to be produced that produces 1.2% of the Dairy's revenue stream is simply
not justified.

But we do look to maximise. I have already said that yoghurt production may well be a possibility
in the new facility. Members may notice we have brought in buttermilk, we have brought in milk
1760 that is designed for people with allergies. There are all sorts of things that we are trying to maximise
the product range, but they have to have a reasonable business case. I am afraid that cheese
manufacture simply does not.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1765 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, has the Committee considered a business model where you
work with start-ups and third party providers to come and try and innovate using Guernsey milk for
the production of all sorts of products, where they take the risk of what happens with those
products? But they may need certain facilities or certain structure of operating with such providers
1770 to come up with those products. Is the consideration for the next dairy taking into account that
ability to innovate and work with third party providers?

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

1775 **Deputy Roffey:** We are always happy to look to work with anybody, but inside the present facility, which frankly is in a dire state, the main thing we need to do now is to replace our milk packaging and processing production line because it is absolutely on the edge. If that went down, all of the support that we agreed for farmers just a few weeks ago would be meaningless because we would be importing all our liquid milk and pouring our milk down the drain. So we absolutely
1780 have to move that project forward and we require the flexibility and space to actually do that. Please give us the credit for trying to run in really poor facilities as commercial an organisation as we possibly can.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

1785

The Bailiff: Your third and final question to the President please, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Is there an opportunity for the existing dairy production equipment to be sold on or donated for further use, preferably within the Island of Guernsey or Bailiwick?

1790

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey to reply, please.

Deputy Roffey: It feels like déjà vu all over again from Deputy Gollop's supplementary to the last question. But yes, the Dairy has always supported local artisan cheese makers in the past, and if there is an opportunity for the current equipment to be put to good use elsewhere, we would very much welcome that.

1795

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

1800

Deputy Gollop: Or blessed are the cheesemakers, as they say.

But no, my supplementary is, given the fact that some States' Members, although supportive of the Dairy, were concerned about the gradual reduction in the volume of milk sold for health or other reasons, is it not essential that even if cheese is only 1% or 2% that we try to maximise the use of our excellent milk product in order – whether it be in the Dairy or using artisans around the Island to ensure that there is a stability in the use of the milk rather than a decline in the demand for the product and, therefore, the cows that supply it?

1805

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

1810

Deputy Roffey: Yes, which is why we will, as a result of ceasing to make cheese, be able to increase the production of local butter, which at times has run short, both on local shelves and for the export market. Similarly, with cream and ice-cream.

COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Floral Guernsey Defunding

1815

The Bailiff: Right. No more supplementaries, so the final set of questions is going to be asked by Deputy St Pier to the President of the Committee for Economic Development. So your first question please, Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Sir, given the mandate of the Committee includes – sorry, this is in relation to Floral Guernsey, sir.

Given the mandate of the Committee includes the promotion and development of the horticultural industry, does the Committee support the decision of its delegate, the Tourism Management Board, to defund Floral Guernsey?

The Bailiff: The President, Deputy Inder, to reply, please.

Deputy Inder: Thank you for the question.

Yes, the Committee supports the Tourism Management Board's decision making in distributing the events grant funding which is specifically for tourism and not related to horticulture.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Yes, sir, I have two supplementaries, if I may.

Sir, would the Committee regard the loss of Floral Guernsey as a loss to the Island generally and to the tourism sector, in particular?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder to reply.

Deputy Inder: The beautification of the Island and its splendour is important. It is the definition of loss. So if Deputy St Pier's question is are fewer flowers around the Island a loss to the Island and the beauty of the Island, the answer is yes.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary, Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Yes, sir.

What support, if any, is the Committee providing to promote and support the horticulture industry in accordance with its mandate?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: None that I am aware of, and I think really we need a broader conversation whether we have even got a horticultural industry in the way that we did have back when the mandate was created. So in short, sir, I think it is a Machinery of Government issue and I think the matter of horticulture is something of the past and that should be dealt with hopefully – well, unfortunately not this term but hopefully early on next term.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you, sir.

Can the President advise if he is aware of any funding that will be made available to Floral Guernsey instead of the funding ED was given originally to provide the grant to Floral Guernsey in the first place?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: If that is a loaded question, I genuinely do not know. But if he might ask a supplementary to remind me, then I am happy to take that.

I have been made aware, and no greater than that, that there has been some advice for them to look at one of the other charitable – I cannot remember the name of it now. (**A Member:** Social

1870 Investment Fund.) Yes, sorry, the Social Investment Fund. But I do not know how far they have gone, but I will take another supplementary.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, supplementary.

1875 **Deputy Gollop:** I had always considered elements of Floral Guernsey might be part of E&I, but given the interesting point Deputy St Pier's questions have elicited that the promotion for horticulture is part of the Economic Development mandate, is there not a case for the Committee to reconsider if there is any possibility of support for them, not under the tourist delegation but under the other delegation for supporting in its broadest sense the horticultural sector?

1880

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I am not entirely sure how to answer that question because I am not entirely – but if we want any indication of where the horticulture industry is going, one of the newest blocks was developed by the Langlois, and it was a pepper block down at Vazon some years ago. I think it is four or five acres. Under the new plans for the DPA that is identified for housing. Horticultural in Guernsey need to rethink and it is not as important as it was. That is a conversation we really do need to have with ourselves and it needs to be reduced somewhat out of the Economic Development mandate.

1890

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Taylor.

Deputy Taylor: Thank you, sir.

1895 It was really just to draw attention to the fact that the Guernsey clematis has won 34 gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show; 15 of those have been consecutive. I wonder if that might be something that the Committee, with its mandate to support horticulture, might be interested in announcing more widely.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

1900

Deputy Inder: There was a bit of a mumble at the end that I did not understand, but one very good and important supplier does not make an industry. The point I was making, we do not have the industry in the same way that we had some 32 years ago.

1905

The Bailiff: Your second question to the President, please, Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir.

1910 Given the available budget of the Tourism Management Board appears to be linked to increasing bed nights driven by events, Floral Guernsey was never going to be eligible to receive an allocation from the Tourism Management Board. So why did the Committee transfer responsibility for considering Floral Guernsey's budget request to the TMB?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder to reply, please.

1915

Deputy Inder: The Committee transferred responsibility for distributing the events and activities grant funding, which was already established as being specifically for tourism, to the TMB. This is the second year TMB has been responsible for the grants. In its first year, the TMB did support an application from Floral Guernsey, but it made clear to Floral Guernsey – and this is important – that it may not be able to do so in the future, depending on the competition from other applicants. They were strongly advised to seek alternative funding sources.

1920

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy St Pier.

1925 **Deputy St Pier:** Yes, sir. I have two supplementaries, sir. Given that the Tourism Management Board's events and grant funding was specifically established for tourism, why did the Committee transfer the allocated budget previously allocated to Floral Guernsey?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

1930 **Deputy Inder:** Sorry, would you mind, sir, could Deputy St Pier ask that question again?

The Bailiff: Could you ask the question again and we will start the clock again?

1935 **Deputy St Pier:** More slowly, sir.

Deputy Inder: Thank you.

1940 **Deputy St Pier:** Given the Tourism Management Board's events and grant funding was specifically established for tourism, why did the Committee transfer the allocated budget previously given to Floral Guernsey?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

1945 **Deputy Inder:** I need to dig into that, to be honest with you. I am not entirely sure that that actually happened. So there was some mention made when these questions came up last session that I think Deputy de Sausmarez said that the Floral Guernsey budget was transferred to Economic Development. I have no real memory of that in any way, shape or form, but what I will do – and I will commit to finding out. That is the best answer I can give at the moment.

1950 **The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Yes, thank you, sir.

1955 Given the Tourism Management Board's budget is clearly unsuited to support Floral Guernsey's work, does the President agree that perhaps the response now is that they should apply to the States' Commissioning Officer to seek a partnership agreement for their work if it supports States' objectives?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

1960 **Deputy Inder:** If it is unsuited, that is a statement of fact, but it is worth mentioning, Members, that the TMB have gone, I think, beyond what they would normally do, is just look at applications, make some decisions and make some awards. There have been a number of discussions with Floral Guernsey and I am just going to read, if he does not mind, a paragraph from Mrs Beacom, who is the Chair:

1965 Floral Guernsey applications for the year was in excess of half of our available budget and was not for an event. They were invited to resubmit, focusing their application in a different way, with perhaps a focus on open gardens or working with travel agents to put packages together whilst the Island looked its very best in a judging period. They declined to do so as they felt that the event organising was outside their remit.

1970 Now, I accept that but that is actually what happened. If it is not there to draw people to the Island, the best we can do is direct them elsewhere, which I believe Mrs Beacom did so to the SIF, which I think was the question Deputy Brouard asked her then.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

1975 Based on the answer that Floral Guernsey were advised to seek alternative funding sources and that ED support the TMB in their decision making, is it fair to take from that then that ED do not see the work that Floral Guernsey provide in our town as an important part of the tourist experience?

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

1980 **Deputy Inder:** No, I do not entirely agree with that because some of that is actually done by States Works and St Peter Port. What it does not do is meet the criteria as an event for attracting people to Guernsey. It is just as simple as that.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

1985 **Deputy Gollop:** At one time Floral Guernsey in a different era would have big events at Cambridge Park and have celebrities like Charlie Dimmock and I think Alan Titchmarsh. Would it not be the case that if Floral Guernsey decided to have what amounted to be a festival, with celebrities and talks, that might qualify in bringing visitors, guests and significant people to the Island and therefore match the criteria as laid down by the Tourism Management Board and that point could be put across to all parties?

1990

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

1995 **Deputy Inder:** Turning something into an event would put them in scope for support. That is not advice, but I will give fair warning; that is exactly what happened to the Battle of Flowers in Jersey and look what has happened. They spent hundreds of thousands of pounds trying to bring celebrities over to the Island and it is unsupported this year. We have just got to be careful.

2000 Floral Guernsey really have done a great job over the last 32 years. We have changed the criteria. It is not the like the old days of the Salon Culinaire, when I think, as Deputy Gollop said, Mrs Dimmock came over under Floral Guernsey. Budgets are a lot tighter and we have to work each one of them a lot harder to get tourists in the Island. I am afraid Floral Guernsey did not fall into that category.

2005 **The Bailiff:** While no one else is rising to ask any supplementary questions, that concludes Question Time.

Billet d'État VII

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Guernsey Financial Services Commission – Commissioners

Article 1.

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the policy letter dated 19th February 2025, of the Policy & Resources Committee, they are of the opinion:-

1. *To re-elect Mr Stuart King as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for a further three-year term with effect from 29th April 2025;*
2. *To extend Mr John Aspden's term of office as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission until 31st May 2027.*
3. *To extend Mr John Aspden's term of office as Chairman of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission until 31st May 2027.*

The Bailiff: Greffier.

The States' Greffier: Yes, sir.

Article 1. The Policy & Resources Committee. The Guernsey Financial Services Commission – Commissioners.

The Bailiff: I will invite the President, Deputy Trott, to open any debate.

Deputy Trott: Sir, thank you.

The States are asked to decide whether, after consideration, that we are of the opinion to re-elect Mr Stuart King as an ordinary member of the GFSC for a further three-year term with effect from 29th April this year; and to extend Mr John Aspden's term of office as an ordinary member of the GFSC until 31st May 2027.

Sir, we are also being asked to extend Mr Aspden's term of office as Chairman of the GFSC until 31st May 2027.

Now, both men have superb CVs and I believe I speak for all in this Assembly in thanking them for their continued service in these important roles.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: I do not see any Member rising to debate these appointments to the Guernsey Financial Services Commission. Is there any Member who wishes to vote differently in respect of the three Propositions, or can I put the three Propositions to you collectively? No. On that basis, I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on all three Propositions taken together.

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 34, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 4, Absent 2

POUR	CONTRE	NE VOTE PAS	DID NOT VOTE	ABSENT
Aldwell, Sue	None	None	De Lisle, David	Inder, Neil
Blin, Chris			Helyar, Mark	Mahoney, David
Brouard, Al			Le Tocq, Jonathan	
Burford, Yvonne			Parkinson, Charles	
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
De Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dudley-Owen, Andrea				
Dyke, John				
Fairclough, Simon				
Falla, Steve				
Ferbrache, Peter				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Haskins, Sam				
Hill, Edward				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Le Tissier, Chris				

Leadbeater, Marc
Matthews, Aidan
McKenna, Liam
Meerveld, Carl
Moakes, Nick
Murray, Bob
Oliver, Victoria
Prow, Robert
Queripel, Lester
Roffey, Peter
Snowdon, Alexander
Soulsby, Heidi
St Pier, Gavin
Taylor, Andrew
Trott, Lyndon
Vermeulen, Simon

2040 **The Bailiff:** We will now please close the voting, Greffier. So in respect of all three Propositions, there voted in favour 34 Members; no Member voted against; no Member abstained; 6 Members did not participate in that vote. Therefore, I will declare all three Propositions duly carried.

COMMITTEE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

2. Parole Review Committee: Appointment of Chairperson

Article 2.

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the policy letter entitled "Parole Review Committee: Appointment of Chairperson" dated 3rd March 2025, they are of the opinion:

1. To approve the appointment of Mrs Sandra Platts as Chairperson of the Parole Review Committee for a term of three years, with effect from 1st July 2025.

2045

The States' Greffier: Article 2. The Committee for Home Affairs. Parole Review Committee: Appointment of Chairperson.

2050 **The Bailiff:** I will invite the President, Deputy Prow, to say anything he wishes to in opening the debate.

Deputy Prow: Thank you, sir.

The purpose of this policy letter before us is to propose the appointment of Mrs Sandra Platts as the new Chairperson of the Parole Review Committee, the PRC.

2055 Sir, Mr Philip Taylor was appointed as a member of the PRC in October 2012. The States subsequently approved the appointment of Mr Taylor as Chairperson of the PRC in 2016. Mr Taylor has confirmed that he will not be seeking reappointment at the end of his current term. The Committee for Home Affairs would like to put on record its sincere appreciation to Mr Taylor for his outstanding contribution to the PRC and, indeed, to the wider Island community.

2060 Sir, the Committee proposes, on the recommendation of the PRC, that Mrs Sandra Platts is appointed as the next Chairperson for a term of three years. Mrs Platts was appointed as an ordinary member of the PRC by the Royal Court in 2014 and has been a committed and dedicated member throughout her tenure. Mrs Platts has been delegated the role of Chairperson on several occasions when Mr Taylor has been unavailable and has discharged the duties of the PRC in a professional manner.

2065

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Once again, I do not see any Member rising to speak about the proposed prospective appointment of Mrs Sandra Platts as the new Chairperson of the Parole Review Committee from the summer and, therefore, I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on the single Proposition.

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 36, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 3, Absent 1

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

The Bailiff: Will we now please close the voting, Greffier? In respect of that single Proposition, there voted in favour 36 Members; no Member voted against; no Member abstained; 4 Members did not participate in the vote. Therefore, I will declare the Proposition carried.

LEGISLATION LAID BEFORE THE STATES

**The Telecommunications (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2001 (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025;
The Medicines (Modification of Conditions of Corporate Pharmacy Business) (Bailiwick of
Guernsey) Regulations, 2024;
The Health Service (Pharmaceutical Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024;
The Capacity (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025**

The Bailiff: Can we next lay the legislation, please, Greffier?

2085 **The States' Greffier:** Yes, sir.

The following legislation is laid before the States: The Telecommunications (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2001 (Amendment) Ordinance 2025; The Medicines (Modification of Conditions of Corporate Pharmacy Business) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Regulations 2024; The Health Service (Pharmaceutical Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations 2024; and The Capacity (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Regulations 2025.

The Bailiff: Well, Members of the States, all of those matters are laid before this meeting. There have been no motions to annul any of them. There is still an opportunity next time if anyone wishes to do so.

2095 Next item, please, Greffier.

LEGISLATION FOR APPROVAL

THE STATES' ASSEMBLY & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

**3. The Reform (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law, 2025 –
Proposition Carried**

2100 **The States' Greffier:** Article 3. The States' Assembly & Constitution Committee. The Reform (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law 2025.

The Bailiff: I will invite the President of the Committee, Deputy Meerveld, to open the debate if he wishes to do so.

2105 **Deputy Meerveld:** Thank you, sir.

This simply brings into Law items that we have already agreed in the second policy letter presented by the SACC on the election and I encourage all Members to support it.

Thank you, sir.

2110 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: Thank you, sir.

I completely respect the fact that this legislation as drafted reflects the drafting instructions approved by this Assembly, but I simply cannot support this legislation. I do not believe it is correct that when a vacancy occurs that, unlike every other Parliament I can think of around the world, we will not try to actually fill that vacancy, not until actually three have accumulated.

Now, I understand the reason that it is seen as prohibitively expensive under the Island-wide voting system, but frankly if we have a voting system that does not allow us to follow good practice, which is filling vacancies when they occur, whether through resignation or illness or death or

2120 whatever, then I think we need to be looking at that voting system. Because allowing spaces in our Parliament to remain vacant, not just one but two to remain vacant, I think is a democratic deficit that I cannot countenance.

So I accept I am in a minority and that is why I lost when we debated this in principle in the policy letter, but I cannot support this legislation.

2125 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Deputy Roffey is not in a minority of one because I, for almost exactly the same reasons, will not support this either.

2130 We are seeing, unfortunately, a by-election in England because of the difficult situation an MP found himself in. They are representing a geographical area. We do not; we represent the whole Island. I am sure if we were still in districts like Vale or St Peter Port South or whatever, this Rule would not have come in because, of course, it would have been cheaper and easier and it might have led to one part of the Island being disproportionately not represented. But as we represent
2135 everybody and nobody, you could argue that three vacancies, you could have three parts of our Island, three marginalised communities, three types of Member who would leave a gap.

I would agree that we should not have this practice of effectively potentially being an Assembly of 35. Had we adopted – perhaps we should have done – Deputy Helyar’s and we kept to 28 we would have been down to 25 in that scenario. Jersey are spending all day discussing how many
2140 Members and whether to go to Island-wide or not. I think we are making a mistake with this. It is unfair. It is unconstitutional, really, and it makes a nonsense of us saying how many Members we need if we can leave at least two spaces empty for a long period of time, maybe all three if the third does not occur – if there is a third – before the general election.

Let me make one other point. Sometimes you get parliamentarians who resign on a point of principle and then wish to stand at a by-election. We saw David Davis do that, an MP for East
2145 Yorkshire. Yet he got re-elected. Under these Rules you would be rather a brave person to do that because you might never get the chance to stand again in the term because you need at least three vacancies.

So I think all kinds of reasons. I know it was a democratic decision but we should be, as
2150 Deputy Kazantseva-Miller often says, more innovative. Why not with a by-election of one or two or even three do we have to have a really expensive big book? In fact, I have questions about whether we need four pages but that is perhaps for another occasion. But we could have an electronic voting system for an individual by-election. I do not just mean manifestos electronically; the whole campaign could be done as an e-vote. You do not have to have an expensive 38 model for
2155 by-elections.

So I think we made the wrong move there and I hope a new SACC will reverse it maybe in the next term. I will not support it today.

The Bailiff: Deputy Haskins.

2160 **Deputy Haskins:** Thank you, sir.

While I am sympathetic to what has been said, and I am sure Members holding two spaces that could otherwise be held by, let us say, two Deputy Gollops, Members would think of a democratic deficit. Members, we have already voted on this. This is just the legislation. It was decided upon
2165 really because of the cost, which was considerable. So, Members, while sympathetic, I think we have other business to get on to.

Thank you.

A Member: Hear, hear.

2170 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Sir, one of the criticisms that is regularly levelled at this Assembly, or certainly has been over the years, is that we do not debate legislation as an Assembly to the extent that we should. We effectively delegate that to the Legislation Review Committee. So while I have some sympathy with what previous speakers have said, I slightly differ from the views expressed by Deputy Haskins. I think it is a healthy thing that there are challenges at this stage in the process. But he is right. We debated this at some extent previously. I confess personally to have been uneasy about it at the time. My view was that what price democracy, and I think whilst I completely get it for one, I find it a stretch personally, like Deputy Roffey, that we could operate – we need three before we (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) – yes.

So I remain uneasy about it, but one of the big arguments was the cost of putting on an election of this nature against the backdrop of us having very limited resources. This is limited resources despite being the jurisdiction that spends the least on public services and, while I am at it, has the least public sector workers as a ratio of our population. These are important messages I hope no one forgets.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, absolutely I agree with Deputy Trott. We are given the power to vote down these regulations if we do not think they are correct. To me, three vacancies is a stretch and I actually fully support Deputy Gollop's call for innovation. We do not have to do things in the same way that we have always done. We do not have to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on something that could be done differently. We have to find ways to do things in a more proportionate manner. So I think if we did have to have a by-election we should be finding means to do it in a proportionate manner.

So I will not be supporting these regulations. I think they go too far and I think the cost to democracy has to be weighed here.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, sir.

This seems to be escalating for something which is to be accepted or not, which we voted in before. I do agree with Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's point. You look at the plurality, what Taiwan and other countries have done to actually connect with the members, the citizens of a state, so there are different ways. But we cannot really be discussing this now. It is really a case of accepting or not accepting and we have taken this further. I am just nervous this is going to turn into a complex debate and something we should not be doing considering the other subjects we have.

The Bailiff: I will turn back to the President, Deputy Meerveld, to reply to that short debate.

Deputy Meerveld: Thank you, sir.

I fully understand some Deputies' unease at this, the idea of having three vacancies before an election is invoked, effectively, and the fact that there is an argument that there is a democratic deficit. But this is a practical and pragmatic solution. We do not want to tax our population, either financially or their patience, by running regular Island-wide voting exercises. This was all, of course, debated previously.

It is also worth noting that it was not long ago that we had amendments before this Assembly suggesting a reduction of the number of Members by 10. So I think there is certainly a view of Members that this Assembly can function with a few less Members present. I think, as Deputy Blin has said, we have debated this before. Rejection of this legislation would mean it would default back to an Island-wide voting exercise every time there is a single vacancy.

To Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's point, electronic voting is something we explored at the beginning of this term, whether we could have an electronic voting system for the public in elections. We were advised by people like Microsoft that they did not think the technology was there yet to do it securely. It certainly would be a large exercise to introduce and it is something I think we aspire to in the future and would definitely like to see, but we are not there yet.

But I would encourage Members: this is a practical, pragmatic approach to running elections in Guernsey and I would encourage Members to support it.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Well, Members of the States, it is now time to vote as to whether you are minded to approve the draft Projet de Loi entitled The Reform (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law 2025. I will invite the Greffier to open the voting, please.

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 22, Contre 10, Ne vote pas 5, Did not vote 2, Absent 1

POUR

Aldwell, Sue
Blin, Chris
Brouard, Al
Cameron, Andy
De Lisle, David
Dudley-Owen, Andrea
Dyke, John
Fairclough, Simon
Falla, Steve
Ferbrache, Peter
Gabriel, Adrian
Haskins, Sam
Le Tocq, Jonathan
Leadbeater, Marc
McKenna, Liam
Meerveld, Carl
Moakes, Nick
Murray, Bob
Parkinson, Charles
Prow, Robert
St Pier, Gavin
Vermeulen, Simon

CONTRE

Bury, Tina
Gollop, John
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha
Le Tissier, Chris
Matthews, Aidan
Oliver, Victoria
Queripel, Lester
Roffey, Peter
Soulsby, Heidi
Trott, Lyndon

NE VOTE PAS

Burford, Yvonne
De Sausmarez, Lindsay
Hill, Edward
Snowdon, Alexander
Taylor, Andrew

DID NOT VOTE

Helyar, Mark
Inder, Neil

ABSENT

Mahoney, David

The Bailiff: Will you now please close the voting, Greffier? So the voting was as follows: there voted in favour 22 Members; there voted against 10 Members; 5 Members abstained; and 3 Members did not participate in the vote. Therefore – you will correct me when I get this wrong, Mr Comptroller – I think that the numbers mean that there has not been a two thirds majority.

The Comptroller: Your maths is correct.

The Bailiff: So Article 3, paragraph 5, of the Reform Law is engaged, which means that I will not declare it carried until seven days hence. But there is an opportunity, if Members so wish, to make an application in writing to me, which means that it would then come back for a confirmatory vote, but that will not be until July. *(Laughter)* Is that right? Because there is no meeting three months after the current meeting until July. You are nodding sagely, Mr Comptroller, but I would just like confirmation from you that that is the effect on the numbers of the votes that were cast.

2255 **The Comptroller:** Sir, I agree with that analysis. As for the listing of when the matter might be dealt with next, I am sure you are absolutely right on that. I have not had an opportunity to check, but the principle that you have espoused is quite correct.

2260 **The Bailiff:** Well, it is as soon as may be after the expiration of three months from the date of the resolution. So if there were to be a request in the next week, then it will be put off for a subsequent vote, but that vote will be taken in July.

The Comptroller: Sir, that is right.

2265 **The Bailiff:** If there is no request, then the majority, although it has not reached the two-thirds majority that is required by the Reform Law, will simply bite and thereafter the Projet will be submitted in the usual way to His Majesty.

The Comptroller: Yes, sir.

2270 **Deputy Vermeulen:** Sir, could I request a recount? It is entirely possible that Members had lost their connection or some backbone or something and a recount could be considered.

2275 **The Bailiff:** Okay. I just have to remind myself, Deputy Vermeulen, as to whether you can now have a recount. I am not sure you can. I thought that was changed so that when the Rule changes were made – and again (*Laughter*) help me, Mr Comptroller. There used to be a Rule that said that you could have a recount, but I thought that had gone.

2280 **The Comptroller:** I am just looking at the Rule book now, if you could have a couple of minutes, please.

The Bailiff: Yes. Greffier, that was the position, was it not, that there used to be the ability to request a recount?

2285 **The States' Greffier:** There certainly did, sir, yes.

The Bailiff: But that has gone because the – what is it called, simultaneous electronic voting, is that right? The simultaneous electronic voting was regarded as being accurate and, therefore –

2290 **The States' Greffier:** Yes, that is correct.

The Bailiff: So on that basis I am not –

2295 **Deputy Taylor:** Sir, unless the Blue Book has not been updated, it is still written in the Blue Book on gov.gg as 26(b)(2).

The Bailiff: Which provision is it, Deputy Taylor?

2300 **Deputy Taylor:** Well, 26(b)(2), I think.

The Bailiff: Oh, yes. Is that right, Greffier, that Rule 26(b)(2) does allow Deputy Vermeulen to ask for there to be a –

2305 **The States' Greffier:** Yes.

The Bailiff: Oh, yes, it will only be once.

The States' Greffier: So the voting that is published online is that it is what it says, sir, I can confirm.

2310

The Bailiff: My printed version says that as well, now that I have had it – so on that basis we will have the vote again.

2315

A Member: Sir, it was my understanding that the Rules came into effect immediately, similar to the limit on time speaking, in which case the fact that the Blue Book has not been updated is neither here nor there.

2320

The Bailiff: Well, unless somebody can point me to the Resolutions, because I was not presiding at the time, in respect of that matter that says that that Rule has gone.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, I think most of us have a recall that the Rule was changed. I would maybe ask that there is a recess to examine the Proposition that was approved because I think we are concerned that the Blue Book has not been updated accordingly.

2325

The Bailiff: So that was the February meeting, was it not?

A Member: Sir, may I propose we break for lunch and then resolve this when we get back?

2330

The Bailiff: No, I want to start afresh with the next item after lunch rather than deal with this. Greffier, Mr Comptroller, let us just doublecheck what the resolutions were.

Deputy Brouard: Sir?

2335

The Bailiff: Yes, Deputy Brouard?

Deputy Brouard: Would it be possible to suspend the Rules, take the vote again and the sort out the paperwork afterwards? *(Laughter)*

2340

A Member: Sir, if it is any assistance, it is P.2024/107, Proposition 2 would have been what we were voting on. But I have not got as far as looking up the voting record. But according to my good friend, Deputy Haskins, the vote there was contre 21 votes, pour 17, so it looks like the Rule is still valid.

2345

The Bailiff: Yes, I think that is probably right.

A Member: If the role of the Greffier is still available I might apply for it, Sir.

2350

The Bailiff: I am reasonably confident, he says, that what is online is accurate. I am reasonably confident because after the Rules of Procedure debate I went through to see what had changed, and the online version and my paper version I think is accurate. So on that basis I am going to allow Deputy Vermeulen to have a second division. I am going to make it perfectly clear that I am not going to relevé Deputy Mahoney. So he cannot vote on this vote because he was not here for the original vote and I think that is only right and proper. *(Laughter)* So, Greffier, can we get the vote up again?

2355

Deputy Oliver: Sir, how many votes does it actually need to actually pass?

The Bailiff: It is two thirds, Deputy Oliver, of the number of people who are voting. I will invite the Greffier to reopen the voting for those who are eligible to vote a second time.

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 22, Contre 13, Ne vote pas 3, Did not vote 1, Absent 1

POUR	CONTRE	NE VOTE PAS	DID NOT VOTE	ABSENT
Aldwell, Sue	Brouard, Al	Hill, Edward	Helyar, Mark	Mahoney, David
Blin, Chris	Burford, Yvonne	Snowdon, Alexander		
Cameron, Andy	Bury, Tina	Taylor, Andrew		
De Lisle, David	De Sausmarez, Lindsay			
Dudley-Owen, Andrea	Gollop, John			
Dyke, John	Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha			
Fairclough, Simon	Le Tissier, Chris			
Falla, Steve	Matthews, Aidan			
Ferbrache, Peter	Oliver, Victoria			
Gabriel, Adrian	Queripel, Lester			
Haskins, Sam	Roffey, Peter			
Inder, Neil	Soulsby, Heidi			
Le Tocq, Jonathan	Trott, Lyndon			
Leadbeater, Marc				
McKenna, Liam				
Meerveld, Carl				
Moakes, Nick				
Murray, Bob				
Parkinson, Charles				
Prow, Robert				
St Pier, Gavin				
Vermeulen, Simon				

The Bailiff: Can we now please close the voting, Greffier? So on this occasion (*Laughter*) there have voted in favour, 22 Members, there voted against 13 Members, 3 Members abstained, 2 Members did not participate in that vote, and so everything I said before still applies (*Laughter*) which is that it is carried but it is not carried by the requisite majority under Article 3, paragraph 5 of the Reform Law and, therefore, it will only be effective if there is no request for it to return to the States in the next seven days. At the end of that seven days if there were no request then it would become effective and the process could follow. But for the time being it is carried but not carried by the requisite majority.

We will now break for lunch. There will be, I think, a copy of an amendment to the next matter, which is amendment number 6 that is going to be circulated to you. So if you want to wait for a copy of that before you leave for lunch, because it is quite long although it does not change anything particularly (*Laughter*) then you can wait and get a copy of that before you leave. But we will now adjourn.

A Member: Can I ask, whether it passes and if it passes how that would work for the proposers of the amendments that have been sucked up into it?

The Bailiff: Well, this is an amendment by the Committee, President and Vice-President. It will operate in the ordinary way as each amendment does, but I will take it first. If it were to be successful and replace the Proposition with a suite of Propositions, then it would still potentially be open to those who have got amendments in play already, so amendments 1 to 5 to resubmit those amendments to target them as they saw fit thereafter. But the amendments are incorporated into the Committee's amendment but they are ordered in a particular way, and that will become clear to Members when they see it. I do not think I can really pre-empt anything further than that, but that is the position.

Would you like to be relevé, Deputy Mahoney?

Deputy Mahoney: Yes, please, Sir.

2395 **The Bailiff:** We will relevé you, so we have got a full Chamber now, and we will adjourn until 2.30 p.m.

*The Assembly adjourned at 12.35 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 2.30 p.m.*

COMMITTEE FOR SPORT AND CULTURE

4. Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College & The Ladies' College: Future Funding Arrangements – Debate commenced

Article 4.

The States are asked to decide –

Whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter entitled 'Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College: Future Funding Arrangements' including the related letter of representation (Appendix 1) they are of the opinion:-

1. To agree the following in its entirety:

to reduce the financial support paid by the States of Guernsey to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") over the academic years 2026/2027 to 2030/2031 inclusive, adjusted annually by RPIX (as illustrated in Figure 28 in section 17 of the Policy Letter) such that no financial support shall be payable to the Colleges from the start of the 2031/2032 academic year onwards; and

that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each academic year based on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter); and

to reinvest in the fully States-maintained education system a proportion of the resultant revenue savings as set out in figure 30 in section 17 of the Policy Letter, with the remaining revenue savings contributing to Reducing the Cost of Public Services, in accordance with Resolution 28 of the States of Deliberation in respect of the States of Guernsey Annual Budget for 20251.

Or, only if proposition 1 is not agreed,

2. To agree the following in its entirety:

to maintain the financial support paid by the States of Guernsey to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") at the level in place for the 2025/2026 academic year for a further inclusive), adjusted annually by RPIX (as illustrated in Figure 31 in section 17 of the Policy Letter); and

that, conditional on a College continuing to meet, in all material respects, its agreed metrics as set out in the funding agreement for the academic years 2026/2027 to 2032/2033 inclusive, the States of Guernsey shall continue to pay financial support to that College for a further seven academic years (i.e. from 2033/2034 to 2039/2040 inclusive); and

that the financial support is paid to the Colleges for each of the seven academic years from 2033/2034 to 2039/2040 inclusive at the level in place for the 2032/2033 academic year, adjusted annually by RPIX (as illustrated in Figure 32 in section 17 of the Policy Letter); and

that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each such academic year based either on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3) or on such basis as is otherwise unanimously agreed by the

Colleges and reported in advance of the payment period to the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, for the purpose of delivering education for students in Years 7 to 13; and that a new agreement between the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and such Colleges (for the seven academic years from 2033/2034 to 2039/2040 inclusive) is entered into by no later than 31st August 2031, on materially the same terms as the funding agreement for the academic years 2026/2027 to 2032/2033 inclusive.

3. To agree that the resultant States' financial support for the Colleges is implemented by an agreement between the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and each of the Colleges to reflect the above decisions, ensuring such agreement broadly reflects the terms of the current agreement with regard to the Conditions of Grant Aid, Health & Safety Compliance and Quality Assurance, Safeguarding Children, Key Performance Indicators and Performance Review, and Maintaining Provision to the Colleges (see Appendix 2 of the Policy Letter) and, in relation to the agreement commencing in the academic year 2026/2027, to execute that agreement with each College by no later than 30 November 2025.

4. To direct the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture to develop and agree in consultation with the Colleges, and in consultation with other stakeholders as necessary, a partnership arrangement with the Colleges for the benefit of the island's children of secondary school age, to take effect as soon as is practicable commences in the academic year 2026/2027 arising from proposition 3 above. (noting, for the avoidance of doubt, that the partnership arrangement shall not include any obligation requiring the States to provide financial support to the Colleges, other than that arising from the above propositions).

2400 **The States' Greffier:** Article 4. The Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and the Ladies' College: Future Funding Arrangements.

The Bailiff: I will invite the President of the Committee, Deputy Dudley-Owen, to open the debate please.

2405

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Thank you, sir.

Sir, I am not shy of bringing challenging topics to this debating Chamber, and this is one such topic which has been a regular and challenging one, featuring on various agendas of the States for deliberation over many decades. *Plus s'étendré*, some might say.

2410

Debates on grant funding for Guernsey's three private colleges have been passionate affairs over the years, and this is because the colleges are undoubtedly a valued part of our education system and a part of Guernsey's history, with many Islanders feeling a strong attachment to them. The relationship with the Guernsey Government goes back a long way, well preceding the advent of our current system of Government. This policy of support was not borne from this, or previous Education Committees and – notwithstanding the outcomes of any negotiations – prevailing financial circumstances have required the Committee to bring back savings.

2415

Some Members called for complete funding removal, some to keep the funding, and it is, therefore, no surprise that the Committee felt it necessary for the matter to come back to this Assembly.

2420

As a parent with school-aged children I, like many others, have a strong personal connection with both the colleges and the state sector. I am a former Blanchelande girl and have children currently in both sectors. It is clear to me and my Committee colleagues that we need a wide and diverse range of schools in our education system, and that difference of education provision is attractive to many parents who seek choice.

2425

I hope that our debate today will reveal a path through to a consensus position and that it will be conducted in a constructive and parliamentary manner, working together and leaving emotions and entrenched views at the door. In the words of my good friend, Deputy Ferbrache, this debate should be conducted more like Panorama than Sweet Caroline.

2430 Previous debates show us that our funding decisions must be based on facts and not on our strong, personal or emotional connections, nor rhetoric, and definitely not misinformation. Because at the heart of this debate are our Island's children and each and every one of them, no matter where they are schooled. Knowing that many people's views on this topic are set, when the Committee started to review the grant as requested by the States, it was determined to do so in a fact led, objective way. It has delivered fact led and objectively considered policy proposals for the States to deliberate.

2435 Representatives from the Committee worked with counterparts from the colleges for months to negotiate a way forward that would take account of all the Island's students, no matter their background or need. Also mindful of the circumstances of the colleges, the declining school age population, and our straightened public finances.

2440 The terms of the negotiation were limited by the existing agreement and required by the then P&R to include consideration of the removal of the entire grant. It was on this basis the Committee sought options to reduce the grant and, therefore, it is regretful that a middle ground could not be found. In the circumstances the Committee agreed to put both Propositions before the States.

2445 In summary, there are a number of proposals for the States to consider. Regarding the current grant aid agreement which expires in August 2026, the Committee's recommendation is to taper, with inflationary increases, the grant which by then will be circa £2.8 million a year, to zero over a five-year period ending 2031. The alternative recommendation from the colleges is to increase the funding annually by inflation over a 14-year period, which becomes circa £4 million over that time, ending 2040.

2450 Proposition 3 deals with the agreement to support and Proposition 4 is a very deliberately strategic and high level proposal for the Committee and the colleges to progress partnership conversations.

2455 There are undoubtedly points of disagreement but there are also points of agreement between the Committee and the colleges and I will deal with the latter first. The colleges' assertion that the independent sector is a valued part of the education ecosystem is a point that I think everyone would agree with. It also undoubtedly contributes to the wider economy and success of the Island as part of the whole education system.

2460 A strong, high quality education offering right across the board in Guernsey is a must for the Island to remain resilient and attractive. It is clear, however, that the grant as currently scribed, supporting an independent sector that in its own words is broadly selective, is an imperfect mechanism, especially as the States agreed a now longstanding and fully implemented policy to remove selection via the 11-plus it can also be perceived as unfair.

2465 I received an email this week and the writer has kindly given me his permission to share his comments anonymously, which I think illustrate the point very well. A former college student himself, an OE, he says:

This policy sends the message that the state system is inherently second rate and that its best students should be removed rather than nurtured within it. When I was at Elizabeth College students who were underachieving or disruptive were simply asked to leave. Private colleges had the advantage of selecting their students and removing those who do not meet expectations, which naturally inflates their academic performance metrics. Meanwhile, state schools must accommodate all students, including those who have been excluded from the private sector. This practice skews overall performance comparisons and it seems counterproductive for the States to further entrench this imbalance by funnelling its highest achievers into private education.

Not mine, but sobering words, nonetheless.

2470 It is also imperfect as it does not deal with the matter of the viability of the sector and also requires the colleges to come back to the States on a reasonably regular basis in order to renew their agreement, hence our agreement of getting some longer-term certainty around the grant, either that it stops, per Proposition 1, or alternatively per Proposition 2 that it extends past a five-year term.

So it really boils down to a series of questions. We know that the colleges are beloved institutions but, notwithstanding their history, are we going to continue to bake into our education system Government funding of private, broadly selective schools? Are we truly able to provide equitable opportunities for all children, especially when the state system catering for the full range of needs and majority of learners, must make difficult savings?

The Committee intends to reinvest some of the colleges' grant funding to benefit a greater number of students. The colleges, via entrance processes to their secondary schools, favour students who are already higher academic achievers. Would the colleges face insurmountable financial pressure if the grant was gradually withdrawn? How does that compare with the benefits that reinvesting a significant proportion of the grant would bring to States' maintained schools, and the saving it would return to be reinvested in other essential services, essentially the wider community.

Facts are helpful when considering the answers to these questions. For example, it is factually incorrect to say that the colleges education 30% of students with 3% of the Education budget. Members will know, you cannot just take a budget headline and do some quick maths. Recalling the ESC budget that Members approved in November 2024, the total budget including sports and culture was £92 million. Of that, the total secondary schools budget was £21 million. It is the figure of £21 million that is the correct one when seeking to compare the percentage of the budget spent on those 30% of secondary phase students, and that works as 13%, not 3%.

A detailed account of the financial information has been provided in the policy letter and Members can choose whether to accept the data or not, but it has been provided by Policy & Resources professional staff. These are highly complex calculations built with care and much consideration.

It is important to of course correct some of the narrative that runs during these types of debates and Members will recall the tax debates and how much time was spent on doing just that. Sir, through you, Members may hear that the figures are not accurate. These are the same figures used across the States of Guernsey for population management, for tax projections, for the housing indicator. These form the bedrock of our calculations and policy decisions in this Assembly and all Government work.

Members may hear confusion about increases versus decreases in grant aid. To clarify, in 2019 the colleges were able to support themselves with a general grant from the States of £637 per student. Today that same grant is over £2,000 per student, an increase of well over 200%. Inflation over the same period was 25%. Over the same period the special placeholders have been replaced by fee-paying students so there has been no overall loss of income for the colleges. It is just the source of the funding that has changed as a result of policy decisions taken by this Assembly.

Members may also hear comparisons with Jersey where in terms of the education system it is quite different from what we do here and it runs a completely different operating model for its two colleges. Those schools are States of Jersey managed with the headteachers answerable to the Education Department, running the States of Jersey approved curriculum and governing board with no executive powers. It is also interesting to note that the Jersey colleges are subject to the same external inspection framework as the fully-funded schools, so parents in that Island can make objective quality comparisons when making choices over where they might prefer to have their children educated.

Sir, through you, Members might hear it said that the SEND percentage in the colleges is much higher than might be expected. That statement of how children who are SEND are placed upon the register suggests that there is a correlation of students being on the SEND register and also being granted different exam access arrangements. But these are two different things entirely. Placement upon the SEND register is made through the use of the SEND, or ALN, additional learning needs, code of practice, and the nationally recognised, graduated response. Gaining different access arrangements through the Joint Council for Qualifications, the JCQ, is made through a separate assessment process.

A student on the SEND register does not automatically mean that they need or should have different access arrangements for exams and, likewise, applications for different access

arrangements for exams can be made for children not on the SEND register. Members may also hear that the absence of analysis on the economic contribution of the colleges is a significant omission. Seeking to extend the terms of the working group we inherited from the last States would put undue strain on already tight resources and would have undoubtedly created delay; a delay which the colleges could not bear. The approach taken here has followed a pattern set in train by previous negotiations.

So what do we know? The colleges have more money per pupil before they receive the States grant than our States maintained secondary schools. The grant further increases the investment per child in the colleges, which is not available then to those in state schools. It is true to say those who choose to educate their children in the colleges save the States money but that choice is one I support them to have, just as some choose to save the States money by paying to access private healthcare. It is not true to say that the grant to the colleges saves the States money. The grant only saves the States money if withdrawing it means the number of children in the state schools will increase to the point that the cost of educating them is more than the cost of the grant. The States' data firmly and objectively shows this would not be the case.

The colleges have an admissions process that select more able students and it would be naïve to deny the evidence suggesting this widens the attainment gap, or to think that these children would be potentially far less well off in our state schools, given the rate at which our schools are demonstrably improving.

We are missing a trick and have done for years in not concentrating enough on the pipeline into the economy and community, and in fact need far more investment overall in education as a whole. Research shows that additional education funding has the biggest positive impact for children facing social deprivation, but those who are academically gifted should not be overlooked either. With savings from gradually reducing the grant funding we are confident money can be redirected to where it is needed most for those children and that the Island's economy will benefit in the long run.

In the whole scheme of things, less families are making significant sacrifices to send their children to the colleges and a fee increase from £15,000 to £17,000 might make this impossible for them. But consider that one of the colleges in recent times put up its fees by 14% in one year and appears not to have suffered as a consequence, which suggest for many parents any price sensitivity is not acute and a decision to taper the grant over a number of years, as proposed, enables any adverse impact of its withdrawal to be managed.

We need to ask why those families are choosing to make these sacrifices in the first place, and what happens to others in their position who cannot afford the circa £15,000 per annum. In many cases they do not feel that the state system can provide what they want for their child. Should the priority for investment be in ensuring slightly more families are able to afford the colleges' fees, while making significant sacrifices, or should it be in investing more resources in the state system so that our children and young people can receive an excellent education that their parents can feel confident in, without the need to make sacrifices in other areas of their lives.

Making savings is painful and reinvestment in education is vital. We know it would have far-reaching impacts. It could enhance access to preschool education, support learners with additional needs, give more pastoral support and early intervention for children and young people struggling with life beyond school, and increase resources for high achieving students. It can seed fund consistent childcare options that wraparound before and after the primary school day, supporting working parents and our most vulnerable children, who sometimes very sadly arrive at school unable to concentrate because they are hungry. We have been inspired by a successful primary school subsidised hot and healthy lunches initiative in Jersey, saving parents time and expense while providing social and nutritional benefits.

Finally, the prize for me beyond the grant is in the partnership work. This type of collaboration is widespread and, in fact, the States sector already has achieved this through an existing and strengthened collaboration and partnership across all areas of education, including our state schools and settings. We partner with schools in other islands who share some of the challenges

we face, and with schools and settings on the mainland where best practice is shared in both directions; all done without direct intervention. Instead, politically, we have set the high level strategic aims.

It is so important that partnership, in whatever context, is based upon the development of a culture of trust with professional challenge and support, and is seen working particularly well within our secondary school partnership, ably led by our Executive Principal. Witnessing the work that this group of schools and senior leaders achieve, it is clear why the grant-aided college leaders would like to work closely with their colleagues across the States' sector, not least within the secondary phase. Benefits that we have seen in the partnership within the States have resulted in the creation of new operating models, efficient and effective use of resources, shared support and expertise, and creating opportunities across all partnership schools.

There needs, however, to be a strategic and overarching framework that enables the school leaders and their governing boards to be free to find their most impactful collaborations, the ones that best suit their school, their needs and their values. Our job here is to agree to set the strategy; not to dictate the action. After all, we are a national Government, not the managing director.

Before I close, Sir, I must mention that the spectre of selection having been reintroduced by Deputy Dyke's amendment is no real surprise. We moved away from selection in 2017 and I have highlighted that there remains a conflict with the policy facing in two opposite directions on this matter. Deputy Dyke's amendment seeks to further entrench that conflict, rather than seeking to resolve it, via perhaps the complete removal of any selective admissions criteria across the board, which would surely be a far more equitable and inclusive way forwards.

The crux of the matter is, is it better to use States' funding to enable a few less well-off children to be selected to attend the grant-aided colleges, or to use that money to improve the quality of provision for the majority of the Island's children who attend the fully States' funded schools? This Island should care passionately about education.

The Bailiff: Point of clarification, Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: I am sorry to interrupt but my amendment does not necessarily raise the spectre of selection and, secondly, it does not increase cost to the States, as I will explain later. I just wanted to make that correction before it stuck, thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dudley-Owen.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Finally, the Island really needs to care passionately about education –

Deputy Le Tissier: Point of order, Sir.

The Bailiff: Point of order, Deputy Le Tissier.

Deputy Le Tissier: On page 65, 19.3(b) of the policy letter it says that the proposals 1, 3 and 4 have unanimous support of the Committee. But I understand that at least one of the Committee has an interest in having children at one or other of the colleges, so I do not know how that can be.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Tissier, which particularly Rule are you saying has been broken?

Deputy Le Tissier: There has been no declaration of the conflict of interest.

The Bailiff: That is not really a valid point of order. Deputy Dudley-Owen to continue.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Thank you, Sir.

2630 Hopefully everyone is listening in my final remarks when I say that this Island should care passionately about education. A strong education system across the board is key to our future success. I want the right level of investment for every single child and young person and I am sure Members do too. I commend this policy letter to the Assembly and look forward to Members contributing to what I hope will be an agreeable and constructive debate. Thank you.

2635 **The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, at the moment we have got six amendments. I am going to take Amendment 6, which was only submitted earlier today, but hopefully everyone has got a paper copy already, first on the basis that it is a Committee amendment. I will invite Deputy Dudley-Owen to move Amendment 6 if she wishes to do so.

[Amendment 6.](#)

To delete propositions 1 to 4 and substitute therefor:

"1. To agree the following in its entirety:

- to reduce the financial support paid by the States of Guernsey to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") over the academic years 2026/2027 to 2030/2031 inclusive, adjusted annually by RPIX (as illustrated in Figure 28 in section 17 of the Policy Letter) such that no financial support shall be payable to the Colleges from the start of the 2031/2032 academic year onwards; and*
- that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each academic year based on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter); and*
- to reinvest in the fully States-maintained education system a proportion of the resultant revenue savings as set out in figure 30 in section 17 of the Policy Letter, with the remaining revenue savings contributing to Reducing the Cost of Public Services, in accordance with Resolution 28 of the States of Deliberation in respect of the States of Guernsey Annual Budget for 2025*

Or, only if proposition 1 does not carry,

1 Billet d'État No XIX dated 23rd October 2024 - Resolutions made on 8th November 2024

2. To agree the following in its entirety:

- to reduce the financial support paid by the States of Guernsey to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") over the seven academic years from 2026/2027 to 2032/2033 inclusive by 4% annually, whilst adjusting for RPIX, as set out in the table in the explanatory note, such that in 2032/33 the total amount payable will be equivalent to 75.1% of the grant at the end of the current agreement in real terms; and*
- that the grant shall be based on the number of pupils multiplied by the per pupil funding figure in the table in the explanatory note, with a maximum funding equivalent in any given academic year of 1,256 pupils; and*
- that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each such academic year based either on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter) or on such basis as is otherwise unanimously agreed by the Colleges and reported in advance of the payment period to the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, for the purpose of delivering education for students in Years 7 to 13; and*
- to reinvest in the fully States-maintained education system one half of the resultant revenue savings subject to a case being made to the Policy & Resources Committee by the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, with the remaining revenue savings contributing to Reducing the Cost of Public Services, in accordance with Resolution 28 of the States of Deliberation in respect of the States of Guernsey Annual Budget for 2025 ; and*
- to direct the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture to return to the States with proposals for a new funding arrangement for the academic years 2033/34 onwards, within five years of the commencement of the arrangements described above. Such proposals should have particular regard to progress with the suggested partnership arrangement between the Committee for*

Education, Sport & Culture and the Colleges, so that the value of cooperation and joint working can be properly recognised and financially rewarded.

Or, only if proposition 2 does not carry,

2 Billet d'État No XIX dated 23rd October 2024 - Resolutions made on 8th November 2024

3. To agree the following in its entirety:

- to maintain financial support paid by the States of Guernsey to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") based on a per pupil model the value of which is set by the per pupil funding for the 2025/26 academic year, with the maximum financial support per year not exceeding the total payable for the 2025/26 academic year, with the subsidy each year to be calculated using the number of qualifying students (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter); and*
- that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each such academic year based on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter).*

Or, only if proposition 3 does not carry,

4. To agree the following in its entirety:

- that Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") are an integral, valued and valuable part of the educational ecosystem; and accordingly;*
- that the Colleges' stability is in the interests of the island, students and their families; and accordingly;*
- to enable the Colleges to effectively forward plan, any financial support by the States of Guernsey to the Colleges should be on a rolling basis until such time as reasonable notice is given to terminate such financial support; and*
- to maintain financial support to the Colleges based on a per pupil model the value of which is set by the per pupil funding for the 2025/26 academic year adjusted annually by RPIX, with the maximum financial support per year not exceeding the total payable for the 2025/26 academic year adjusted annually by RPIX, with the subsidy each year to be calculated using the number of qualifying students (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter) on the 31st October in the preceding academic year; and*
- that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each such academic year based either on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter) or on such basis as is otherwise unanimously agreed by the Colleges and reported in advance of the payment period to the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, for the purpose of delivering education for students in Years 7 to 13; and*
- that the Key Performance Indicators set out in the resultant agreement between the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and each of the Colleges should include assessments of students' attainment and progress; and*
- that the resultant financial support may only be reduced or withdrawn after approval by the States of Deliberation and with five years' notice to the Colleges.*

Or, only if proposition 4 does not carry,

5. To agree the following in its entirety:

- to maintain the financial support paid by the States of Guernsey to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") at the level in place for the 2025/2026 academic year for a further seven academic years (i.e. for the academic years 2026/2027 to 2032/2033 inclusive), adjusted annually by RPIX (as illustrated in Figure 31 in section 17 of the Policy Letter); and*
- that, conditional on a College continuing to meet, in all material respects, its agreed metrics as set out in the funding agreement for the academic years 2026/2027 to 2032/2033 inclusive, the States of Guernsey shall continue to pay financial support to that College for a further seven academic years (i.e. from 2033/2034 to 2039/2040 inclusive); and*

- that the financial support is paid to the Colleges for each of the seven academic years from 2033/2034 to 2039/2040 inclusive at the level in place for the 2032/2033 academic year, adjusted annually by RPIX (as illustrated in Figure 32 in section 17 of the Policy Letter); and
- that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each such academic year based either on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3) or on such basis as is otherwise unanimously agreed by the Colleges and reported in advance of the payment period to the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, for the purpose of delivering education for students in Years 7 to 13; and
- that a new agreement between the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and such Colleges (for the seven academic years from 2033/2034 to 2039/2040 inclusive) is entered into by no later than 31st August 2031, on materially the same terms as the funding agreement for the academic years 2026/2027 to 2032/2033 inclusive.

6. To agree that the resultant States' financial support for the Colleges is implemented by an agreement between the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and each of the Colleges to reflect the above decisions, ensuring such agreement broadly reflects the terms of the current agreement with regard to the Conditions of Grant Aid, Health & Safety Compliance and Quality Assurance, Safeguarding Children, Key Performance Indicators and Performance Review, and Maintaining Provision to the Colleges (see Appendix 2 of the Policy Letter) and, in relation to the agreement commencing in the academic year 2026/2027, to execute that agreement with each College by no later than 30 November 2025.

7. To direct the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture to develop and agree in consultation with the Colleges, and in consultation with other stakeholders as necessary, a partnership arrangement with the Colleges for the benefit of the island's children of secondary school age, to take effect as soon as is practicable and by no later than the date of the expiry of the funding agreement that commences in the academic year 2026/2027 arising from proposition 3 above. (noting, for the avoidance of doubt, that the partnership arrangement shall not include any obligation requiring the States to provide financial support to the Colleges, other than that arising from the above propositions). Or, only if proposition 7 does not carry,

8. To agree that both the educational provision for pupils on the island and the island's wider economy will benefit from, and be enhanced by, collaborative working between the States' sector and the independent sector; and that, in building collaborative relationships between the States' sector and each of Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College (the "Colleges"), there is the potential for additional opportunities and experiences to be developed that will improve the outcomes for all school age pupils on the island; and accordingly:

- to direct the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture (the "Committee") to: encourage and support each of the Executive Principal of the States' Secondary School Partnership and the Principal of a States' High School to work in partnership with the Principal of a College to enable partnership working to develop between a High School and a College (i.e., "partnered schools") at the Principal level, and at the governing board (or equivalent) level to support the establishment of the independent governance model for the States' secondary schools; and identify ways in which the partnered schools and the Sixth Form Centre may work together collaboratively to establish shared educational experiences and opportunities for the benefit of all secondary age children on the island; and
- to direct the Committee to engage with stakeholders in the States' education sector, the Colleges and others as necessary, to enable these groups to explore together potential opportunities to develop collaborative projects between the States' sector and the independent sector, with the aim of mutually beneficial outcomes for all school age pupils on the island; and
- to direct the Committee to include in its Education Strategy Annual Report (or other similar report) for the academic year 2025/2026 and then annually thereafter, a summary of the collaborative work and/or opportunities that have been completed, are being undertaken or are planned between the States' education sector and the Colleges.

9. To direct the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture to present to the States no later than the end of the academic year 2025/2026 for implementation in 2027/28, a series or range of options to introduce a bursary or open access programme to Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") in secondary education for students in Years 7 to 13, allocated between the Colleges and subject to agreement with each College in respect of the number of pupils and admissions policy applicable to the funded places. The range of options must include an option to provide financial assistance by way of a sliding scale of up to 100% of fees according to a means test based on family circumstances for at least 30 places per annum. The range of options presented shall allow for variations of the total number of places to be funded, covering a range of revenue costs and the degree to which each option seeks to open access to the Colleges up to pupils from all backgrounds."

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Deputy Dudley-Owen: Thank you, Sir, and hopefully everyone has had a copy of the amendment, which was circulated just as we broke for lunch recess, and will have had an opportunity to look through that.

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Members will note that although it is a long amendment, it is simple. It brings every single word of all the Propositions that are contained within the Committee's original Propositions, and in Amendments 1 to 5, and sets them out in a logical order. For those related to the value of the funding they are listed in a cascade, starting with the one closest to the Committee's Proposition 1, and ending with the colleges' preferred option, original Proposition 2.

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The amendments to do with the partnerships and bursaries have their Propositions slotted in where they most logically sit too, and nothing has been lost, nothing has been added. There is no magic nor mischief. Everyone still has a chance to vote on everything.

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In bringing this amendment the Committee is simply trying to apply the principles of good governance. It is trying to ensure that there is an open, fulsome and transparent debate, and one that is not overly protracted by repetition on amendments that have similar themes, which I hope will resonate with Members.

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I have spoken in advance with the proposers of the other amendments. This amendment also honours the Committee's commitment to the colleges that their preferred option will have its day, so to speak. Assuming this amendment succeeds and the ones it wraps up are not laid, the colleges' preferred option will survive into general debate, and I feel that we owe them that. It demonstrates the way that we have done and the way that we want to do business with them.

I will ask Members to vote for this amendment, Sir, and to allow us to move swiftly into general debate.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Haskins, do you formally second Amendment 6?

Deputy Haskins: Yes, Sir, I do.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much. Deputy Inder.

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Deputy Inder: Sir, only briefly, hopefully to speed this part up a little bit.

I can confirm that myself and Deputy Prow will be supporting Amendment 6 for the reasons outlined by the President. I wonder, Sir, if you might want to call the other proposers and seconders of the amendments to see if they may agree with that, to speed the debate up a little bit.

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The Bailiff: Well, nobody is standing at this point. Deputy Soulsby.

Deputy Soulsby: We are talking about the composite amendment, are we not, Sir?

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The Bailiff: We are talking about Amendment 6.

Deputy Soulsby: Good. I am happy to support the composite amendment. Just to make Members aware, there might be two additional amendments as a result because previously I had a couple of amendments that I would not have laid, it depended on how the amendments were passed. There will be two amendments against existing Proposition 1 and one against the amendment put by Deputy Inder. But because we cannot wait until that, they will have to be brought sooner.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, Sir.
I was just wondering how you might address Members addressing Rule 17(15) declaring a direct or special interest as there could be many Members. Is it your intention that they declare it as per the Rulebook, or you will be doing it *aux voix* as you have done before?
Thank you.

The Bailiff: Who is at school at the moment then, Deputy Gabriel? *(Laughter)*
Deputy De Sausmarez.

Deputy De Sausmarez: Thank you, Sir.
I can certainly see the merit of this composite amendment because I think it would save considerable time. I am grateful to Deputy Inder for clarifying his position, and Deputy Soulsby, but I am interested in understanding where other proposers of other amendments are on this.

Obviously I would have thought the main disbenefit of the composite amendment would be that proposers of amendments potentially lose a speech because if they were presenting their own amendment they would be able to open on it and then reply to debate, and it would have a specific and dedicated debate on that one issue. I do think there is an awful lot of merit, given the potential length of this debate, in consolidating that.

I do not think this is possible under the Rules but as there has been some discussion about rules already today, if there were concern from proposers of amendments I would be interested in understanding whether there was any potential flexibility to approach it a little bit more like a *requête* where proposers of amendments included in the composite amendment would be given a chance to speak both at the beginning and at the end of general debate.

Now, I appreciate there is not a Rule that can accommodate that but we do seem to be in the mood for flexing rules. So I just thought I would put that out there as a suggestion, if it were something that were proving to be a concern for proposers of individual amendments. I also appreciate that it does not necessarily address all the problems because some people may feel as though they want to speak specifically on one amendment – especially if they are involved in proposing one of those amendments – and they want to speak on another one, then even that does not necessarily solve the issue.

But I thought I would make that suggestion just to test the appetite of the Assembly and the Presiding Officer.

The Bailiff: Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, Sir.
I am the seconder of one of the amendments. I cannot support this composite amendment. I know it has been brought with the best of intentions but if it is a matter of simply trying to save time then I do not think there is any reason – we have certainly done it in the past – where the three amendments so concerned could be debated at the same time and then voted on separately.

But, in any case, I still think that these amendments should be taken separately and that there should be opportunities to debate them then individually and have the requisite start and finish speeches. But I would like to understand better from Deputy Soulsby, and I can give way to her,

whether she is saying – because I did not quite understand it – that if this amendment that we are currently debating passes, that will trigger her into bringing further amendments. I will give way to Deputy Soulsby.

Deputy Soulsby: That is correct. They are not major amendments but they are important ones.

Deputy Burford: But there are amendments. All right, so I will not be supporting this amendment.
Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: The seconder of my amendment and myself take slightly different positions on this. Deputy de Sausmarez is quite right, the main disadvantage of this amendment from ESC is you do not get to hear me speak twice. However, I think given the time pressures and the amount of work that we have got on, we are in danger of having three incredibly similar debates one after the other.

Therefore, on balance, I would quite like the various amendments to be articulated and ventilated separately but I think in the spirit of compromise I will be voting in favour of this amendment.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ferbrache.

Deputy Ferbrache: Sir, as seconder of the amendment being proposed by Deputy St Pier, and very much a seconder and a supporter of it, I am not in favour of this being dealt with in a composite manner. I think these are important amendments and should be dealt with separately. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

While on my feet, to take up Deputy Gabriel's point, I do have two grandchildren at Elizabeth College and I do pay their school fees, so I declare that as an interest.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Sir, as the seconder of the two amendments that Deputy Soulsby referred to earlier, I too agree with Deputy Ferbrache and that the composite amendment should not be supported.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, Sir.

I have rather changed my mind on this. I think that the idea was to try and simplify the whole thing but now Deputy Soulsby has said it will generate two more amendments to put her where she needs to be. I think we would be best just going back to doing it the normal way and not passing this particular amendment.

Thank you.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, Sir.

I concur with Deputy Ferbrache and Deputy Dyke. I think there might have been a case perhaps for combining the first three amendments, which are similar in nature. The other amendments are

2785 quite different and refer to different Propositions and I think it would make for quite a disjointed debate.

Certainly from my point of view I would have to give a speech in support of what had been a previous amendment that somebody else had proposed, and then tack on to the end of it a speech in support of the amendment that I am seconding. Of course proposers of amendments would not get the opportunity to sum up and respond to specific comments relating to their amendment. So for those reasons I will not be supporting this amendment.

Thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

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Deputy St Pier: Thank you, Sir.

I rise to my feet just to draw attention to another consequence of this composite amendment, again, understanding the logic for it. As I understand it, sir, it was your intention prior to this amendment being lodged to debate the amendments in the order in which they were lodged, in other words the St Pier/Ferbrache amendment would come first. The point I am seeking to make is that this will change the order in which they are voted upon, and that may change the ultimate outcome.

For example, for myself, while obviously supporting my own amendment, if it were to fail as Amendment 1 when it is debated, then actually the Roffey and/or the Inder amendments present quite nice backup alternatives. (*Laughter*) But obviously this way around the prospect of them trumping the amendment which Deputy Ferbrache and I are laying, actually makes those options quite unattractive in the voting order.

So what I am seeking to express, quite badly, is the composite amendment reverses the order in which the amendments would previously have been voted on. That is an issue which Members will wish to take into account, I would suggest, on whether they support this composite amendment or not.

A Member: Hear, hear.

2815 **The Bailiff:** I do not see any other Member rising at the moment to speak on Amendment 6 so I will turn back to Deputy Dudley-Owen to reply to that debate.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Thank you, Sir.

I thank Members who have expressed their support and I do understand those Members who are not wanting to support this particular amendment. I think that it is really important to dwell on, yes, this debate is important for the debate's sake to get a resolution and a particular position, but we are in among a States' meeting here and one of my concerns is if we become protracted. Obviously if this fails we would go well into tomorrow if it then went further than that with extra amendments coming.

2825 If we have a risk of pushing out beyond this particular week then that pushes us into a position of not getting a commitment before the Easter holidays. I think that given that we have discussed this matter in the President-to-President meeting about people's availability, I think this is just a high risk strategy. For the sake of good governance and for the sake of allowing all the amendments that are currently in play to be laid for all those options to be on the table in a transparent way, I think it is really helpful.

2830 It is a shame that Deputy Soulsby did not let me know that there were other amendments in play, I was not aware of those. I will give way to Deputy Soulsby.

Deputy Soulsby: I do appreciate Deputy Dudley-Owen giving way.

2835 Indeed, the first I knew about the composite amendment was when she phoned me at 9 p.m. last night, and of course I had not seen the composite amendment either. It was only after reading

it that I realised there would not be a chance of putting in amendments afterwards because it is just one amendment and we would have to go straight to voting on all the amendments at once.

So, yes, it is only just reading it and realising that that would be necessary, but it will not be necessary if we do not support this composite amendment; which I probably think I will not now.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Well, okay, thank you.

I am grateful for that explanation but, as we know, amendments can be laid during general debate and often are, so that allows the position to become clearer and for amendments put in place up to the vote.

So, yes, I would encourage Members to support this on the basis of good governance and expediency. I think that the debate has a real risk of becoming quite complicated otherwise with the way that certain of these amendments are scribed variously to insert, such as Deputy Inder's, and to delete and replace, such as Deputy St Pier's. I think that knowing how complicated sometimes these debates become with Members previously before saying that they are sure that other Members did not know what they were voting for, I would commend this particular amendment for the sake of clarity and transparency, which is of course one of the things that we aim for.

Thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff: Well, Members of the States, it is now time to vote on Amendment 6, proposed by Deputy Dudley-Owen, seconded by Deputy Haskins, the effect of which would be to replace all of the original Propositions with a new set of Propositions. I will invite the Greffier to open the voting please.

There was a recorded vote.

Amendment 6.

Not Carried – Pour 12, Contre 27, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 0, Absent 1

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

The Bailiff: Can we now please close the voting, Greffier. So in respect of Amendment 6, proposed by Deputy Dudley-Owen and seconded by Deputy Haskins, there voted in favour 12 Members, 27 Members voted against, no Member abstained, 1 Member was absent at the vote. Therefore, I will declare Amendment 6 lost.

So I am going to take Amendment 1 next, so if you wish to move that amendment, Deputy St Pier, now is the opportunity.

[Amendment 1.](#)

To delete propositions 1 and 2 and substitute therefor:

"1. To agree the following in its entirety:

- that Blanchelande College, Elizabeth College and The Ladies' College ("the Colleges") are an integral, valued and valuable part of the educational ecosystem; and accordingly;*
- that the Colleges' stability is in the interests of the island, students and their families; and accordingly;*
- to enable the Colleges to effectively forward plan, any financial support by the States of Guernsey to the Colleges should be on a rolling basis until such time as reasonable notice is given to terminate such financial support; and*
- to maintain financial support to the Colleges based on a per pupil model the value of which is set by the per pupil funding for the 2025/26 academic year adjusted annually by RPIX, with the maximum financial support per year not exceeding the total payable for the 2025/26 academic year adjusted annually by RPIX, with the subsidy each year to be calculated using the number of qualifying students (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter) on the 31st October in the preceding academic year; and*
- that the resultant financial support to the Colleges is distributed to the Colleges in each such academic year based either on the number of qualifying students in Years 7 to 13 in each College (as described in paragraph 17.3 of the Policy Letter) or on such basis as is otherwise unanimously agreed by the Colleges and reported in advance of the payment period to the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, for the purpose of delivering education for students in Years 7 to 13; and*
- that the Key Performance Indicators set out in the resultant agreement between the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and each of the Colleges should include assessments of students' attainment and progress; and*
- that the resultant financial support may only be reduced or withdrawn after approval by the States of Deliberation and with five years' notice to the Colleges."*

Deputy St Pier: Thank you very much, Sir; and I would like to thank Deputy Ferbrache for seconding this amendment.

I will simply seek in opening this debate to explain the amendment. I will not ask the States' Greffier to read it, which I am sure he will be grateful for. The first thing of course it does is to delete the existing Propositions 1 and 2 and to replace them with a new Proposition. The first point really is, I think it is important to acknowledge the role that the colleges play in our education system, hence the statement that they are an integral, valued and valuable part of the educational ecosystem. It is intended to be presented as a statement of fact; it is not an ideological statement (**A Member:** Hear, hear.), it is simply an acknowledgement that they do play a vital role in our system and obviously have done for a considerable period of time.

The second point is to acknowledge that the colleges' stability is in the interest of the Island (**A Member:** Hear, hear.), the students and of course their families. Accordingly, that in order to enable the colleges to effectively forward plan, that any support that is provided should be on a rolling basis. As is noted in the explanatory note, my involvement with this debate does go back indeed to the last term when Policy & Resources were directed by the States to become involved in the final stages of the contract after the last States debate.

At that stage, it was always felt important that there should be developed a rolling contract to ensure stability, and that we did not keep having these cliff edge debates once every seven years, which is not healthy for really any part of the system that is involved. So it is a matter of disappointment that that rolling contract never emerged from that last round.

2895 The fourth point is to maintain the financial support, but to do so on a per pupil basis. This really is a change from Proposition 2 which is, as currently drafted, to maintain the block grant at its 2025-26 adjusted for inflation. By making it per pupil it acknowledges the reality that the number of students in the system is very likely to fall. We know that from the number of those that are born and will, therefore, enter the system in due course.

2900 If we were to do nothing or if we were to adopt Proposition 2 in its entirety then the block grant would continue to go up with inflation and potentially as the number of students falls the overall level of public support and States support as a proportion of the total fee income for the colleges would rise. That feels an unfair risk to the taxpayers and that is what the fourth bullet point is seeking to address. It also puts a ceiling on the level of support at its 2025-26 level. Again, this acknowledges
2905 the other risk, that actually the colleges continue to exceed expectations and attract more students than they currently have and, in consequence of that, it is felt that it is not reasonable that the burden on the taxpayer should continue to increase, hence capping it. So it is effectively a ceiling or a cap acknowledging that particular issue, although that seems very unlikely, given potential student numbers.

2910 The fifth bullet point is really lifted directly from the original, which is to agree that the financial support should be distributed as agreed among the colleges based on the number of qualifying students that they each have, or on such other basis as they unanimously agree among each other. That seems to be language that they are comfortable with. There is no particular reason to change that.

2915 The next bullet point is to acknowledge the requirement for key performance indicators. There are some already in the existing agreement but the purpose of this is to include assessments of the students' attainment and progress. This really is to better enable future committees and future Assemblies to determine the value for money that is being received as a result of this grant. In other words, a raw comparison of exam performance, for example, between the colleges and the States
2920 sector is not a particular fair comparator because of the fact that there are different cohorts. But actually a measure of the value added by the colleges in their education can be more directly compared with the value added by the States' sector in the education they deliver.

So in due course we will be in a better position to determine in any future such debate actually whether there is value for money in continuing to provide States' support because we will have the
2925 data based on that student's attainment and progress information to allow that assessment to take place.

Finally, that any change in support, reduction or withdrawal, is a matter – just really to put it beyond doubt – that should be determined by this Assembly or a future Assembly and is not simply a matter for the Committee. That, in essence, is what is set out on the face of the amendment.

2930 The financial implications – as noted in the Rule 4(1)(d) information, and again this is on the advice of officers – will not exceed those pertaining to the original Proposition 2. I am also grateful to the advice received from the Greffier and the officers of the Committee who have helped draft this amendment.

2935 This is not an ideological amendment; it is a practical amendment that acknowledges our current education system. It acknowledges the role that the colleges do play in that, as I said at the outset. It recognises the importance of stability in the system, and I think we all have to acknowledge – as has been done several times in this Assembly during this term – that there has been significant instability in our education system probably for the best part of two decades for a whole variety of reasons. To toss another rock into that pond right now, irrespective of one's views of private
2940 education or otherwise, or the performance of the colleges or otherwise, is a risk which I would suggest few members of the community wish us to take, and I would suggest it is a risk that few Members of this Assembly should be willing to take. (A Member: Hear, hear.)

2945 To emphasise, the other value of this amendment is replacing the block grant with a fairer per
qualifying student grant, providing that managing that risk for the taxpayers – both on the upside
and indeed on the downside – in terms of student numbers. I think for this reason it is clearly not
what the colleges have asked for in Proposition 2, it is not the Committee's position in Proposition 1.
It does fall between those two positions. I think it is a fair and reasonable amendment and it has,
I hope, received significant support in and outside this Assembly and I do hope it now receives the
support of a significant majority of this Assembly in order that we can move on and provide the
2950 stability which is so required in the system.

Thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ferbrache, do you formally second?

2955 **Deputy Ferbrache:** I do.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much. Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, Sir.

2960 Very briefly. We have three amendments that are remarkably similar too that may be laid, and
one we are currently debating. My position is that they are sufficiently similar that I will support
them all if we get to the other two as well. I think perhaps we have probably got a lot more people
listening to this debate, and certainly in the public gallery, than we would ordinarily have and I just
wanted to kind of explain that perhaps a sort of logical way would be for each of the three
2965 amendments to have a number of votes on them and then one that gets the most to be declared
the winner. But clearly that is not how our system works and so that, therefore, leads one to have
to take a slightly different approach. My approach will be to vote for all of them and the music will
stop at whichever one gets a majority of votes.

In terms of this specific amendment, I do support it for a lot of the reasons that Deputy St Pier
2970 has said. I think it is garnering support in certain areas. I think it is better than the two Propositions
in the policy letter for very different reasons, because obviously they are at extremes of the debate.
I think it is also very helpful on this per pupil issue and that is something that is embedded in all
three possible alternatives, because it also moves away from this idea of part of the grant that was
a replacement for special placeholders, and part of it that was a block grant, into simply linking it
2975 to pupils.

So I will be supporting this. Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

2980 **Deputy Gollop:** Thank you.

I have actually got quite a lot of sympathy and time for the Education, Sport and Culture
Committee because they have been faced with a difficult inheritance, and I know at least some
Members of the Committee would probably not be in this place if we could go back 10 years. But
we are where we are.

2985 The landscape is constantly changing, not just on the Island but in the United Kingdom and
elsewhere. We might not even have an education department in America if things go on as they are
going. So we have to be pragmatic. I have spoken to a number of people connected with the
colleges.

2990 I have got something to declare; no children there or grandchildren, but I do go to their functions
and plays now and then and I am not just an old Elizabethan. One of the letter writers said, 'I bet
most of the States Members went to these schools', well I am an old-Elizabethan – as Deputy Trott
and other people know from the dinners – and I am also an old boy, or is it old girl, of Ladies
College, which it might seem a bit strange but I believe a former Bailiff went there. They took in

boys at one time. So I have got a lot of sympathy with them. It is good too that on the Island you can still connect with your former teachers and understand those issues.

My position when I looked at this is actually – and we may come onto this in general debate – a lot of the points Education, Sport and Culture have made about needing perhaps more funds; Deputy Dudley-Owen mentioned children going to school hungry, I know Mrs Michelle Le Clerc and others have done a lot for school breakfasts. I go to the States hungry sometimes but that is my own fault; but perhaps not this morning. But there is a lot of reason actually to put more resources into the secondary school system, and I would certainly like on occasion more special needs support, more people pupil to teacher ratios. I would support all of the initiatives that are suggested for funding in the future.

But that actually is more of a tax debate, it is more a resources debate, and if those services are really needed we should have had that debate earlier this term in the context of the Government Work Plan. The problem is this negotiation with the colleges has clearly been traumatic to a certain extent for both sides, and I do not know if either party would want to go straight back into another one, although I do think there are some interesting amendments here.

But my position is I would actually really be keenest on the second set of Propositions in the original policy letter that had the 14 years and so on, because that would give a degree of certainty without necessarily being overly generous but I think would be very much in the message of the hundreds of letters that we have had. I think the key argument, that the colleges are part of our ecosystem – which is actually a phrase I think Education have been using more and more this term – and they also are an essential part of our economy.

I know that we changed the system and what we really do need is for the state schools to work as best as they can and to offer choice. I am not sure they do but that is a different argument when they come up another time. But they certainly offer excellence, and I am not suggesting they do not. But I think we are in the danger of undermining excellent institutions and perhaps weakening our offer to incoming people and creating possibly more social division. Because, as I say, I would like to see more funding across the board and I certainly agree with Education, Sport and Culture when they talk about the need for partnership in the future.

But of the three amendments the one that struck me as probably the best of the three is the Deputy St Pier/Deputy Ferbrache amendment. I think it is closer to what people in the colleges want. I think it is a compromise because, as Deputy St Pier says, they do not want the colleges to be put in a situation where they are getting more and more money. I think it tries to encourage the colleges to be efficient. It gives this five-year buffer; not as good as a 14-year buffer but maybe one that is politically more manageable because we may have different thoughts about this in a term or two anyway.

I certainly agree that the colleges' stability, as I have said, is in the interests of the Island's students and their families, and although I am sure the education service could take on more pupils perhaps in a cost effective way, that could easily overburden the system if one of the schools discovered viability issues. So I think we should avoid that by being cautious and supporting this amendment. I think the rolling basis of five years is right. The financial support on a per pupil model rather than an overall sum, again, as I have said, motivates the colleges. Key performance indicators will enable us perhaps to not only make comparisons but define whether the colleges are providing the right services.

The colleges clearly believe they have something unique to offer. They do offer difference; one is an all-girls school, one is a mixed school with a religious foundation, another one is a historic foundation. I think not only do they offer difference but from what we have heard they do provide, in addition to what the States provide, excellent tuition in terms of extracurricular activities and special needs. So for all those reasons I think this amendment is better than perhaps the Deputy Inder amendment because the Deputy Inder amendment seems to come to a cliff edge and then stops, whereas, I think this has the facility of moving on more like the tides.

The Bailiff: Deputy Taylor.

Deputy Taylor: Thank you, Sir.

I think the biggest problem for me with this amendment is the delete Propositions 1 and 2. If it was a case of inserting it as a new Proposition I think I could have got behind this because it would not be my first option but it is better than Proposition 2, or more palatable to me. That is my starting point.

But a big concern – and I can understand why he has done it – is the final bullet point:

That the resultant financial support may only be reduced or withdrawn after approval by the States of Deliberation and with five years' notice to the Colleges.

That is a significant amount of notice. I understand to allow the students who are in the colleges currently with parents benefit from the grant, they may have made financial planning based on that grant being there and they have got to go through, I can see that. But five years; if this Assembly wanted to change the budget that it has given to Education and all of the remaining 70% of students in the Island, this Assembly could slash that budget quite quickly on a yearly basis. Now, I do not think they will, Sir, but it would be within the gift of the Assembly to do that.

But it would almost be sacrosanct; you could not affect the grant that is going to the colleges and that just does not sit quite right with me. It does raise a question – and I do not know if it really needs answering by Madam Procureur – whether the States are truly bound by that. Would this be classed as a contract that then if it was reneged on that the colleges would be liable to some kind of payment in lieu of this agreement being defaulted on?

It feels to me that this Assembly should have the power to withdraw this funding if it so decides. I do not know if that is going to be a dealbreaker. If that is something that Madam Procureur had a view on I would be interested to know. But otherwise it just seems that if a new Assembly comes in and the very first decision on day one is that they do not think that there is enough money in the pot to continue funding this grant, it would have to go through the entire States' term and through the election and another year after. That just seems an awful long time, but I do understand the reason it is put in there.

So I will not be supporting this amendment. If it had been laid as a potential insert as Proposition 2 I think I could have got behind it but I do have those concerns. Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Sir, only briefly, because actually Deputy St Pier has said a lot of things that I would have probably said about the stability of the colleges.

Let us all do a bit of a reality check here and it might save some time. What is clear is that the States will not rise on a Friday leaving the colleges defunded. That simply is not going to happen. It is fairly clear where most people are so it should save us some time.

Now, the amendment before us is largely all about a matter of quantum. The Roffey, St Pier and Inder amendment are all relatively similar so this is really going to be about choice. I think reflecting on what Deputy Trott said today in his update speech – and some of us already probably knew the state of affairs – regarding our public finances, some of this will be about returning savings. Even Deputy St Pier when we spoke on Amendment 6, I think deep down he really quite likes our amendment. If his loses I think he would probably head in our direction.

So, Members, we do not really need to dilly-dally around more than that. We know the States will not rise with defunded colleges. It is really a matter of the three that you support. It is quite clear that Proposition 1 from Education, Sport and Culture is not going to win and I doubt Proposition 2 would, which would have been the colleges. So, as usual, straight to the point, this is where we are, we have just got to get on and make a decision.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Aldwell.

Deputy Aldwell: Thank you, Sir.

3100 Just to say I am a fan of the colleges. My daughter went to Blanchelande, excellent school, and my sister is an old Ladies' College girl, so I do support the colleges. But I did want to actually put my point across. I am probably only going to speak once in this debate. I am probably not going to support this particular amendment but I am going to explain why.

3105 Really for me, we are gathered here today to discuss the college future funding primarily because it was agreed by the majority of this Assembly in 2017 to remove selection by ability and, in so doing, removing the Grammar School and the scholarships to the colleges. This Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture – not by choice, were under resolution from 2017 to come back to this Assembly as the grant agreement was due to end in 2026, which was a consequence of removing the 11-plus.

3110 The Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture was also under direction from this Assembly in November 2024, voted by 35 Deputies in Proposition 28, to implement changes needed to deliver savings in tier 1 of the Committee's grants. Sir, with the media coverage you would be forgiven for thinking that Education, Sport & Culture out of the blue decided over a lunchtime recess to remove the college funding by 2033. But nothing could be further from the truth. To be honest, if a college grant could have been pushed into next term I, for one, would have been more than happy to do so. But we were elected to make difficult decisions on the insistence of the colleges to get this resolved before Easter, which is why Education, Sport & Culture finds itself here today.

3120 It has also been said in the media that the Committee rejected working with the colleges, referring to a document on page 78 and 79 in the policy letter. The partnership document provided by the colleges suggested school buddying, teacher training and teacher CPT, Saturday classes, etc. This document had not been seen by my Committee; it certainly had not been seen by me until it was lodged with the policy letter. I understand that it was officially presented to P&R but not to Education, Sport & Culture. Of course I would very much like the States' Education to work with the colleges organically, but not prescribed, and involving Les Voies and Le Murier, which are all secondary provision.

3125 My recollections are that the negotiations ended in December. These are my recollections. There had been conversations held, the Committee putting the Proposition forward and the colleges put their Proposition forward, which was for a small reduction, very much on the same vein as Deputy Roffey and Deputy Burford's amendment, and we were asked to remove the cliff edge of 2026 grants ending. We asked if they could do better and the colleges came back with a Proposition of 14 years of funding. We removed the cliff edge from the grants ending in 2026.

3130 It was thought that as we were unable to come to an agreement, and that this was a decision made by a previous Assembly to remove selection, it should be the Assembly to decide on the college funding and we have welcomed amendments.

3135 We have probably received 200 emails from college parents, grants and staff explaining their reasons for not wanting the grants gradually removed, and I have replied to all, bar one or two which were so obnoxious that I could not bring myself to respond. In my reply, I felt I needed to explain that the Committee had been under resolution by the previous States and under direction to make savings by this States. I also wanted to make the point that I did not think either Proposition – Education, Sport & Culture or the colleges – would win, which is why we had several amendments which we have welcomed.

3140 There would need to be a compromise and, as I said to Deputy Dyke, having both been in long marriages we are both very familiar with having to make compromises. I also explained in my replies that every child had a different starting point and what is a low achievement for one child is a high achievement for another. That every child must be valued. We are very much an all-ability. We welcome absolutely everyone. No one is turned away. Which is quintessentially why we must invest in our States' education.

Sir, as you will know, the Committee has completed about 140 governing boards over the past few years and I have to say that it has been an absolute pleasure to work with the headteachers and staff in many of our settings. By the letters I have received over the past few days I can only assume that many have little understanding of the work and dedication we witness on a regular basis, and I feel I need to defend.

We witnessed staff coming out of COVID absolutely on their knees. They have been on the frontline during COVID. Exhausted. They have worked extremely hard building new curriculums to engage our young people and have all achieved good Ofsted reports. They are all working towards excellent. All our school leaders are incredibly proud of their school settings. Our students aspire to be the best they can be, encouraging team building and resilience. We invest in the Sports Commission, bringing wonderful opportunities for all our students in an array of sports. We see many wonderful achievements. We invest in the music service where we see 1,000 students every week dedicated to producing extraordinary choirs and orchestral arrangements.

We invest in the arts; our students are so creative and produce some magnificent pieces of art across our school settings. We invest in the Youth Commission; bringing young people together, completing Duke of Edinburgh, team building, and I remember very well the Youth Parliament, many of our young people debating here in the Assembly. One memory I have is very clear, of a young woman from Les Beaucamps who spoke at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Malta on International Women's Day representing Guernsey and she spoke so eloquently, she wowed everyone.

We invest in drama and we have seen very recently the very wonderful Bugsy Malone produced at the performing arts by our sixth form and we have many, many talented young people developed in our States' education. We offer a well-rounded education with many opportunities for young people with a broad curriculum and enrichments.

What we have also seen in our governing boards is the need to invest in our early years. Putting the building blocks early on, investing in students with additional needs, building their confidence to succeed, because we do not have an entrance criteria. We have to assure we meet every student's needs, challenging our high achievers and building our low achievers' capacity in knowledge and skills. We need to invest in our early years and lay down the firm foundations. In the Budget debate in November two amendments were brought to our Education budget for 2025; one to remove £1.6 million and another from Deputy Dyke and Vermeulen in the region of £4 million, or the equivalent of closing Les Beaucamps High School. This would have been devastating.

There has not been a budget when I have not made the point that we need to support –

Deputy Dyke: I do not recall bringing an amendment to cut the Education budget by £4 million.

A Member: It was all budgets.

Deputy Aldwell: It was all budgets.

Deputy Dyke: All right, thank you. *(Laughter)*

Deputy Aldwell: Does not even remember. Okay.

There has not been a budget when I have not made the point that we need to support and invest in our education system. I hope every Member in this Assembly values education and those candidates thinking of standing in June also understand the need to invest in our education. Investing in our young people is crucial.

Interestingly, on the majority of the 200-plus replies I also added a comment to my reply that I hope the next Assembly support the proposals for the GST package to support Health and Education, as we cannot do everything with only 20% Income Tax. Not a single reply disagreed with me and many agreed and said that they would not vote for someone who did not vote for the GST package.

3200 It is for the Members to decide how they would like to fund the colleges in the future. We have had several amendments and, of course, I support THE Committee's proposals, but also accept and appreciate that a compromise will probably need to be made. Looking at the amendments before us, and if a compromise needs to be made, I shall be supporting Deputy Roffey and Burford's amendment, which is very similar to the original proposals offered by the colleges, which gives both a reinvestment in States' education and makes savings, albeit it at a lesser amount. But it is in the spirit of the original Proposition.

3205 Education, Sport & Culture was directed in the 2017 Assembly to bring this back for 2026 after it has been removed selection, and in November 2024 this Assembly directed ESC to bring a savings via grants. We have done what we were asked. Members, we leave it in your hands.

Thank you, Sir.

3210

The Bailiff: Now, Deputy Dyke, when you want to make a point of correction you have to stand up and say, 'Point of correction' and wait to be invited to address the Assembly. I did not hear Deputy Aldwell indicate that she was giving way to you but you simply started speaking. Please do not do that again.

3215

Deputy Dyke: Apologies, Sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

3220 **Deputy Trott:** Thank you, Sir.

I only want to make a few comments but I want to pick up really from where Deputy Aldwell left off, and that is on this issue of compromise. I have said it before but I am going to say it again, I think this Assembly is at its best when it reaches a compromise. It is almost a case of if absolutely everybody leaves this Assembly dissatisfied that they have not got precisely what they want then somehow or other we have reached the political sweet spot in our system of Government. That is why I have every intention of supporting the St Pier/Ferbrache amendment. I think it represents the best compromise.

3225 We have all had an awful lot of correspondence and I would like to make an apology; I have not replied to the hundreds of emails of support for the independent schools that we have received, but in fairness I have not replied to the three or four that we have received in support of ESC's proposals either, so I have treated everyone equally. The reason for that is (*Laughter*) – what is funny? I have been extremely busy but I will hopefully get around to it, but the point is there has been overwhelming support.

3230 We have all had an awful lot of correspondence and I would like to make an apology; I have not replied to the hundreds of emails of support for the independent schools that we have received, but in fairness I have not replied to the three or four that we have received in support of ESC's proposals either, so I have treated everyone equally. The reason for that is (*Laughter*) – what is funny? I have been extremely busy but I will hopefully get around to it, but the point is there has been overwhelming support.

3235 Now, one piece of correspondence has mentioned that Elizabeth College in particular, a place that I am very proud to have gone to, even if my academic record left something to answer to, I would like to think I came good, but this piece of correspondence makes clear that Deputy Ferbrache is the archetypical old Elizabethan. From starting life with an outside toilet, he now lives in a mansion. I replied to this correspondent and said to them that there were in fact four others that had been to Elizabeth College that had attained a similar office within this Assembly

3240 than Deputy Ferbrache, but I have not heard back.

Am I mentioning that because I want to make a point about how the school has done well in producing its leaders? No, it is because it is very unusual for me to receive some correspondence speaking highly of Deputy Ferbrache, and I wanted to place it on record. I felt it was important. I am of course joking.

3245 Now, I have a daughter who is at the lower school of Blanchelande and she is being extremely well educated. Two of my other children were educated at Capelles, and they were educated as well. I have a daughter who passed the then selection of 11 and went to the Grammar School. She had an outstanding education. I fall into the category where it does not matter to me. I am very lucky, it does not matter whether the grant is removed or not, my daughter will progress into the upper

3250 school at Blanchelande. There are, however, an awful lot – you have read the correspondence, everyone – who have made it absolutely clear that for them it will be a tipping point.

Why does this tipping point matter? Well, I am going to make a point I have made repeatedly over 15 years and that is this. If you are a citizen of this Island on average median earnings, in other words you are right in the middle of our earnings table, you will pay about £6,000 a year income tax. It is not enough to educate a single child in the secondary system for one year. In fact it is just enough to educate a single child in the secondary state system for one and a half terms.

I think it is true to say that the Policy & Resources Committee have challenged extensively the figures that have been presented to them, and the lead officer has made clear that the numbers are not accurate. You need to take into calculation the cost of capital. We have invested extensively in our education system over the last 20 years or more. In fact I think I am right in saying I can think of four new schools during my time in this Assembly. If that is not substantial investment I do not know what is. But cost of capital matters and that is what takes the threshold even higher.

So the difference between giving a pupil a £2,000 or thereabouts grant and the £14,000 or thereabouts that it costs to educate a single child in the secondary system is enormous. So I think this Assembly will need to –

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Point of correction, Sir.

The Bailiff: A point of correction, Deputy Dudley-Owen.

3270 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** I am afraid Deputy Trott probably knew that I would rise to make a point of correction. The figures that are stated within the policy letter are the accurate figures around this per pupil cost, and this has been advised by the officers in Treasury, and quality assured by the officers in Treasury. They are careful, considered figures and so I would just correct Deputy Trott there, that the figure as presented, £10,500, is the accurate figure.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Absolutely not, Sir.

3280 I contest that very strongly. In fact, I was not alone in this meeting; there were other Members of the Policy & Resources Committee there. When the head of the division that makes these calculations was challenged and the point was made that if you take into account the cost of capital it is a particular figure. Now, I have been generous; I have only said £14,000. I wanted to say £15,000, but I built in some tolerance. The cost of educating a child in the States' secondary system, if you take into account the cost of capital, as the private schools must, as they go out and obtain independent funding, drives the number in that direction. It is a fact.

3285 Now, we will find ourselves in a position, if we are not careful, where we are going to need to apologise to taxpayers. Because the argument that is being given in some areas is that, do not worry, because any that leave the independent schools will be absorbed into the state system. Up will go class sizes and, with it, potentially, not definitely, but potentially lower educational standards as a consequence.

So, not only will we be burdening the taxpayer with £12,000 or even £13,000 more cost per pupil, but we potentially, as a consequence of that transfer, will damage, materially, educational standards.

I am not prepared to do that, but I am prepared to find a compromise. That is why, as I started, I will be supporting the St Pier/Ferbrache amendment, because it is a sensible compromise.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ferbrache.

3300 **Deputy Ferbrache:** Sir, I rise to my feet. My legs should be shaking with jelly because I have had praise from Deputy Trott, which does not happen too often.

But in relation to where we are, can I just remind Members of the explanatory note to the St Pier/Ferbrache amendment, because it begins with the words:

This amendment is a compromise from the effective 14-year term sought by the colleges.

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It acknowledges the important values the colleges play in our education system and that their stability is in the interest of the whole community.

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It introduces a lesser five-year period on a rolling basis, and there is a footnote which I will come to, i.e. it requires five years' notice to terminate. This is to provide reasonable certainty to enable the colleges to plan in the medium term.

Finally, it replaces a block grant with a fairer per-qualifying student grant ensuring that, as student numbers fall, if they fall as expected, the total grant paid will fall and does not rise as a proportion of the total income.

Just in relation to that, the footnote says:

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During the last round of negotiation with the colleges before 2020, it was envisaged that any financial support could move to a rolling basis in order to avoid the periodic cliff edges which come from having fixed-term agreements.

So that is the start.

What I also say is this, education is one of the fundamentals of life, and I am going to go a bit beyond the brief speeches that I commend to the States that have already been adopted.

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Education, and this comes from a distinguished former teacher of mine, who is in the gallery today, who said this. He has probably forgotten he told me this. He told me this when I was 15. He said, 'Education informs, instructs, and inspires.' In my words, in the developed and liberal society we are fortunate enough to live in, in Guernsey, it must be given the highest of priorities.

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For some years in Guernsey, our education system has been in some disarray. The current political holders who make up the ESC Committees, although sometimes disunited, must be given considerable credit for their efforts over the last four and a half years. They have put and are putting much to right, and they know there is still much to be done. They cannot be criticised for bringing this policy letter, and I commend the opening remarks and the way that she addressed them of Deputy Dudley-Owen.

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Now, the state system uniquely has to educate every child of school age. Whatever their abilities, whatever their needs, whatever their disabilities, and whatever their social problems, they cannot and do not turn anybody away. Now, I, like many others in this room, are a product and beneficiary of our educational system.

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I was educated in the state system at Vauvert Infants and Amherst Junior Schools, and then as a scholarship for Elizabeth College, all paid for by the taxpayers of this Island, as was my time at law school in England. I thank the people of Guernsey for what they did for me. I thank all the inspirational teachers, all the inspirational teachers who I benefited so much from.

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Those opportunities must continue for every generation. Every single child is important. Every single child must be given the opportunity to prosper, and where it is often the case, much needed support. Our children are all different, but they are all equally important.

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What we have is a great strength in our private schools. Their distinguished history is set out in paragraph 2 of the policy letter. They educate about 30% of the relevant school-age cohort we are considering, far higher by a multiple of four or five times those similarly educated in the UK. See paragraph 18.4 of the policy letter. They are a vital part, not only of our educational system, but also of our community. They need to be preserved and supported. They are well run. Eighteen months or so ago, I thought that they could support themselves. I realise that I was wrong in that conclusion.

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We see some paragraphs in the policy letter about UK schools. I am not sure why, as our situation is much different to theirs. Our children are educated in Guernsey, not in Slough. By the way, I do wish we would keep UK political dogma out of our policy letters. An example of this we see on page 22 in footnote 18, which is headed, 'Labour's independent school tax plan strongly backed by public, poll shows.' So what? I do not care whatever it is in relation to that.

I want to say something about social mobility. When I went to Elizabeth College, we, the scholarship pupils, all came from similar backgrounds. We met children from different social backgrounds. They all had inside toilets. They were no better than us, but we each benefited from each other's experiences. As I often say, my friends from Amherst call me Pete, my friends from Elizabeth College call me Peter. They are all my friends. Social mobility eroded because affluent people, as is their right, but what they did inadvertently disadvantaged children from less affluent backgrounds, educated their children in schools such as the Forest and St Martin, had them tutored, so social mobility was diminished.

But it must never be extinguished. Every effort must be made to facilitate it. Education is far more than academic achievement. After all, there are so many academically-gifted children in the state system. I note the reference to social mobility on pages 40 to 43. It refers to the Sutton Trust, a UK-based non-political organisation. What it does in the following quote encapsulates the importance of social mobility:

Social mobility is widely accepted as being crucial for creating a fairer society, fostering social cohesion and boosting economic growth, and had a significant beneficial effect for the Island and many children in the post-war period.

Hear, hear, I say. I and many others benefited from that. So please, I say politely to ESC, note that. Your proposals and indeed your recent letter to parents militated against that, in my view. In fact, I was disappointed both by the fact, tone and content of that letter.

Now perhaps let us look at some figures. Deputy Trott has already touched upon those. But I have got to say it is a somewhat arid discussion about whether the cost of secondary education for a pupil is £10,000, as ESC say, or £15,000, as Deputy Trott says. Whatever is the right figure, it is significantly more than the grant funding per pupil to the colleges. Please see figure 1 on page 18, which I am sure is not meant to be misleading, but some of its commentary certainly is.

Academic year 2019 to 2020, there were 1,150 pupils at the colleges. The total grant was £4,064,840. So, per child, the grant was £3,534.64. In 2025-26, there are 1,256 pupils at the colleges, and a grant of £2,844,940, which amounts to a grant of £2,265 per pupil. So a reduction of nearly £1,270 per child per annum. Now, I learnt my arithmetic at Vauvert Infants and Amherst School before I went to Elizabeth College, and I think it is still the same then as it was now, but Deputy Roffey is saying otherwise, but I think he was a product of the selection system because he went to the grammar school.

Please note also the switch to paid-for private education. Of the 1,150 pupils in 2019-20, 286 were special place holders, so 864 were not. The 2025-26 figure shows that the number going to the colleges has increased to 1,256, but the fee payers have increased by 392, or 45.37%.

Now turn to figure 3 on page 20. Elizabeth College has seen its numbers increase to 604 from 511, so 93 more pupils, 18% more. If you look at the fee payers, the increase is even more stark. 225, or 59% increase. Blanchelande, the numbers have increased from 244 to 290, which is an 18% increase. Fee payers have increased by 70, or 28%. Ladies College, the numbers have fallen from 395 to 362, but of that 395, 130 were place holders. So it again has seen a net increase in fee payers of 97, or 36%.

There is one figure that really grated my teeth and annoyed me, which is the figure 13 on page 29, showing the median household income for the various schools. So what? So what? Everyone poor and rich is important. I say turn to it, but what is the significance of it but to create social division? (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) Everyone pays their taxes.

How would the state system cope if all three colleges closed? Could it absorb another 1,256 children? That is not 30% more, that is 42% more, because you have got 3 over 7 is 42%. So, if they can accommodate another 42%, they must have too many facilities, they must have too many schools, they must have too many teachers.

We all know that is nonsense, absolute arid nonsense, because they could not accommodate another 1,200 people. We need both the state education to prosper, we need the private education

to prosper. Now 30% to 33% of parents of secondary-aged children in the colleges are in the lowest three quintiles of income range.

Now I turn finally to the aspiration of ordinary folk and to my own experience. My father was the youngest of 14 children. Other than my Uncle Basil, who went to intermediate, the other 12 left school at the earliest age. That was 12 and 13 years of age in those days. My grandfather, who was by the time my father was school age, well into his 60s, and my grandmother was in her 50s, decided with family help to educate my father at Vauxbelets College. My grandparents never owned their own home, they never owned a motor car. My grandfather's greatest luxury when he was 80 and retired was to have a black and white TV where he watched cowboys. They wanted to give their youngest child what they hoped was the best education suitable for him. That is still the aspiration of so many today.

So that is why I, despite being fully committed to our education state system, and of my seven grandchildren, my two eldest granddaughters completed all of their education in the state system. Three of my grandchildren are at different schools in the state system and are being extremely well-educated, and two of my grandchildren are at Elizabeth College. So I benefit from all of that.

I will support this amendment. I ask everybody to support it.

The Bailiff: Deputy Roffey.

Deputy Roffey: Thank you, sir.

First of all, can I just ask for a clarification that, assuming this amendment is passed, we will be able to pass on to the other two amendments? Clearly the wording is not quite right. For instance, mine talks about deleting Proposition 1 and 2, and there will be no 2 anymore.

The Bailiff: That is the position.

Deputy Roffey: What this amendment does is correct one of the things, or maybe two of the things, that is wrong with Proposition 2 in the Billet, but it does not address a third.

What it does do, and Deputy St Pier referred to this in his opening, is by making the grant consistent in real terms per pupil, it stops what would probably have happened if it had been the block grant being maintained in real terms as a whole, which is that the support per pupil would have gone up very steeply in real terms, because pupil numbers are almost bound to fall. By that, I do not mean that the buyout rate will fall from 30%. I mean, if it remains at 30%, we know what is happening in our primary schools, we can see the numbers going through and it would have gone down. So, to that extent, I certainly prefer this amendment to Proposition 2.

What it does not do, though, is address the fact that it is both this amendment and Proposition 2 are baking in what was intended to be a temporary and very significant increase in the level of the grant. I agree totally with Deputy Ferbrache when he says that he wants the state sector and the private sector to thrive. So do I.

But there has been a narrative, and Deputy Ferbrache came out with it today, and some gentleman at the presentation at Ladies College from the colleges came out with it as well, that the grant had somehow declined in recent years. Absolutely the opposite is true. It is almost treble what it was a few years ago per pupil.

Now the total amount that the States pay to the colleges may be lower, but what used to happen is that the States bought places at the colleges, those were the special placeholders, and that was all the colleges got for that place. They could not charge fees on top of that because we were almost *loco parentum* paying those fees.

The grant is a totally different beast. The grant comes on top of the commercial fee that is being charged for that pupil. So all of those places used to just receive the States purchase of the special place. The grant is on top of the fee that is paid. To conflate the two is arithmetical nonsense, I am afraid.

Why is the grant three times as high as it used to be? Blame former Deputy Shane Langlois, because what was being said at the time by the colleges, and it was a legitimate fear, they were really worried that with the States no longer purchasing special places, that their total pupil numbers would drop very considerably and therefore their whole business model would collapse and so might the colleges themselves. Therefore, Deputy Langlois persuaded the States, 'Let us increase the general grant as a bridge on a temporary basis until we see whether that happens.'

Well, it has not happened. So congratulations to the colleges in many ways for that. Why it has not happened is open for discussion. I know ESC will say it is the change and the flux that has been going on. I agree with that. I personally believe it is also the fact we have not adopted by any means the optimum system of comprehensive education that we should have done. That is probably a debate for another day. But the fact is that it has not happened.

So we are baking in a level of grant, and by grant I mean what we pay on top of the fees, which is roughly treble what it was a handful of years ago. My personal belief is that we should be seeing very carefully and very cautiously, because I do not want to do anything that would destroy the viability of the colleges, a return towards that normality. Because money is scarce and if we are going to invest, not just in our state education system, although it is important because 70% of our pupils go there, but also in other areas of Island life, we have to be very cautious what we do with public money and a fee, a grant, three times of what it used to be, not three times in real terms, three times in cash terms, but still well over double what it was in real terms, ought to be slowly ameliorated, which is why other amendments later on will seek to do that.

So I do not know whether I am going to vote for this amendment. I probably will, on the basis that it is better than Proposition 2, and I am worried that Proposition 2 might go through. On the other hand, if it goes through, then Deputy St Pier, who had said if it loses he might vote for mine as a backstop, clearly will not be doing so then. So that is one vote lost straight away.

But I have to vote for it, because Proposition 2 is so unacceptable, and so would lead to a more and more unfair situation over a 14-year period. So I probably have to support this, but it is really flawed, and it definitely does bake in a level of state support for fee-paying places in the college that is way above what historically, certainly in my time in politics, we have ever been anywhere near.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla.

Deputy Falla: Thank you, sir.

Sir, at our last meeting, this Assembly agreed measures designed to stabilise the care home sector. The risk arising from today's debate is that we destabilise our existing education system. The danger is that we unintentionally leave education, when looked at holistically, in a worse state, with unknown and far-reaching consequences.

I am just going to highlight what I see as one of the benefits of the colleges. They are an economic enabler (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and it has never been more important to attract families to Guernsey who will make a valuable contribution to our economy.

I think Deputies St Pier and Ferbrache should be congratulated on drafting this thoughtful compromise. It is the way forward, the best way forward, and I will be supporting this amendment.

The Bailiff: Deputy Moakes.

Deputy Moakes: Thank you, sir.

First of all, please can I thank the proposer and seconder for bringing this, and for tabling this amendment. I know they did so because they thought that the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture's proposal for option one went way too far.

We did not need to be in this position. In my opinion, it looks like the decision to remove funding was made first, and the policy letter was then framed to support that decision. In my view, rather

than taking an objective look at funding and education, this policy letter represents the flawed and one-sided ideological views of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture.

There appears to be a distinct lack of consultation, it ignores the elephants in the room, and the colleges' views are only expressed as an appendix, an afterthought, if you like. More about the elephants in the room later.

The good news is that a number of amendments have now been tabled in an attempt to resolve some of the very many issues in the policy letter itself. I want to focus on some of those issues to highlight the pros and cons of the various amendments. Let us look at the consultation first. While ESC might have been in discussions with the colleges for two and a half years, we now know that ESC has made various assertions and then failed to listen or even respond to many of the counter-arguments put forward for the colleges.

For example, ESC has continued to insist that funding for the colleges has increased when it has decreased. ESC has challenged the number of college students registered to SEND, even though these numbers are scrutinised to ensure that they are accurate. ESC has also suggested that the colleges should cut costs and be more efficient without any evidence. Finally, ESC has stated that the colleges are private enterprises when they are not. They are not-for-profit organisations. There is a difference.

The list of inaccuracies and misleading statements is depressingly long, and to add insult to injury, the colleges' own views are only expressed, as I say, as an appendix, an afterthought.

In addition, I have seen no evidence to suggest that ESC consulted parents, who would have been able to provide valuable insights into why they chose to send their children to one of the three colleges. In fact, over the past week or so, we have had many hundreds in fact, of emails telling us exactly why. In fact, I understand that ESC even asked the colleges not to send out a questionnaire to parents asking for their views.

Now, had ESC engaged with parents, they would have realised that not all the parents who send their children to college are wealthy. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Instead, they would have discovered that many parents go to quite extraordinary lengths to be able to send their children to college. I have heard of parents who forgo holidays, parents who take out loans, parents who rely on financial support from family or friends, parents who have had to take on more than one job, parents who work seven days a week. I could go on, but the point I am trying to make is that the narrative that all parents who send their children to college are rich is utter nonsense. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

To Deputy Ferbrache's point as well, the policy letter includes pages and pages dedicated to household income. I think this is both divisive and completely unnecessary.

What about the business community? I have seen no evidence to suggest that the Committee engaged with industry either. If it had, ESC would no doubt have received more unwelcome feedback. Over the last week or so, business has also provided feedback. Sadly, I do not have the time to read the statements from GIBA and the IoD, but I can tell you that they both made extremely strong arguments in favour of ongoing college funding.

Both business groups touched on another very important point too. Many leading economies, including our competitor next door, Jersey, provide funding for independent schools. Why? Because they recognise that funding independent schools as well as state schools represents a good investment in their children and in their respective economies. We need students to leave schools and colleges with strong academic skills so they can fill local roles across a diverse range of sectors, including, but not limited to, finance and professional services. If we can do this, we will be less reliant on bringing in people from abroad to fill roles, although we will still need them, of course.

So, reducing college funding will put us at a competitive disadvantage with other jurisdictions, lead to a decline in academic standards and damage Guernsey's attractiveness when we need to hire overseas talent.

While I am on the subject of the economy, I have been told that the wider economic impact of reducing funding was not even considered by ESC. Apparently it was not within scope, and I believe Deputy Dudley-Owen confirmed that earlier today.

3555 Now, as this letter and the amendments all focus on funding, let us look at that in a little bit more detail. Words like equitable and fairness are liberally used throughout the policy letter. If this was really about equity, ESC could have simply proposed that every single child gets the same amount of Government funding. Now, of course, no one is asking for that. I am simply making the point.

3560 The cost to the States of educating students, and I am covering a little bit of what Deputy Trott mentioned earlier on, is, according to ESC, £10,700 pa. However, for some reason, ESC has either been unwilling or unable to include all the costs within its calculations. For example, there is no mention of capital spending anywhere. Let us be clear.

Yes, I will give way.

3565 **Deputy Trott:** Sir, I am very grateful to my friend, Deputy Moakes, giving way.

He made a point earlier, his interpretation of the policy letter was that there may have been some bias or possibly some ideology in the policy letter. It is important at this stage to explain, because the President has not done so herself, but she played no part in the drafting of this policy letter, having been considered to have a conflict. That conflict miraculously disappeared when she found herself needing, in her role as President, to present this policy letter. So while it is fair to say that he is entitled to an opinion about bias and ideology, there are many in this Assembly that may share it, he must exclude Deputy Dudley-Owen from that analysis for the reasons I have given.

3575 **Deputy Moakes:** I would like to thank Deputy Trott for that, and I do not disagree with that, which is why specifically I have talked about ESC and not a specific person. You are quite right there.

So let us be clear, the real number is probably close to £15,000, and I know that that has been challenged already, but whatever that number is, it is close to that. In comparison, it costs the States just £2,019 per pupil to educate a student at one of the colleges. So this is a huge saving to taxpayers.

3580 And reducing college funding will push more students into the state school system, which if you think about it, will increase costs for taxpayers, not lower them. So, despite what you may have heard, the colleges provide the Government, and by extension taxpayers, with excellent value for money, along with really high-quality educational outcomes.

3585 Next, I would like to come on to efficiencies. And I have left this to last because it is really important. As I have already mentioned, ESC suggested that the colleges should cut costs and be more efficient. However, the Committee was unable to provide any evidence of how or where this could be achieved, despite having access, in fact, to the colleges' accounts. But there is probably a reason for this. The colleges are already well run and efficient.

3590 Ironically, ESC believes that if students are forced out of the colleges following the removal of funding, the state schools can simply absorb up to a third of the college students. Well, that is hundreds and hundreds of additional students. So, if ESC believes that the state schools can accommodate this many additional students, I believe that the efficiencies lie within the state system and not the college system. ESC should be addressing the inefficiencies within the state school system, rather than attacking the colleges, and as other people have said, destabilising the entire education ecosystem. And that is the elephant in the room. The Guernsey school population is in decline.

3595 In summary, the colleges deliver outstanding outcomes and provide taxpayers, I believe, with excellent value for money. It costs the States less to educate a child at one of the colleges than it does in the state school system.

3600 Like the colleges, I can see that Amendment 1, and like many people in this room here today, it represents a compromise that still manages to achieve much of what the colleges need. Primarily, continued funding and stability, which will enable the colleges, the parents, and in fact the students to plan ahead with greater clarity and certainty.

3605 So, like the colleges, if making this compromise helps to ensure that the colleges receive funding in the future, I will support this amendment to ensure that we continue to provide the colleges with

continued funding and stability. It will also avoid destabilising, as I have said already, the wider education ecosystem, which will be to the detriment of all students.

Sir, I encourage everyone to please vote for Amendment 1. Please do not vote in favour of any amendment that reduces college funding, and absolutely do not vote for ESC's original proposal. It is wrong, it is flawed, and it will damage Guernsey, in my opinion.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Tocq.

Deputy Le Tocq: Thank you, sir.

I can be brief, and I will be, as is my want. Sir, I was a special placeholder at Elizabeth College, and I had a history teacher there who was fond of saying that history teaches us that men have sadly learned very little from it. And it is history, sir, that primarily brings me to my feet.

Because I agree with a lot of the arguments that we have heard today, and I do have a lot of sympathy with my colleagues on ESC, because 20-or-so years ago, during my first term in this Assembly, I came in as a supporter of selection and of the 11-plus and was faced with the fact that my eldest daughter at that time was going through the 11-plus, and I was put on the borderline panel. I saw first-hand that it was no longer the system that enabled social mobility that I thought it was. So I do not have any regrets in terms of my voting that I have made historically with regards to that.

But I also have historically said that I believe that education is essentially an extension of parenting. As such, it is a parent's right, whether they have the wealth or whether they want to work the extra hours that many do to send their children to the school that they choose to do so. So I have been a supporter of our independent colleges, and I continue to support them.

But I would go back further in history than that, sir, and we have, as an Assembly, going back centuries, supported these schools, because when they find themselves in crisis of one sort or another, the Island sees for many different reasons a need to try to keep them maintained, to help them in terms of their buildings, and to help them succeed in terms of their education. That happened with Elizabeth College 200 years ago or so, and that happened with Ladies College in the post-war period. It happened during my first term in terms of Blanchelande as well. So this Assembly has done so because it sees the advantage of having parental choice and of having these colleges present in our community.

Like Deputy Ferbrache, at one time I would have been one who would have thought that the colleges could have got to the stage where they would have funded themselves to some degree. But I realise, sir, as well, that we are now living in a world where there are, roughly speaking, about 50% of the number of schoolchildren that there were when I was at school. So it is much harder nowadays to keep any school going, it is much more expensive, and I am not going to get into the debate about the relative costs.

I do believe on that we are comparing apples and pears to a large degree, because it is a totally different set of parameters in doing so. I accept that the colleges, because they have parental contribution, cost us, the taxpayer, less to educate the children. But my primary reason, sir, is to say that I believe they are an intrinsic part of our community and our culture and, as such, I believe that they need support of some type.

As a result, this amendment is very attractive to me. I would certainly support the Roffey amendment, but like him, I will be supporting this amendment because I believe it gives, at the very least, an option for time to be given so that no immediate decisions to change are given to the colleges, who are businesses trying to make their way forward, and it provides particularly the type of environment that gives enough notice if there is going to be any change in the funding mechanism in the future.

I will give way to my friend.

Deputy Trott: I am very grateful to my friend for giving way, because these independent schools are often described as businesses. They are not-for-profit organisations. They are not businesses in the sense that they would look to return dividends to shareholders.

Deputy Le Tocq: I accept that correction, Sir, but I am talking about the way in which they run, and from that point of view, they have to have the planning that any business would have. I am very familiar with not-for-profit organisations, and that is the way in which they have to operate in this world. From that point of view, sir, this amendment gives them that option in the future.

Of course, I will be seconding an amendment that will be proposed by Deputy Soulsby that hopes to improve the connectivity and the relationship between the colleges and our state school sector. I do think the two work very well together. We certainly have to do that. We should not be trying to put one against the other. They provide for our community in many different ways an opportunity to give the next generation the educational choice that otherwise they would not have in a community our size anywhere else. We are small Islands, and, like our neighbouring island, I believe we need to continue this choice, and so that is why I will be supporting this amendment.

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you.

Sir, I have to express my concern regarding the proposal to phase out the grants provided to our esteemed independent colleges. Elizabeth College, Ladies College, and Blanchelande College.

Now, I am an old Elizabethan. I have and have had children and grandchildren in the private colleges, and have and have had children and grandchildren in the state school. I am a former apprentice from the College of Further Education, and I am now an interim governor of the Guernsey Institute.

The recommendation, while perhaps well-intentioned for money-saving purposes, poses significant risks to the educational landscape and economic stability of our Island.

Currently, these three colleges educate approximately 30% of Guernsey's secondary school students, receiving around £3 million annually from the States, constituting just 3% of the overall education budget. The arrangement offers exceptional value, delivering high-quality education at a minimal cost to the taxpayer.

Sir, I am sure, like many of us in here, they will have received many letters of concern, many emails from parents, former pupils, general Islanders. A very rare occurrence to receive so much correspondence on one matter. I also thank those that have emailed in support of Education. I feel it is extremely helpful to hear both sides of the argument and receive feedback.

I was shocked, however, to see Education actively encourage political lobbying from parents and make promises which are both not costed and undeliverable in the short term, especially considering the length of time we have left in office. But I will leave those points there.

It is noteworthy that a substantial portion of students attending these colleges come from families with modest incomes. Specifically, between 30% and 37% of the children in each college are from less-well-off families, and 34% to 39% have special educational needs. Removing these grants could lead to increased fees, making the colleges less accessible to middle-income families, and thereby reducing educational choices. This outcome would contradict our commitment to social equity and diversity within our own educational system.

I was disbelieving when I was told the scope and terms of reference of Education's report over two years did not include any reference to the economic impact of any decision. I am also not sure why there was not a compromise made, rather than these two polar opposite decisions before us. A thriving independent education sector is pivotal for attracting and retaining talent, which directly influences our competitiveness as a jurisdiction.

GIBA and the Institute of Banking Association emphasise that subsidising independent education is a common economic strategy worldwide, as it alleviates pressure on public education

systems and contributes to long-term economic success. By maintaining support for our independent colleges, we not only invest in education, but also in the future prosperity of Guernsey.

Sir, we are competing so closely now with Jersey, with the support that they give to their colleges, their connectivity, and availability of housing stock, makes a professional family's decision on where to relocate a very easy one. Now we have to ask ourselves a question, where do we want to be in 10 years' time? Do we want to be a thriving Island, a booming economy with growth and prosperity for all, or do we want an Island with a bleak future, struggling tax base, and no aspirations?

I know what I want Guernsey to be, and I hope colleagues will agree. In light of these considerations, I urge this Assembly to reject the main proposal to withdraw funding from our independent colleges. Instead, let us continue to support these seats of learning that play a crucial role in our community, provide excellent value for money, and contribute significantly to the social and economic fabric of our Island.

Eliminating this funding provides significant instability to the colleges, and also the Island's economy.

Now, I understand that the Deputy St Pier amendment has got approval from the colleges, and as such I am sure that I will be able to support it, and I am even more sure that it is going to succeed. So, on that note, sir, I will finish my speech.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, sir.

I do not intend on speaking in the general debate, so I may stray away from this amendment.

Sir, we have a choice today. We can continue handing out public money to private schools with no hard evidence of whether it is truly necessary to do so, or we can reinvest in the States' education system that is available for everyone, spending wisely, especially on those who need it the most.

We have received a considerable number of claims that the private colleges outperform the State secondary schools. The Ofsted assesses our state schools against an inspection framework that judges our settings on quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. Across the entire States' education system, our assessments show a picture continuously improving. However, it is simply not possible to compare the colleges with our state schools because they are not assessed against the same rigorous criteria that our inspection framework uses.

Sir, many of the emails we received emphasise the need to empower our future leaders, with some suggesting that the colleges are solely responsible for producing them but developing the leaders of tomorrow is not exclusive to any one type of school. Many of us in the Assembly attended State secondary schools: Deputies Aldwell, Gabriel, Leadbeater, Taylor and myself, to name a few. Our newly-appointed Chief Executive and Head of the Public Service also attended La Mare de Carteret Secondary School, as did I.

A quick search on LinkedIn of any state school in Guernsey will show thousands of Islanders who are educated in our States' education system and have gone on to own businesses, lead organisations or rise to the top of their industries. The success of our graduates speaks for itself. States' education in Guernsey has produced, and continues to produce, leaders and contributors in all sectors of our community. We are, and should be, proud of their achievements and excited about the aspirations of today's learners.

Sir, as Deputy Roffey has already said, back in 2017 the college funding was ramped up in case of the removal of 11-plus and special place holders which meant fewer parents would pay for private education. The fear was the colleges would lose students, suffer financially and struggle to survive. Well that did not happen. Instead the colleges adapted, replaced special place holders with full fee-paying students and, surprise, surprise, continued to thrive.

And why would they not? The demand for private education remains strong and the colleges provide a service for those who choose to pay for it. But do they still need extra financial help from

taxpayers? Consider this, the equalised median household income for college families is between £91,000 and £102,000, compared to £53,000 to £58,000 for families in the state system.

Over 70% of college families are in the top two income quintiles, hardly middle-income families claimed by so many of those emails, while up to 75% of families in state schools are in the bottom three quintiles. I am all for fairness, sir, but does it seem right that all taxpayers, many of whom are on lower incomes, are subsidising those who can already afford to pay? Let us address the inevitable argument.

Deputy Trott: Point of correction.

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Both parents are working and both of them are on median earnings. They would be earning about £84,000 or £85,000 a year; that would make them middle-income earners.

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Let us address the inevitable argument. This will make college education unaffordable. Sir, I suggest it will not. The projected increase in college fees is just £40 per week. That is not per day, that is £40 per week. At one of the college refectories you can eat a three-course lunch every day for just under £50 a week. A packed lunch instead would see any fee increase covered.

Families already paying private school fees, many of whom earn nearly twice the median income of families in the state school sector, are unlikely to be deterred by an extra £40 a week. That is about the cost for a manicure, a bottle of wine at a restaurant or a couple of takeaway coffees a day. It is hardly a financial hardship, although I accept it will be harder for some. Our proposals certainly are not a justifiable reason for the wave of emails attempting to undermine the credibility of this policy letter.

There has been a fair bit of misinformation swirling around about the policy letter. One thing I hope we can agree on is the urgent need for reinvestment in some areas of the States' education system. Many of you will know that I am passionate about extending our early years' education entitlement from 15 hours to 30 hours.

The Committee is very keen to work collaboratively with others to put in place an Early Years Strategy. I see a key component of that focusing on enhanced access to pre-school and nursery care, which has the potential to support all families with young children and provide essential foundations for learning. I might even go as far to say this is perhaps the best economic enabler we have at our disposal.

It is not just the children who benefit. This policy could be a game-changer for parents too. Expanding early years' education means more parents can return to work, advance their careers and contribute to our economy, perhaps even enough left over for that three-course meal at the college refectory.

I have spoken to many parents recently and the reoccurring concern is the staggering costs of childcare. For many it is the single biggest barrier to having another child. If we genuinely want to grow our population sustainably, should we not prioritise supporting local families to expand rather than relying solely on immigration? (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Redirecting subsidies from private colleges to an Early Years Strategy or to put before and after clubs in primary schools does not just benefit a select few, it ensures that every family, regardless of income, has access to quality early childhood education and wider support.

Investing in early years for all our children and introducing initiatives that support working families by redirecting subsidies from some of the wealthiest is not just fair, it is common sense. I know not all fee payers are what you might describe as high-net-worth individuals. Evidence shows

the majority have reasonably high incomes, certainly the sort of income that could easily absorb a modest fee increase.

Sir, Members have received a considerable number of emails. Although many have been a copy-and-paste exercise from a template provided by the colleges, I accept that there is a strong resistance from the parents of pupils attending the colleges to remove the grant. We received an email from a part-time doctor who claimed she would have to leave the Island if the grant was removed. I was astounded that someone in such a position would consider uprooting their children from what she, herself, describes as an 'excellent education system' all for what would amount to be just a few minutes' of work per week for her.

Meanwhile, many families in our States' education system make far greater sacrifices. Every day some children have what we might call 'tag-team parents'. An example of this is a father working long hours on a building site, only to return home and take over childcare while the mother heads out to work late into the night cleaning offices. These parents are working tirelessly, often on a minimum wage or not far above it, yet many are too proud to claim even the most basic benefits such as uniform allowance, despite struggling to make ends meet.

To Deputy Trott's comments. If you expect a parent to cover their child's education, what does that education look like when paid for by someone on a minimum wage? This is the reality for many families in Guernsey. Their resilience and work ethic deserve recognition and it is worth considering who truly faces difficult choices when it comes to affording a future for their children.

I welcome the college's willingness to partner with our state schools. That is fantastic and we should embrace it because partnership with public and private schools will benefit all students. But let us be clear, partnerships should be based on mutual benefit, not on subsidies. It needs strategic direction to ensure everyone benefits from it.

We have some very experienced leaders and some of the colleges have less-experienced leaders, yet the colleges appear to have decided who to partner with. Deputies Soulsby and Le Tocq appear to have overlooked the benefits that partnerships with our specialist schools could bring, which is why the Committee's strategic approach to partnership is far preferable to their proposal.

Sir, in summing up, Proposition 1 of this policy letter does not dismantle the colleges, it does not push families out. The tapering of funding allows colleges to decide for themselves how to support any families that might be on the margins of affordability, so it does not ruin anyone's education. Let us not forget one of the colleges recently put its fees up by 14% and that appears not to have given rise to a mass exodus of students.

Proposition 1 simply ensures that taxpayer money is being spent where it is needed most, including some of the Island's most vulnerable children, many of whom will never have the luxury of a three-course lunch. I say, let us spend the money wisely where it will do the most good for many of Guernsey's children, not just the wealthiest minority.

I will not be supporting this amendment but will support Deputy Roffey's amendment as a compromise. For fairness for the future generations, I urge you to support the Committee's proposals, Propositions 1, 3 and 4, and send a message to our community that the States' education system and children and young people within it with the widest and most diverse range of needs are worthy recipients of this additional financial support.

Thank you, sir.

Deputy Queripel: Rule 26(1), sir, please.

The Bailiff: Can I invite those Members who wish to speak in debate on Amendment 1 to stand in their places. Is it still your wish, Deputy Queripel, that I put a motion?

Deputy Queripel: It is, sir.

The Bailiff: Well the motion, Members of the States, is that there be no further debate other than hearing from the President and the proposer of the amendment.

Those in favour; those against.

3865

Members voted Contre.

The Bailiff: I think I can declare that lost. (*Laughter*) Deputy de Sausmarez.

3870 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir.

I think I will reserve my comments for general debate and in the spirit of the guillotine motion which Deputy Queripel has just attempted; it is actually some questions related to the amendment very narrowly focused.

3875 I am keen to just make sure there is some clarity about the effect of this amendment relative to the effect of subsequent amendments that may be laid; I appreciate I cannot really talk about those. This amendment seeks to delete both Propositions 1 and 2, so that is the original Committee proposal to reduce the financial support paid to the colleges to zero over five years. And Proposition 2, which is to continue the current level of financial support for a further 14 years, which is the college's proposal. This amendment seeks to delete both of those and replace with a single proposal, which Deputy St Pier outlined.

3880 That just leaves the one option on the table when it comes to voting on the substantive Propositions. Amendment 2, if I have understood correctly, does the same. So if this amendment were to carry, and then Deputies Roffey and Burford are to lay their amendment, that would then replace this Proposition.

3885 Then there is Amendment 3 which seeks to insert something. If neither of those amendments have carried, it would insert a new Proposition in between Propositions 1 and 2. I am looking at the Deputy and he does not seem to remember what he put in his own amendment. I am pretty sure I can tell him that that is what the effect would be.

3890 So I am interested in understanding the impact of either Amendment 1 or Amendment 2, or potentially both of them carrying, and then Amendment 3 also carrying. Would that then insert a new Proposition beneath the new single Proposition that either 1 or 2 has introduced? That seems to be the case, and it does raise some interesting considerations. I just thought it would be helpful to have some clarity about how they interacted. I hopefully have been a help to Deputy Inder when it comes to him placing his amendment later on.

3895 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Soulsby.

Deputy Soulsby: Thank you, sir.

3900 I will begin by declaring an interest. I am a Governor of the Ladies' College but I am not an alumni actually, or alumnus, and the rest.

The Bailiff: Alumna.

3905 **Deputy Soulsby:** It is probably inscrutable I do not know what that is, but I am a Grammar School girl. I am proud to represent such an amazing school that provides choice for parents who want to send their daughters to a successful girls' school, and the only one on the Island. (**A Member:** Yes.)

3910 I am grateful to those who have put forward amendments, for genuinely trying to develop a solution to the position we find ourselves in. It has been clear that the principal aim of ESC has been to get rid of funding and try to retrofit arguments as to why it should be done, rather than see the colleges as an integral part of the education ecosystem. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Withdrawing or materially reducing funding is not logical, is a blinkered UK-centric approach and designed to destabilise the education sector even more than it already has been over the last decade.

3915 We have had more emails on this subject than any other this term. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Even more than GST (**Several Members:** Yes.) and overwhelmingly from those wanting to retain funding. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Like Deputy Trott, I have not been able to respond to everyone; I have tried. I think I got a third of the way through but did not have a chance to follow up anymore yesterday. So apologies to those who have sent emails and they have not had a reply from me; what I will say is I have read them.

3920 What I read was stories of parents making sacrifices and doing two jobs to put their children through the colleges as they think that they can provide the environment that will suit them best. We have had parents who have told us that they have children in both the state and independent sector, particularly those who have children with special education needs. Obviously the colleges have been able to provide them with the support they need.

3925 We have read emails from a large number of people: parents, grandparents, and people who were educated in the public as well as independent sector, set out in a considered way just how important the colleges are to the economy of the Island. All of which goes to show, as Deputy Inder has said on more than one occasion, that you should not make important decisions based on an online survey on where some savings can be made. You need to look at both sides of the argument.

3930 ESC are very clear in their view, getting rid of the grant results in a saving of £1.1 million after taking into account around £300,000 a year that they think it will cost to educate those children whose families will not be able to fund their education anymore or who would otherwise be able to attend the colleges, and after wanting to reinvest around £2 million in additional services.

3935 Is it worth such an upheaval for such a sum? Will such a saving really arise? Well let us look at that. They will only materialise if the assumptions from ESC that it can absorb the pupils stands up to scrutiny. I would say it is a bit like a slice of Swiss cheese: full of holes. For a start, it is based on similar numbers moving to the state sector in each year group. It also assumes that they would be spread evenly across catchments. It also assumes that the move from the colleges will happen evenly over time.

3940 What I suspect, however, which has been reinforced by the stream of emails we have received, is that all the above assumptions have with them a high degree of uncertainty and are great in theory but will prove very different in practice. They also take no account of the destabilising effect on the children, colleges and, yes, the States' sector with the vast majority of the cohort of one or more of the colleges having to be found places in the state secondary schools in short order.

3945 That leads me to question as to how the analysis has been undertaken. The problem with the analysis is that it just makes one assumption, there is no best case or worst-case scenario. When it comes to savings, clearly ESC want to use some of them to reinvest, despite the fact the Committee's budget has increased by £10 million this term against the falling school age population.

3950 Cutting the grant is a lazy way of making savings and it does feel like it is a means of ESC trying to keep its budget against a background of a falling school age population. If we believe that has to be the case, it should be a concern to all of us in terms of our economy.

3955 We hear that the general grant must go as there is no policy behind it because the state sector is not selective anymore and the colleges are. Well, selection, we do not have the 11-plus and, certainly I can say from a Ladies' College perspective, only about one application a year is rejected on average.

3960 It is selection insomuch as the college has a challenging curriculum that is taught at pace. It is believed it is unfair to accept children who they believe will not be able to cope. But when it comes to selection the colleges do have a high proportion of children on the SEND Registers, something ESC does not want to accept, and say it is only to do with taking exams, which seems a bit odd. How can you be special educational needs for one thing but not another?

3965 Again, we have had emails from parents who have said that they have taken their children out of the state sector because they feel they had needs that were not being addressed, and they were now thriving, which kind of backs it up. We hear also that we do not know how other colleges are doing. Well, just speaking for the Ladies' College, it had 67% of pupils getting grade 7 and above in 2022-23 and 65% last year, the first without selection. We saw a 50% reduction in top band

students. Oh, and it was in the top 100 of independent schools in the British Isles for the best GCSE results last year.

Deputy Cameron said colleges do not go through a vigorous assessment process like Ofsted. Well there he is completely wrong. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspects colleges using the same framework. They are appointed by the UK Home Office to inspect private-funded schools against the same standards expected in –

Deputy Dudley-Owen: A point of correction, sir.

The Bailiff: A point of correction, Deputy Dudley-Owen.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: I do apologise, I do not like to interrupt, but that is factually incorrect. The framework is different for Ofsted from the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

A Member: It is a lot more stringent.

Deputy Soulsby: And if I had been allowed to finish my sentence, I would have added to that. They are appointed by the UK Home Office to inspect private-funded schools against the same standards inspected in state schools but with an additional focus (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) on things like co-curricular activities. They look at leadership and management, education provision and compliance against education standards. All three colleges are rated excellent, not just good or very good, but excellent.

Deputy Cameron talks about the proportion of households in the higher income bracket but a third of children are in the lower quintiles. They are not all rich and that is the point. Again, we have seen that from the emails we have received. The colleges have people who are waiting on whether to accept a place based on the outcome of this debate.

When it comes to policy that we are told is missing, the St Pier/Ferbrache amendment sets that policy and sets out precisely why funding should not be dramatically reduced or completely withdrawn. In particular, the amendment states how the stability is in the interests of the Island. That is something that is completely ignored in the policy letter, and really I struggle with that.

Look at it this way, if we do not have the colleges there is no choice. We have far fewer parents able to make a choice. One of the key attractions for those middle earners who are the next leaders, those who will drive economic growth, is that they have choice. We have an attraction over the UK in that we provide a real choice at that middle-income level. It is still nothing like Jersey but then no one is saying we should be like Jersey, just that there is choice there.

By withdrawing the grant here the ability to choose will be taken away from many of those who we wish to attract. Again, we have had emails from parents who have said how they were attracted to the Island because of that choice. It might well be that by limiting this choice, continuing to have a falling school age population will be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

My final point relates to education as a whole. The States' education system has been in turmoil for over a decade now and the colleges have been an oasis of calm. It might well explain in response to Deputy Roffey why the pupil numbers have not gone down as envisaged when funding was last debated. Why potentially just make things even worse and try to fix something that is not broken?

Sir, as I have said, I am a Governor of the Ladies' College, and proud to have been so for over a decade now. I was disappointed that we lost the special place holders because it meant the college is not much more exclusive. Getting rid of the grant or materially withdrawing it will only make matters worse. That is not something I want to see and I do not think many here do too.

The amendment provides a certainty that Proposition 1 does not. It also represents a compromise in respect of what the colleges have said they want by relating the grant to the number of pupils. I think a lot of credit should go to the colleges for giving ground and saying that they will support it. Similarly, I ask Members to support this amendment for certainty, stability and a flourishing education sector.

4020 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

I will try to be brief. Many Deputies have spoken far better than me on why we need the colleges and why they do so much for us, so I will try and comment on some other areas. I did find this policy letter, to be honest, really quite a political thing in terms of its tone and its construction. To be honest, to me it seems like an officer-drafted thing and I just do not see that some of the Committee members had anything to do with it at all; I know Deputy Dudley-Owen really probably did not.

4025 That said, I suppose one is always affected by one's own background. I come at this as an ex-Grammar School boy from Poole. I highly appreciate the concept of social mobility and allowing people from all sorts of backgrounds to mix with people from a higher socioeconomic level and get ahead together. That is quite a big thing for me. Obviously I am sorry we lost the Grammar School here but we still have the colleges here. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

4030 What can we do with the colleges? How can we increase social mobility between the socioeconomic classes here? The colleges I think are an avenue to do that. We have the grants which at the bottom end at the margin – Deputy Cameron has somewhat dismissed this – we have heard from a lot of people. I particularly recall, one of our hundreds of emails was from a registered nurse who was quite moving in saying what the problems would be for her if the fees started going up by a couple of thousand pounds a year.

4035 So at that level we have got people struggling very hard to keep their children in what they think will be a good mixed environment socially and that will help them. Part of a free society is to have a degree of liberty, for parents to have some choices to do things, and to choose how best to educate their children. The more we can assist in that, the better.

4040 So to my mind there can be no question that we should cut these grants because we will be cutting off access to a lot of people who cannot take that extra couple of thousand pounds a year. It is dismissed as a three-course lunch or a couple of coffees but when you are utterly struggling and you are at the end of your tether trying to pay the school fees, that does make a difference. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

4045 I have just got a text from one of the parents from one of the schools. I will just quote it because it sums it up:

4050 We have parents who have two and three jobs, stacking shelves at Waitrose, etc. We have grandparents who help with fees. We have parents who rent a room in their house to HSC staff to help pay school fees. We do everything we can to help out.

4055 That is where we are and those are the people that will be affected by this, so we cannot possibly cut the funding to the schools, it is completely ludicrous. Whether you are from the left or the right of the political spectrum, I just cannot think that we could conceive of doing it. (**A Member:** Absolutely.)

4060 Deputy St Pier has brought forward an amendment which seems to me a sensible compromise. Structurally it is a better structure for these grants to be evergreen but subject to termination on five years' notice. That does avoid the precipice which would otherwise come every seven years, so I will support it. On the subject of social mobility I, seconded by Deputy Matthews, am bringing an amendment later.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

4065 **Deputy Matthews:** Thank you, sir.

Sir, I will be supporting this amendment. The first bullet point of the explanatory note explains that the amendment:

Acknowledges the important, valued role the Colleges play in our education system and that their stability is in the interests of the whole community.

4070 The colleges are described as 'integral, valued and valuable part of our educational ecosystem' and that their 'stability is in the interests of the Island, students and their families'.

At first glance, and I think Deputy St Pier may have described this, or similarly, this just seems to be a statement of the obvious or the kind of preamble that often accompanies resolutions which have no meaningful or operative effect on policy. The way these negotiations have taken place
4075 between ESC and the colleges leads me to believe that this is a necessary acknowledgement.

Sir, as politicians, we first learned of the possible conclusion of negotiations between ESC and the colleges in the same way as the rest of the public, that is, on the front page of *The Guernsey Press* on 13th February with a headline, 'ESC is looking to scrap college's public funding.' We were advised by email on the same day by the President of ESC that the situation with the press headline
4080 was not what we had planned and that the colleges did not want to be involved in issuing a joint statement on the policy letter.

This immediately indicated to me that the relationship between ESC and the colleges has broken down and become somewhat hostile. This notion was further confirmed to me by Deputy Helyar who advised that, as a director of Elizabeth College, he was aware that ESC had refused to share the content of the policy letter prior to publication. This is not a working partnership that is designed to lead to a common position. The press article included a quote from Committee member Deputy Aldwell which read:

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I am persuaded by the analysis which shows, contrary to popular argument, that the colleges do not save us money and that if we needed to, absorbing some of these children into our system would be more economic and improve attainment for all our young people.

4090 This quote, which is perhaps prepared by officers and ascribed to designated Committee members, is something of a head scratcher. It further indicates an adversarial relationship, 'We can absorb these children into our system.' It strikes me as very much of a 'them-and-us approach', absent of the notion of a shared responsibility to all children no matter where they are educated.

With such a dramatic and sweeping change to the education landscape, finding agreement
4095 ought to be prerequisite. This divided them-and-us approach spills into our education system at large, further entrenching the divisions in our community between the haves and have nots.

We should not encourage a divided community where those of different levels of wealth are not only educated separately but are mutually hostile towards each other. This change has to start with our approach to education. I sense hostility emanating from officialdom, which I do not see in the colleges.
4100

There needs to be a new spirit of partnership where ESC officials see the colleges as a valued part of our education landscape rather than rivals, not a relationship where a policy letter is released accusing the colleges of causing an attainment gap and sees social segregation in our education system and our society.

4105 There needs to be an acceptance that both the colleges and the state schools have a shared goal of educating our young people, the future of the Island. I believe it is possible for ESC to forge a more constructive relationship. So I support the intention of this amendment to help build a base from which this relationship might emerge.

Yet, leaving aside the tone, the content is even more troublesome. I am afraid I do not agree
4110 with the contorted logic in the statement, 'The colleges do not save us money.' One month after the publication of the policy letter, the President of ESC went on to explain, also in the pages of *The Guernsey Press* that:

Facts are helpful when considering these questions and it is factually incorrect to say that the college educate 30% of our students for 3% of the budget.

4115 I am afraid to say, I fundamentally disagree with this statement. To me, the cost to the States of educating a child in the colleges is extraordinary value for money at only £2,019 per pupil compared with £10,065 per pupil in the State secondary schools. Of course, that figure, as Deputy Trott and many others have suggested, does not include the capital costs and so is likely to be a lowball number.

4120 Either way, the taxpayer is getting good value for money. For this reason alone, the financial support provided is worthwhile. If the colleges were to suddenly close, the cost of educating the students in the state system would be £12.5 million or £19 million if you accept the higher figure and, of course, would probably involve building new school buildings.

4125 The remainder of the points in the amendment set the financial support provided to the three colleges on a secure basis with the amount of financial support fixed on a per pupil basis, uprated for inflation, with a five-year rolling arrangement that enables the colleges to plan ahead with some certainty.

4130 But why the economic consequences of removing the funding would not only be felt by those parents who are no longer able to afford higher fees but could threaten the viability of the colleges themselves. ESC does not take this into account in their policy letter, instead blithely advising the colleges to improve their efficiency. This is something of a case of, 'Do as I say and not what I do.'

4135 The basis for the claim that the transfer of 10% of the Island's school population from independent schools to the state system would not cost ESC any significant money, is that students would be taking up surplus space in the state schools caused by a general decline in demographics and falling school rolls.

Clearly such a drop in student numbers would dramatically affect the three colleges and put great pressure on their own cost per pupil. In an extreme case it might cause one or more of the colleges to become unviable and it would certainly lead to dramatically increased fees which could displace students of those families who can only just afford the fees.

4140 Sir, in briefings to Deputies, officers from ESC explained that it would be up to the colleges themselves to decide whether to increase fees for current students or apply higher fees for future students only. What an awful choice to make between protecting students who are already enrolled and settled in their schools from the possibility of increased fees and having to leave versus yet higher fees for future students and attempting to downsize their operations by a third, while still catering to a partly-subsidised cohort. It seems like an almost impossible task and it seems like an insensitive way to treat parents and students alike. It furthers the impression that ESC policy appears hostile towards the colleges.

4150 This is very different from the situation in Jersey, our competitor Isle, where private education is subsidised to a far greater extent than in Guernsey. In terms of recruitment from off Island, the effect could be dramatic. Education policy, having already removed the Grammar School, would now go on to reduce the affordability of independent schooling too. This could have a ruinous effect on Guernsey's ability to recruit and retain new residents. I do appreciate the intention of saving States' revenue but to me the risks involved in reducing the grant, estimated at £2.9 million for 2025-26, to be greater than the possible savings.

4155 One of the emails that I received reminded me that in the States' meeting before last we approved £2.3 million annual subsidy to dairy farming on the Island. I, of course, supported that. I was a member of the Committee that brought the dairy farm paper to the Assembly, and I support that, but I think it does put the number in perspective.

4160 Sir, I would like to extend choice in education to all parents in the Island. I am unwilling to reduce the limited choice available the colleges provide for those parents able to take advantage of it. For these reasons, I support the amendments aimed to clarify the financial support to the colleges.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

4165

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, sir.

I have several special interests, quite a lot of skin in this game, so I thought I would run through them. I know I am not necessarily required to declare them now or later on, but it does provide some context.

I am a Governor or a Director of Elizabeth College. I have three children currently at Elizabeth College; three others have been through some of the other colleges. I am an old Elizabethan and also a Catholic, which covers the Blanchelande section, so I do have quite a lot of skin in the game.

I found the Chief Minister's update on the financial situation this morning quite depressing, if I am honest. I have been thinking about it a lot since it was made and some of the numbers that came up were really quite astonishing. I thought perhaps it would be helpful to put those numbers in context of the savings that we are talking about here, because these schools are part of the jewel in our crown. **(A Member: Hear, hear.)**

They have been around in some cases for hundreds of years. That is not to say other schools have not produced fine people as well, I absolutely agree, but they are part of the fabric of our Island and its culture. It is important to support them and I do believe that. I think we are at risk in looking for cuts in places where they will cause a disproportionate amount of damage. **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** We risk causing immense damage to the Island and to its future.

We are setting off a cascade of doom. This is not going to be the last time, I am afraid, in this Assembly we have to have the same debate about a tiny cut which could risk causing immense long-term damage to the Island's future. **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** I just stood back from the numbers to start with. We have heard the 3%, the 30% number, and that is a really important thing.

As the Government would be aware, 3% of risk for 30% return is a huge force enhancer. It is probably one of the best investments that the Government makes **(A Member: Yes.)** because if we were not investing in that, we would have to spend an awful lot more. I know that there have been some disagreements about that. It is inevitable that more would have to be spent if we were not investing it in the way it is invested now.

The figure of £336 million was mentioned this morning by the Chief Minister in terms of the salary bill for the States last year, the amount that we are considering saving here by potentially damaging some real jewels in our crown. The amount that represents is 0.003% of the salary budget of the States. It is an almost infinitesimally small amount to save but to cause risk at the same time, so my view is this is completely the wrong thing for us to do.

We really need to be facing up to the fact that we do not have enough revenue. We have to face up to that because otherwise this is not the only thing that we are going to be chasing down and potentially causing risk to and undermining. There are going to be lots of other jewels in our crown. There are going to be lots of other public services that are going to become endangered and are going to make life worse for the public if we do not face up to the fact that we need to raise more revenue.

I am sure there are different ways of doing things which would make people happier and they would like to see Government behaving in a different way in different places. The reality is, and I mentioned this several times when we had our GST debates, to save the amount of money that we were looking at as the equivalent to GST, is the equivalent – not just of taking a small amount of budget from the colleges – of shutting down the whole of ESC. The whole thing. Everything. Education, Sport and Culture, closing it entirely would get you enough money perhaps to close the gap that we are talking about, which this morning was £71 million.

We cannot manage to do that with savings. We have to start focusing on bedding that in. It is very important, otherwise we are going to be having hundreds of these debates in order to get to a position where we have made enough savings in order to counteract it. I think we have really now got to face up to it. Let us not start a cascade of doom, we need some positive news here. I think it would be fantastic if we could all get behind supporting this amendment, which is a fantastic way of finding a compromise for the situation we find ourselves in.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

4220 **Deputy Brouard:** Thank you, sir.

I will be very brief. It is just really picking up on something that Deputy Dyke said, if I heard it correctly, that by the Deputy St Pier amendment there would be people having to find thousands of pounds extra towards their fees. I do not think that happens with Deputy St Pier's amendment, it does not happen with Deputy Inder's and it does not happen with Deputy Roffey's.

4225 All the fees are moved by a bit but it is a very small minority. The fees or the support still ranges around £2,000 per annum per pupil and it moves by a few hundred pounds per year in each of the years. So I just do not want parents to be worried that there are thousands of pounds that they would have find in the Deputy St Pier, Deputy Roffey and Deputy Inder's amendments. The actual changes, I understand, are quite marginal between those three amendments, if he agrees with me.

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Deputy Queripel: A point of order, sir.

The Bailiff: A point of order, Deputy Queripel.

4235 **Deputy Queripel:** Rule17(6), sir. *(Laughter)*

The Bailiff: Why is it not relevant to this debate on this amendment?

4240 **Deputy Queripel:** Sir, it says in the Rule it should be relevant to the issue before the States, which I understand it means it must focus exclusively on the individual motion before the States at that time, not to focus on amendments that may or may not be laid in the future. Deputy Brouard referred to two other amendments, as well as this one; that is why I invoked the Rule, sir.

4245 **The Bailiff:** Well, Deputy Brouard, please just continue for the moment *(Laughter)* on Amendment 1.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you, sir.

4250 That was the only point I wished to make, was just to clarify that with all the three amendments that there is very little extra cost to parents so they need not be that worried if they are to have children at the colleges.

Thank you, sir. I will give way to Deputy Dyke.

4255 **Deputy Dyke:** Yes. The different cutting amendments apply differently but one of them does cut the funding eventually to zero, so the point gets bigger as we go along, depending on the different amendment. I was supporting Deputy St Pier's amendment which does not do any of that.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you, Deputy Dyke.

I do not think Deputy Inder's or Deputy Roffey's does that either. They do not go down to zero, they all stay around the same amount.

4260 Thank you.

Deputy Dyke: But one of them has it. Are you giving way? *(Laughter)*

The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke.

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Deputy Dyke: Ultimately, if you have no inflation added to a fixed amount, then its value does deteriorate to zero eventually over the years.

4270 **Deputy Brouard:** I take his point but I think the review dates cut in well before that ever happens.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Murray.

4275 **Deputy Murray:** Thank you, sir.

When I was at school, sir, I was a Grammar School boy, it was not co-ed then, unfortunately, but there we are. (*Laughter*) When I was getting uncomfortable during whatever the teacher was saying or my fellow students were saying, I would always look out the window. I would look somewhere else to actually give me inspiration. I cannot see out of these windows, unfortunately, otherwise
4280 I would have been, because we are actually getting into a debate that I had hoped to avoid. It is very uncomfortable. I know people have got very strong opinions and that is understandably so. Education is so important to us all, and to our children.

I was involved in the negotiations with the private colleges and it is very unfortunate because I think that Deputy Dudley-Owen and myself – who eventually got involved in that because of the
4285 previous difficulties with conflicts and so forth – were beginning to get somewhere, I felt, on certainly trying to find a way forward that was a partnership way forward which could have, and could still, cover many things.

What we have got into here, unfortunately, it is starting to get very raw because people's concerns are clearly bubbling to the surface. We have heard a lot from the public, we have heard a
4290 lot from people who are obviously involved in this whole debate, perhaps more closely than others. I have considerable sympathy for that. What I would say, however, is that the comments made just latterly by Deputy Helyar are probably at the root of it.

One of the things I mentioned that I think struck a chord when we were in negotiation with the colleges, what I wanted to see was Guernsey recognised as a centre of excellence for education.
4295 (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) To achieve that we have to invest right across the piste. That is what we are looking for. No doubt we are going to be potentially – and I do not think it is a very good indicator – in a falling student population situation. That does not bode well for our future. If that comes to pass that does not bode well and that concerns me.

It is going to make the mechanics and the finances of the whole of the education system, including the private colleges, even more complex and difficult to achieve. I certainly believe that
4300 there is a place for both, it is why I participated, because there is a place for both. In a subscale economy – and we all recognise that we are – what we are trying to do is to maximise the settings that we actually have available to us across the piste to try to ensure that we cover as great a curriculum opportunity as possible for all students.

That inevitably is going to require both sides to work more closely together because I suspect that technology is going to create a huge difference in the way we actually educate our children. I am not even sure it is a good sign, to be perfectly honest. We cannot oppose it but AI is potentially
4305 going to change the way that we educate our children. (**A Member:** Yes.) I think they are going to lose a little bit in that as well (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and that does bother me.

So in a small location such as we are, we can craft an education system, I believe, if there is willingness to do it. I believe there is willingness to do it. I think potentially we are losing a little trust on both sides of the argument, and that is very unfortunate. I think discussions like this are only
4310 going to potentially exacerbate that, and that is unfortunate. I would like to get past that. I would like us to be looking for a way that we can actually improve all of our students' opportunities as a consequence of decisions that we make.

One of the challenges that we were having was finding a metric to be able to sustain satisfactorily, for all parties, how we could justify continuing to fund the colleges in a way that people could relate to because it is a complex matter. It has been relatively straightforward when
4315 we were in a buyout situation, I think was described before, post the loss of the 11-plus.

I was impressed with Deputy St Pier's introduction where he did cite all of the various ways in which this tries to adjust and to address that difficulty we have got. I am also attracted to the Roffey amendment but I can see in the cascade situation that we might end up with one or the other,
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which would be unfortunate. I think the mistake we have made is in assuming that we actually have to save money because I think, unfortunately, trying to save money is causing us the problem here.

4325 What we should be looking at is how we invest more money across the piste. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) To do that, we have to go back to Deputy Helyar's suggestion of making sure we have got sufficient surplus in the system that we can do that (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) because the whole economy will benefit from having the best education system we can possibly afford. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

4330 I think we have got into this sort of penny-pinching mode, unfortunately, because of our situation. I cannot ignore a £70 million deficit. Of course, I cannot; I am Scottish for a start (*Laughter*) but it is a fact and it is going in the wrong direction. There are people in here, unfortunately, who still will not accept that there is an inevitability about doing this, finding a solution that we can cut away to actually make things better, and we cannot, so we end up in this debate. It is uncomfortable and it is unpleasant.

4335 I know we all want the best for the students but I do not want us to take a position on ideology or on a position because 'that is my particular experience' or 'what I can afford and I cannot afford', that should not come into it. We should be in a position whereby choice is available to all. That is what I would like to see happen. Unfortunately, that is going to have to evolve and we have to actually manage to get there.

4340 I suspect that this amendment is a good way to get to that point. What I do not want to see is it stop with that. The partnership opportunity has got to come forward. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It has got to be embraced. I would be prepared to support this amendment if that was the outcome, if we all agreed that is where we were going, because that is what I certainly want.

4345 Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Can I get an indication as to how many people want to speak on Amendment 1 still? Thank you. Well, the numbers are increasing as – (*Laughter*) Let me see whether you want to finish Amendment 1 this evening.

4350 The motion will be that we conclude debate on Amendment 1, which does include hearing from Deputy Dudley-Owen and Deputy St Pier at the end, of anyone who wants to speak.
Those in favour; those against.

Members voted Contre.

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The Bailiff: Well I think that has been lost (*Laughter*) and, therefore, we will adjourn now until 9.30.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.30 p.m.