



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION

OF THE

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Thursday, 1st May 2025

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Present:

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

Law Officers

M. M. E. Pullum, K.C. (H.M. Procureur)

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

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 M. P. Leadbeater (*relevé à 9h 41*) ; Deputy P. J. Roffey
Deputy C. P. Meerveld (*relevé à 9h 41*)

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States of Deliberation

The States met at 9.30 a.m.

[THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*]

PRAYERS

The States' Greffier

EVOCATION

Billet d'État IX

The States' Greffier: Billet d'État IX, Article 17 - the continuation of debate.

Statement

Personal Statement by Deputy L. S. Trott

5

The Bailiff: Members of the States, before we continue the debate on inert waste and water, I have given permission for Deputy Trott to make a personal statement at this time. We will call it a quasi-Sergeant Pepper moment, but Deputy Trott.

10

Deputy Trott: It is mercifully short, sir, Members will be pleased to hear. But I am very grateful to you for granting me permission to make this Personal Statement.

15

It is 25 years to the day since I was first sworn in as a People's Deputy on 1st May 2000. The State's Greffier, who is a man I have been pleased to call a friend for nearly 50 years, tells me that I have spent more than two full calendar years of my life in this Assembly, over 750 days. Tomorrow will, however, be my last full day in this place.

20

Sir, I have worked with some brilliant political mentors. Roger Berry Senior OBE, is one such outstanding example. I think I learned more about politics as the junior member of the Board of Administration in my first term between 2000 and 2004 than I have in the 21 years that have followed that experience. John Roper, Bill Bell and Laurie Morgan, all now deceased, were States' Members of the highest calibre, all had a profound influence on me. Very different people, but all hugely able.

In fact, all the Members of this Assembly I have served with over the years have had some degree of influence on me, particularly during debate, and that is how it should be. I have worked with many outstanding civil servants. As a matter of tradition, we do not name those who are currently

25 serving and I shall not, but Mike Brown, Nigel Lewis and Dave Clark from the past were simply superb and, for me, inspiring.

I have watched numerous civil servants and Deputies grow in confidence and ability over the years. In fact, many are sat in this Assembly today. A perfect example would be another man I am proud to call a friend, a man who has risen through the legal ranks from that of a self-described bag-carrier in the role of the Policy Council's External Relations Policy and Legal Adviser, so-called ERPLA, to that of, well, our first citizen. I refer, of course, to Sir Richard. In my view, a superb Presiding Officer of this Assembly and one I have enjoyed working with enormously. I have to say, at this juncture, that H.E. is a first-class chap as well. But there we are, we all know that.

35 Sir, I have had the honour of meeting Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, and King Charles and Queen Camilla, together with the Princess Royal and many other senior royal figures. I have met Prime Ministers Sir John Major, Sir Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Lord Cameron, Baroness Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, Rishi Sunak, and the current Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. In fact, sir, I could name drop all morning, but I have no intentions of doing so. *(Laughter)*

40 I have had the honour of topping the poll twice and finishing runner-up once, but I have also just crept over the line, and I really do mean just. It was on that occasion, 17 years ago, when I was asked what went wrong at that election by an inquisitive reporter. I explained that I put it down to illness and fatigue. The interviewer said she had not realised I had been unwell. I said, 'No, I was fine. It was the electorate. They were sick and tired of me.' *(Laughter)*

45 I am occasionally asked what is my personal highlight from time to time in public service, and there are many to choose from. But on balance, the honour and the privilege of laying our wreath, the Bailiwick's wreath, at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday last year was my proudest moment. Having had great-grandfathers and grandfathers who fought bravely in the respective world wars, and in some cases made the ultimate sacrifice, added to the poignancy of the event for my family and I. It was a very special moment.

50 So I wish to say a heartfelt thanks to the incredibly supportive and adorable – I am not sure how that crept in there, sir, but anyway – Mrs Trott for her unstinting support over the years. And indeed to my three children who have no memory of their father before he was a Member of this Assembly.

55 Sir, while I am leaving elected service, I am certainly not retiring. My long-suffering business partners will be seeing much more of me as I return, in part, to the private sector. In addition, I will be contributing to the ongoing work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, having agreed to become the first Chairman of the Trustees of the CPA Charitable Funds.

60 Finally, it has been an enormous honour and a privilege to serve this community. It is a community that we all love, a fact that binds us together despite our occasional policy disagreements. Next month we will have a general election and a new Assembly will be sworn in. In fact, I believe, sir, two months today.

65 Some other Members will be joining me in not seeking re-election. To them I say, on behalf of our community, thank you for all your dedicated service. To those who seek re-election, I wish you well. Good luck to you all. To those seeking election for the first time or as a returnee, I extend similar best wishes.

Public service can be challenging, and it is extremely demanding on occasions. But the opportunity to participate in the development of future policy, to help make this beautiful group of Islands, which remain, in my view, the very best place to live and work for most in our community, is the ultimate privilege.

70 Sir, my father would be particularly proud of me to finish as I am. Always look on the bright side of life, and never forget the gift of laughter. Best wishes to you all.

(Members applauded.)

**Welcome to Conseiller Cragoe and Conseiller Locke –
Chief Pleas of Sark**

75 **The Bailiff:** I am going to welcome back the two visiting Conseillers from the Chief Pleas of Sark, Conseillers Cragoe and Locke. Once again, they are very welcome to witness what happens in in this Assembly.

I am also going to ask Deputies Leadbeater and Meerveld if they wish to be relevéd.

80 **Deputy Leadbeater:** Yes, please, sir.

Deputy Meerveld: Yes, please, sir.

Billet d'État IX

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

17. Future Inert Waste Disposal and Water Resource Management Including the Future Strategic Use of Les Vardes Quarry – Debate continued – Propositions carried as amended

85 **The Bailiff:** Thank you very much. Who wants to speak?
Deputy Queripel.

Deputy Queripel: Thank you, sir.

90 Sir, I had the great pleasure of working with former St Peter Port North Deputy, Michelle Le Clerc, in a previous Assembly. I had a lot of respect for Michelle. I really liked her approach to politics. She often asked questions she knew some of her colleagues would consider to be silly questions but she wanted the answers to be out in the public domain in order that the public could understand what was going on. I have done that myself on occasion over the years, and I am going to do it again on this occasion because I think it is really important for the public to know why we find ourselves where we should not be once again.

95 I risk being criticised and ridiculed, but I am not at all concerned about that. What I am concerned about is getting the answers out into the public domain to clarify why we are where we should not be.

100 So my questions to Deputy de Sausmarez are as follows. We do not even own Les Vardes Quarry so why are we talking about the States using it for water storage when we do not own it? Are we living in hope the States will end up owning the quarry at some stage in the future? If so, is that not rather unprofessional? If, for some reason, the States do not end up owning it, will not a lot of taxpayers' money and civil servants' and Deputies' time have been wasted planning to use something that is not even ours? Why do we even need to consider reclaiming Black Rock for housing when we already own numerous sites? Why do we not just get on with building houses on the sites we have already got? At least we would be providing housing in the short term, if we did that.

105 Thinking long term, seeing as we are talking, what is it, 10 or even 12 years ahead for Black Rock to provide 300, or whatever it is, houses., why not put our inert waste on the Belgrave and Fontaine Vinery sites to stabilise that land to enable 300 houses to be built there instead of Black Rock?

I think I know the answer to some of those questions, sir, but I may be wrong, which is why I am seeking clarification. But even if I am wrong, at least the answers will be out in the public domain.

115 At the moment we are talking and planning to store water in a quarry we do not even own. That makes no sense at all to me. It does not make any sense at all to the 20 or so Islanders I have spoken to recently. Moving builders' compounds back to the Fontaine Vinery, where they were originally just a few years ago, does not make a lot of sense to me either. Why were they moved to Griffith's Yard in the first place? How much did that cost the taxpayer? How much will it cost to move them back?

120 As I remember rightly we knew, even though Fontaine and Belgrade were designated for housing, it waterlogged. Hence my question of why do we not stabilise it by putting inert waste there.

125 Unlike Deputy Le Tissier and some more Islanders I have spoken to recently, I am struggling to get to grips with hundreds of houses being built at Black Rock anyway because I cannot see how they are going to be affordable unless the whole complex is turned into a social housing estate and is heavily subsidised by the taxpayer. I remain to be convinced about that one.

130 If I can be convinced they will be affordable, and will be tastefully and sensibly developed, not crammed in like sardines but with plenty of open space and car parking, then I might just vote in favour of the Proposition. I am not a Luddite, as I have said several times in speeches in the past, but my great fear is the whole complex will end up like another Bouet, which the States knocked down and rebuilt not so long ago because the houses there were crammed in like sardines and were badly designed.

135 As I am sure we all realise, we currently have almost 400 people on the social housing waiting list. A lot of them are inappropriately housed. A lot of them have been on that list waiting for a long time and they need somewhere to live right now; not in 10 or 12 years' time. Right now.

In my view, I have said this before, one of the worst things the States ever did was stop building social housing and hand everything over to the GHA and expect them to keep up with demand. They have done and they are doing a marvellous job. They are doing their very best. But it was an extremely unrealistic expectation in the first place.

140 So moving towards the close, I very much appreciate Deputy de Sausmarez may not be able to answer some of my questions, but I have every faith she will answer as many as she can.

I am wondering what my dear friend, the late Barry Paint, would have said about all of this. So, sir, suffice to say at the current time I do not feel fully informed. Neither do members of the public I have spoken to. How many times have we said in this Chamber we need to be fully informed in order to enable us to be clear of how we are going to vote.

145 So I will listen to the rest of the debate in the hope I hear those killer points made to enable me to then be fully informed. I do not need to be told we have a housing crisis; I am only too aware of that. But I am not convinced we need to build hundreds of houses on Black Rock when we have sites like the Data Park and Fontaine and Belgrave Vinery.

150 In closing, sir, moving back to the point Deputy Le Tissier made when he spoke yesterday, I think he said he does not agree that so much development should be taking place in the north. But that is what the States' Land Use Plan and the IDP dictate. It is there in Law. If things stay as they are, the east side of the Island will eventually become a concrete jungle with thousands of people scurrying around like ants. And the west of the Island will be where people can go for some solace and sanctuary and some open space in which to escape all the noise pollution.

155 So anyone who wants to change and amend the States' Land Use Plan and the IDP needs to layer a requête in front of the States. So I hope that message gets through to the next Assembly where we have new Members who do not quite understand the process and they also agree, they do not like, they will not agree with all the development going on in the north.

160 Roll your sleeves up, do the work, do the research, layer a requête if you want something changed, that is the only way to go.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

165 **Deputy Gollop:** Thank you, sir.

We heard a wonderful valedictory piece from Deputy Trott today, confirming perhaps, although some might be reluctant to hear it, his political retirement, if not retirement from public life. I do not know if Deputy Queripel will stand again, which he may well do, but I am sure many of us will (*Interjection*), not necessarily us, but the States will miss his presence and his uniquely dramatic and pointed speeches, as we do of course Michelle Le Clerc, who Deputy Queripel mentioned, and indeed will be perhaps a significant influence behind the disability debate, if we come to it later today.

170 Le Clerc used to say, 'I used to say you cannot have the penny in the bun', and it is interesting that you cannot be decisive and also question all the time. I am not always popular on Policy & Resources because sometimes I will have a paddy and I will say. 'Let us get this done regardless of the cost rather than be responsible exclusively for the Treasury.' Sometimes you have to make a decision without too much evidence and not exactly of an open chequebook, but those kind of views.

175 Deputy Queripel actually, on a side issue, has raised the issue of requêtes as well, and I have been surprised there have not been more in the last few months – monster-flies and Deputy Helyar notwithstanding – but that is for another day. Of course, requêtes, even if they are successful, have to be implemented.

180 I agree actually with one of, again, Deputy Trott's more able colleagues, the late Deputy Kuttelwascher, who would say he believed we did not have a problem with strategies or even making decisions on occasion in this Assembly, we have problems in implementing them. That is the crucial point because we heard some other scary speeches yesterday, which may well be right, that if we do not decide in the right way we will end up having a problem with inert waste and nowhere to put it.

185 I think in an emergency, if we got to that position, we would have to use in the short term Les Vardes, and it would have to be hybrid and we would be filling in rock in the hole before we used it, perhaps, as a reservoir. That would be foolish, in a way. Of course, we would have less water coverage and maybe a potential contamination. But that might be where we will end up.

190 But I would like to see the Black Rock scheme proceed. I know there have been some concerns about it from the Vale Parish and from northern residents, and Deputy Queripel has also put up the stakes really by suggesting we risk moving into a situation of east coast over-density and development. They will all be little ants scurrying around and that we will have an idyllic countryside out west where only a few can seek sanctuary and solace.

195 But the very nature of planning is, if you follow Deputy Le Tissier's understandable view of sharing houses across the Island, you end up with no countryside at all and no place to seek solace. So if we are going to create more houses, for the reasons Deputy Moakes, and many other Members have said over the recent months, we have to find spaces. We all know that for some reason or another we have not got on with the job of facilitating the planning permissions that are already outstanding and the construction of houses.

200 Maybe the rather sudden letter we had from the Development Agency before we started yesterday suggesting that we might be going up from a notional 350 houses to 500 is a bridge too far. Actually I spoke with a high-net-worth person, as you do, by chance, and he had a vision for Black Rock – I am not sure if it is in the plans or not at this stage – whereby you would combine that area, which is a prime site next to the Vale Castle and the coast, as a kind of marina as well, either there or nearby, and the houses would be very much high quality and aspirational or a mix of social housing and private housing. In my view, I am a great believer in key worker housing and social housing and we have not done enough.

210 But we also need to really focus on private housing for successful people, for people coming to the Island, for young people. We definitely need housing at every level and a quality development, a waterfront development, would be great. Maybe we need less quantity and more quality there.

215 But I think we have to make a decision in principle to go with the Black Rock. I also question
Deputy Le Tissier's perspective that he would not be unhappy to see it used for other purposes
other than housing. Of course that opens the question of just keeping it or enhancing it as an
industrial estate.

220 That brings me on to another little topic actually. I was researching the whole business of the
desalination plant and it is a very interesting history actually because it opened in 1960 by the then
MP for Saffron Walden, whose successor is the Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch, the current leader of the
Opposition. But the MP for Saffron Walden then was arguably the most distinguished non-Prime
Minister parliamentarian of the 20th century.

225 Deputy Ferbrache, I am sure, will be interested in this. That Rab Butler, who was Deputy Prime
Minister, Home Secretary – we used to think Home Secretaries did not visit Guernsey before the
1980s. They clearly did, as he grandly opened it in a ceremony. It was a major event for the Island.
It lasted 10 years, if that. But apparently it was beneficial in the very dry summers of 1964 and 1965.
Only coming in this morning, Deputy Murray, who is a very sage person, reminded us that 1976 was
a particularly hot summer and indeed Deputy Trott's mentor, Deputy Conseiller Berry, arguably built
230 the strength and calibre of his political career on the expert leadership he showed during that crisis.

Deputy Inder has a point that actually I think we needed millions of water more back in those
days because of the success of horticulture and tourism than today and we are more efficient. So
to that degree Deputy Helyar has a point about water requirements. But Deputy Parkinson, as he
often does, drew an amazing rabbit out of the hat yesterday. It is not clearly identified in the policy
235 letter, although it is hinted at a few times, that rather than have yet another huge reservoir at Les
Vardes long term in order to protect against water contamination, to increase demand, maybe an
increased population; you actually were replacing one hole in the ground for another. The argument
seemed to be if Les Vardes is strategically used then maybe the Longue Houge reservoir – I will give
way to the Deputy so he can clarify what I am saying.

240 **Deputy Inder:** Thank you, Deputy Gollop, for giving way.

Just two points on that. I have just recently shared an email, admittedly from about 2018, and
just to shoot that fox, or strangle that rabbit, there does not appear at least from six years ago that
there was any interest in filling in Longue Houge South, and in the note that I sent Members today
245 it also disabuses people of another rumour that Longue Houge South was half freshwater, half saline
as well. I do not know if that helps at all.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

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

Deputy Inder means Longue Houge Reservoir I think rather than Longue Houge South, and he
made the same mistake in his email, but actually all of that is referenced in the policy letter. We
have explained that there would be significant engineering challenges. It does remain a potential
option, but absolutely we concur. But none of that is new; all of that information was indeed taken
255 into very close and careful consideration in the options appraisal.

Deputy Gollop: Yes, getting down in the weeds again, literally. The Longue Houge Reservoir is
not only especially deep and our largest reservoir, but apparently still has gravestones and sanctified
remains of distinguished former Islanders. They might have to be removed and there is a lot of
260 delicacy about that. So it is not simple.

Deputy Parkinson – I do not want to strangle a rabbit or anything – but he raised a vision, or
maybe the Development Agency potentially have as well, that they could potentially utilise prime
land in the Longue Houge area for something, maybe commercial or maybe residential. But it would
be a very expensive way of achieving that objective, it has to be said, because we are talking
265 £38 million here, £20 million there, £38 million for the land wall at Black Rock. But the Black Rock

project, as I understand it, actually the policy letter does not have as much on Black Rock as it could have done perhaps.

270 I would like to see it more as an environmental waterfront area with perhaps very high quality housing in part, and marine facilities. But the report certainly says it would have a significant flood defence role and potential significant housing role. I think we do not want to see housing on green fields and we do not necessarily want to see tower blocks everywhere, and we do not necessarily want to see bungalows. Surely we have to look at key areas like the waterfront. Also it provides employment and revitalisation.

275 Deputy Queripel's point about us buying sites a bit too wildly has some merit. But it has to be said we went through a phase last term, as Deputy Michelle Le Clerc would remind us, when we had run out of sites. Leale's Yard has not quite happened yet, although my personal view is that can be looked at afresh with a new team in the future. But as Leale's Yard, for good reasons, has not happened, we have to look elsewhere. But we all would agree – or most of us would agree – that regeneration of the Bridge, the Vale and St Sampson's is in all of our interests, whether it is from
280 young people's point of view, a community point of view, a housing perspective. The fact that we have almost a rust belt there of industries that are no more, from Leale's Yard to other things, and we want to change that. So we say in principle yes to Black Rock; yes, the design might be improved; yes, we do not want over density of housing there and the issues Deputy Queripel and the Vale parish have raised.

285 Then I come on to the more tricky reservoir one, and I voted for the decoupling. I did that because I think the argument needs a chance. I think Deputy Helyar and others have raised valid points about the overprovision potentially of water, and our lack of strategic decision making. On the other hand, it appears that we might actually be repurposing an existing reservoir, so that makes the whole debate more complicated. Also I am afraid the hare has jumped out of the rabbit burrow
290 here because the fact that we are talking about a major quarry which really only has two uses, because housing there is perhaps too like the hobbit, is either going to be filling inert waste or it is going to be a reservoir, we kind of weakened our negotiating position whichever way you look at it. I will give way to Deputy Haskins.

295 **Deputy Haskins:** I am very grateful to Deputy Gollop.

I just wanted to remind him that the decommissioning of Longue Houge Quarry would cost £17 million and then an extra £1.6 million to get it ready just for inert waste, should it need to. I think that is pertinent when he is talking about the costs of providing housing or something else. These costs, almost £20 million, should be borne in mind.

300

Deputy Gollop: Yes, I thank Deputy Haskins.

I had a figure of around £20 million, and his figure is more or less of the same nature. I think the silly figures in this policy letter, you come up with £58 million just like that, and where I perhaps differ from some of my senior colleagues is they always look to best value to the taxpayer and I say,
305 'Well, to get something done and make decisions there is a balance somewhere there. But Deputy Haskins and many others are right to raise the point – and maybe Deputy de Sausmarez and others can clarify in the summing up – about these costs and issues, and maybe that one would really have to do a calculation as to the value of the land released because if you are spending £20 million plus on filling up a hole then what you use it for has to be of long-term value from both a community
310 perspective and maybe a business perspective.

But at the moment I am more likely than not to also support the decision because we do not make enough decisions, to repurpose Les Vardes – although there might be a crisis that might undercut this – as a reservoir, knowing that decision is very broad, very long term, and may – probably will – require more thorough investigation with more lead-in time by the next Assembly.

315

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

Starting with Black Rock, which I think is the first thing we need to look at, the Guernsey Development Agency obviously have come up with a nice looking plan. I am not at all sure we are going to do all of it. Part of it involves actually moving the power station, which is a long way down the road and I am not sure if that will ever be affordable. But overall it is a good plan and Black Rock fits into it, for various reasons, flood defences and land for building houses or other things.

I agree with Deputy Gollop; I think this is the last site that we simply want to turn into a big social housing estate. We have got a lot of land all over the Island, we have got a nice masterplan from Savills as to how we might set out the road system around the Data Park and all that sort of thing. So we have got a lot of States' land to be going on with. The new IDP is bringing forward more sites that will be suitable for a mix of social housing and private housing, depending on how the joint ventures or whatever might work out. We have got sites coming forward and plans and all sorts of things going on, so I do not think we necessarily need Black Rock for social housing. It would be too expensive. I will give way to Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Please, Deputy Dyke.

The problem is when people say something in the States it often becomes fact. Myself, Deputy Murray and Deputy de Sausmarez have been part of the oversight group. There has been no talk ever about Black Rock as social housing. That has just been created in the States within the last 20 minutes and it has now become a fact, and we have now got speeches talking about things that are definitely going to happen 20 minutes ago which were not going to happen when I was riding into town. There are lots of things I would like to shoot today, Deputy Dyke not being one of them, but there is no intention whatsoever – in fact, while I am on my feet, if it helps Deputy Queripel, given the members of the GDA, if anything they are not looking at Black Rock and certainly Griffith's Yard potentially as anything that is going to look like the modern Fort George. Critical to what they have been saying is – and I do not like to use the word because even that could be misconstrued – it is more likely to be affordable for local people in whatever that context might be.

So that has been embedded and I hope it might help Deputy Queripel in the corner. There is no desire to turn this into the modern Fort George that looks out of the Island. Implicit in their thinking is to ensure we get the right-sized apartments or flats for local talent, if anything, somewhere in between the very expensive houses and the rented social housing. But they would be private owned.

Just one more thing Deputy Dyke might want to consider, and it is a question really for him, through these conversations we always assume Guernsey has to do everything. With a proper plan, with a proper investment, why do we think Guernsey even has to do this? If it is right –

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder, your two minutes –

Deputy Inder: Is it two minutes? *(Interjection)* Sorry. Okay, thank you.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir, I think I had heard enough. *(Laughter)*

Yes, I am aware, we have spoken to the GDA at planning so I am aware of all the ideas they have got, but the idea did seem to come up of 500 apartments and I am not sure that is something that is doable. Anyway, there are all sorts of things that we can do at Black Rock and the GDA have ideas as to what to do.

We are going to have to be very serious about spending money. All of the decisions we make have to be economic, so what is Black Rock finally going to cost, how much money can be made out of it. If we billed it and then sell it to the private sector to do something marvellous, fine, but how much? What is the cost-benefit analysis which we are going to have to do? Hopefully the cost-benefit analysis will be positive and we will do it. We will then have somewhere to put our inert waste and that is great.

Inert waste actually is a valuable asset; it is not just a troublesome thing that gets in our way. It helps us build things like Black Rock. We might even want to ask Jersey if they want to send us

370 theirs if this is a goer as a proposal. If Black Rock is not economic and we do not do it then we have the inert waste problem. But there is one thing that has not been brought into the conversation today, and that is that the GDA are actually calling for raising Longue Houge by 2 m, so if we do not do Black Rock then the option of using our inert waste to raise Longue Houge by 2 m – presumably for flood defence purposes – is still there, so we are not completely stuck if that does not happen.

375 Even if Black Rock did not happen – and I hope it does happen – we do not have to then put the waste into Les Vardes Quarry or another quarry. There are several years that it could be used for building up Longue Houge. So that is how I see that side of the discussion, and I will vote in favour of the Black Rock thing to explore further how we are going to do it and what the economics are. The GDA will certainly be doing that and, as Deputy Inder has said in his speech, it is perfectly possible and probably desirable that we put it out to the private sector. They do marine developments all that sort of thing, so that may well be what we do.

380 So I am going to vote for that, but knowing that it may or may not be economic. I would be disappointed if it does not happen, and I hope it does happen, but I am distraught that Leale's Yard has not happened. But clearly I am not involved in the discussions there; a deal good for us – obviously Policy & Resources did not think that was doable at the moment so we are not doing it. Hopefully we will do something else on that soon. That is my position on that.

385 On Les Vardes Quarry, I echo the views expressed that it is a shame we had not lined up a deal on that when we dealt with Chouet, but obviously the horse has bolted on that. I have studied the figures that Deputy Inder helpfully sent around either yesterday or this morning, and it would appear that at the moment at current rates of usage – which have been dropping but I guess they will plateau or possibly rise slightly – we do seem to have about 11 months' supply of water to cover a drought that would last roughly 11 months. We have not had an 11-month drought recently. I am conscious, as a gardener, that we do seem to be getting more rain in the winter and rather less in the summer, so it may be that over time, depending on how the climate changes – which we do not really know – we may need more storage in the future.

395 But at the moment Les Vardes does not belong to us, it is still being used, there are quite a few years left in it before Ronez have finally exited and moved everything to Chouet, so I do not think that at this point we need to start spending money through the water company on plumbing it in if we do not own it, and at the moment we do not have an urgency. So I would suggest thinking about that at a later date. It is going to be there, it has been allocated as a potential water reserve already in the IDP. I do not think we need to do anything about it now on that one, so I will respectfully vote against that.

400 As an aside, I thank Deputy de Sausmarez for her paper, which is well-researched and interesting. I thank her for that. If I might respectfully make one criticism of her opening speech, she referred to the Fiscal Policy Panel and its suggestion that we should increase our investment, the money we have spent on capital projects. I do not think that is an argument respectfully for any particular capital project. Every capital project must stand alone and I very much disagree with this 3% thing that the Fiscal Policy Panel came up with. I think GPEG called it a chocolate teapot and I agree with that, so that is where I stand on it.

410 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, sir.

415 Last week there was an article in the press where the GDA expressed support for the amendment to separate the Propositions, and that was understandable. Their priority is getting hold of all the inert waste we can produce. However, yesterday we had an email from the GDA stressing that they do not want to see part of Longue Houge being sterilised by the potential of a desalination plant. Even if one is never built, if part of Longue Houge is needed to be earmarked for one that alone

420 disrupts the GDA's master plan. This was confirmed to me last week when I met with the GDA ahead of this debate.

I am also fascinated how we have heard various suggestions yesterday and today – and this picks up a bit on what Deputy Inder was saying – about how Black Rock could be developed, what timescale, what we could put on it and so forth. I began to ask myself what on earth was the point of setting up the GDA if this Assembly wants to relentlessly micromanage their plans, doubtless not having done a fraction of the research, consultation and work that they have done.

425 Separately, Guernsey Water have also made it clear they need to know that Les Vardes is officially earmarked for water. They will only be too aware of the vagaries of this Assembly and, like any business, they want certainty. I am happy to take the advice of the experts at Guernsey Water as I do not profess to be a hydrologist and I am not aware if we have any Members so-qualified. Given
430 all the foregoing, I am baffled by how some in this Assembly appear –

Deputy Helyar: A point of correction, sir.

435 **The Bailiff:** A point of correction, Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: I was formerly the Water Quality Officer at Guernsey Water, then called the States' Water Board, and responsible for preparing the statistics. I also have a degree which involved the study of hydrology and climatology, thank you.

440 **Deputy Burford:** Thank you, so one out of 40.

The question to me is, if we do not put water in Les Vardes what are we going to do with it? In my view it would be simply criminal to put inert waste into it, which is not always that inert, to essentially turn it into an enormous tip. As an aside, responding to a comment that Deputy Le Tocq made yesterday with reference to me about the suggestion of Les Vardes being used as modern
445 landfill, this comment was made some 14 years ago when Guernsey was faced with the prospect of a 70,000 t incinerator on the east coast, and the Deputies at the time were saying to us campaigners, 'Well, what is the alternative to an incinerator?' That was merely one suggestion. Thank goodness the incinerator was overturned, given our waste is now under a quarter of that capacity. But back
450 to inert waste.

Land on this Island is valuable and inert waste will always be most effectively used by making more land; not by dumping it into a hole in the ground that instead could not only give us robust security of water supplies but provide a hugely visually attractive asset to the Island. Just look at how popular and picturesque St Saviour's Reservoir is. Deputy Queripel asked why we are even
455 talking about Les Vardes. Well, it is strategic planning, making decisions early enough to facilitate progress; something that Members of this Assembly frequently complain we are not doing enough of. Fear of being held to ransom over the purchase price of the quarry would also seem to be unfounded as who else will want to buy the site and why would the seller want to keep it on its books when it has no further use to them. As has been said, it will become a stranded asset once
460 exhausted.

Deputy Queripel also asked about what kind of housing will be put on Black Rock. I asked that question directly of the GDA myself, and the answer is a mixture of housing types. I am told that the seafront location will permit a small number of luxury open market-type apartments, which will in turn make the provision of moderately priced units available, and I think that is a better
465 description than 'affordable', which brings a lot of different things to mind.

So I urge Members to support both Propositions and let the people we have charged with development and with water get on with it.

Thank you.

470 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Ferbrache.

Deputy Ferbrache: Sir, I thank Deputy de Sausmarez for a good policy letter and a good opening speech, but we started the morning with a period of self-reflection really over somebody's political career over the last 15 years. I joined the States in 1994, I left in 2000 because I had to earn
475 a living, and I came back in 2016, so today I have clocked up 15 years, not quite 25. Had four presidencies, sat on many committees, etc., etc. But where we are in relation to this – and it is another person that I am going to miss, Deputy Queripel, and Deputy Gollop has already mentioned that. He may not have met popes, he may not have met potentates, he may not have met maharajas, he may not have met kings, he may not have met prime ministers; but he has met the people of
480 Guernsey and he has served their purposes well over the last X number of years that he has been a Member of this Assembly. Just as valuable as my contribution, just as valuable as Deputy Trott's contribution.

Deputy Gollop set out the history of the desalination plant. It only lasted about 10 years, it never really worked very well, and it cost a fortune. The technology has moved on, but nobody really
485 wants desalination if we need it. I am a little surprised to hear Deputy Gabriel's woe and behave speech yesterday in relation to water, 3 million L short, etc. Well when I turned on the tap this morning I had plenty of water. When I turned the tap on three months ago I had plenty of water. When I turn the tap on in three months' time I will have plenty of water.

If you look at the statistics – and from a person who actually knows what he is talking about, at least on this occasion, Deputy Helyar – in relation to the explanatory note, and in fact UK water storage when full, 3,550 L per person; Jersey 26,000 L; Guernsey 54,000 L. I appreciate that something can happen in the next 30 years, it could happen tomorrow, it could happen whenever. I am not saying that we must never ever be vigilant in relation to water storage; I would rather have too much than too little. But we are another situation, and I started a speech yesterday by quoting
490 from Bob Dylan, now I would like to quote from Laurel and Hardy. I used to go and watch those when I used to go to Saturday morning cinema with my older sister who is younger than me, if that makes sense, and we watched Laurel and Hardy films, but then I had to stop because I went to Elizabeth College – an opportunity that would not be given to people like me nowadays – and we used to have to go to school on Saturday mornings.

But Oliver Hardy said to Stan Laurel, 'Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into.' This is another nice mess that we have got the people of Guernsey into because we are, every pun intended, between a rock and a hard place in relation to where we are. We are going to have to go to Black Rock because there is no alternative. But look again at the information given by Deputy Helyar and Deputy Murray in relation to Black Rock. We have got no option and I am going
500 to vote for it, but what they say is, the Black Rock scheme may well be desirable but there are several reasons why it may not happen, it does not have planning permission, no assessment of title effects being conducted and financed – currently estimated at £38 million – is not available within the current funding and investment planning envelope. It is also a tight timeframe to achieve consent secure finance, etc.

They go on to make the point that when we look at the upfront finance of Black Rock and Les Vardes we expect to fund it from reserves. Bear in mind that they say – and they are right – factually and historically, all major capital planning by Government in the past five years has turned out to be 40% more expensive than original estimates. So we could be talking £90 million to £100 million. I know we spent £450,000 a year yesterday which we have not got, but that pales into insignificance
515 in relation to £100 million. But we have got to go with Black Rock because we have nowhere else to go.

We had a water crisis in the 1970s and Roger Berry, who in my view, when I think public acknowledgements were more difficult to obtain, was the saviour of Guernsey because we had a real problem. He sorted that out. I remember when I came into the States in 1994 we had another water difficulty and my good friend, Eric Walters, was President of the Water Board and Roger Berry had to come charging over the hilltops to make sure that we had another water problem solved
520 because we had another difficulty. But we have moved on and we have got plenty of storage now.

I am not saying that Les Vardes should be for inert waste, we will have to wait and see. I am just saying it is too premature to make a decision that it should definitely be for water, because once you have made that decision there is no going back. After all, we have not got a great record of making any decision so if we make one we probably will stick with it I think in this particular occasion in relation to where we are.

Deputy Burford said it was not a very good idea to drop inert waste into Les Vardes. The idea is you try and recycle your inert waste as quick as you can, but it has to be put somewhere before it can be recycled and reused, and some of it can never be used because of the quality of it. I can remember going with Deputy Leadbeater and others years ago down to Les Vardes. It was going to be sorted out very soon. Now Deputy Leadbeater's beard has got grey, I have lost even more of the hair that I had – Deputy Queripel referred to his elder brother when we were barred from discotheques as we had too long hair. I have got even less than I had a few years ago.

But what have we done? We have done absolutely nothing. We are forced with this crisis because we are inept, our predecessors were inept and their predecessors were inept. We have made some good decisions but they are far more outweighed by the decisions we have not made.

I smile inwardly, and I know we are coming up to an election, so Deputy Dyke has spoken a lot more because the election is not far away, but in relation to where we are in connection with the situation that we are in –

Deputy Dyke: Point of correction.

Deputy Ferbrache: I will sit down.

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

I would say I spoke in this Assembly because we are in a debate and I had a couple of points to make, not because there is an election.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ferbrache.

Deputy Ferbrache: I am very grateful for that interjection. I appreciate it most sincerely, as Hughie Green used to say.

But in relation to where we are, in connection to going forward, I can remember I led in this Assembly, Stuart Falla led outside of this Assembly, the Guernsey Development Agency. We did not have a smooth ride. Now it has been raised to almost sainthood. I find that just a touch ironic, but I am very glad that it has been given the prominence that it should be given.

But we are in a position whereby we have got waste that we are stockpiling in places we should not stockpile. It is costing us money that we have not got. So we have got to go with Black Rock. We have got absolutely no alternative.

But I thank Deputies Helyar and Murray for their contribution in bringing the amendment. Because otherwise we would have been left with an all-or-nothing situation. I think they are going to be voting reluctantly for Black Rock, or they are going to be voting for Black Rock, and like me, I believe – but it would be a matter for them where they cast their votes – be voting against, at this stage, making the final decision in relation to a Les Vardes. It could be a water storage, it might not be. It could be used for something else. I fully appreciate the point that Deputy de Sausmarez made very ably. It seems there are negotiations going on. They must be kept commercially sensitive. They must be kept private until the next stage is reached.

So I thank people for their contributions to this debate. But I just hope we make more proactive decisions in the next Assembly.

575 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Sir, I rise briefly. I shall be supporting both Propositions.
To make a far more important announcement, if my memory serves me correctly, it is your birthday today, sir.

580 **The Bailiff:** It is.

Deputy Trott: I think it would be appropriate for us to wish you a happy birthday in the appropriate way. So happy birthday.

585 *(Members applauded.)*

The Bailiff: Thank you very much.
Yes, Members, it is another year older, but not another year wiser. There is, in the States' Members' room some cake, if anyone wants to have a piece of cake.
Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, sir. Happy birthday.
Sometimes the right decision stares us in the face. This is one of those times. Yet here we are again, the final States' debate of the term, and once more the usual ritual, tear down the work, cast doubt, stall for time. Everyone in this room knows that delay does not save money. It costs the taxpayer more. It will cost Guernsey Water customers more. More inflation, more consultants, more duplication of officer time. We are not asking for controversy with this policy letter. We are just asking for progress.

600 We need to use Black Rock for land reclamation to solve our inert waste problem, resolve the issue of land being flooded, and most importantly building much needed homes. Yes, there are sites in the pipeline, but we still need more.

At this time we are asking to protect Les Vardes Quarry for the only use that matters more. Clean, safe, reliable water. There is no greater infrastructure priority than ensuring a secure supply of drinking water. Sorry.

605 We need to use Black Rock for land reclamation to solve our inert waste problem, resolve the problem of land being flooded, and most importantly, building much needed homes. Yes, there are sites in the pipeline, but we still need more.

At the same time, we are asking to protect Les Vardes Quarry for the only use that matters more, clean, safe, reliable drinking water. There is no greater infrastructure priority than ensuring a secure supply of drinking water for everyone in Guernsey. That is not my opinion, that is the Fiscal Policy Panel's in their 2025 report, they put it plainly:

Chronic underinvestment in public infrastructure is an increasingly binding constraint on growth, fiscal sustainability and living standards.

615 They recommend infrastructure investment of 3% of GDP over the long term, with a clear emphasis on water, power and housing. As much as we need housing, you do not get more essential than clean water.

Deputy Inder stated yesterday that water consumption is falling. Yes, it has. It is falling because 68% of customers are now metered and metered customers use about 24% less water. But there is not much further we can go there. Meanwhile, the pressure from population growth is building and water quality problems mean that we cannot collect from all of our existing sources.

620 This is because drinking water standards for PFAS are tightening, and pesticide incidents are increasing. That is why the Water Resource Plan shows we already face a supply deficit in a drought of nearly 3 million L per day, rising to over 4 million L by 2040.

625 Even after we invest in more efficient appliances, catchment management and better treatment, the only solution is a new reservoir or desalination plant. Desalination is far more expensive, riskier and environmentally damaging. Using Les Vardes for water storage is the best choice by a long way.

Deputy Queripel will ask why we are deciding the use for Les Vardes when we do not own it. We need States' Members to determine its future strategic use before those negotiations can begin. So not making a decision means we are still in limbo and acquiring the quarry will be delayed.

630 We have, as others have said, got mountains of inert waste building up, 100,000 t a year and nowhere left to put it. Black Rock gives us a really efficient solution. We use the waste to reclaim land, which we can use for housing, coastal defences and regeneration of the Bridge. That is a triple win that aligns with our Waste Strategy and the hierarchy of reuse over landfill. The site is viable, the GDA is ready, and it helps us reduce expensive stockpiling and double handling. Yes, there are planning permissions to secure, but the timeline is clear and achievable.

635 For those asking what if Black Rock is delayed, the answer is clear. We have already got up to eight years' worth of stockpiling space at Longue Hougue. That is more than enough time to get Black Rock up and running.

640 Sir, before I close, we have heard previously that some Deputies have declared that they are shareholders in SigmaRoc or Bailiwick Investments, the company that owns Les Vardes Quarry. Given the importance of this decision, it is only fair to ask, before this goes to vote, do they still hold shares in SigmaRoc or Bailiwick Investments? If not, when did they dispose of them and was it to a family member or associate? Let me be clear, I am not making accusations. But public trust demands transparency.

645 So, colleagues, this is a question of priorities. Do we want to turn inert waste into much-needed new land, unlocking housing, building flood defences, and at the same time securing clean drinking water for generations, or do we want to kick the can in the long grass, hoping the next Assembly will have the courage and common sense to pick it up and take credit for it?

650 I urge Members to back both parts of this now-amended policy letter. Proposals that are backed not only by the Guernsey Development Agency and Guernsey Water, but unanimously agreed by E&I.

Thank you, sir.

655 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Haskins.

Deputy Haskins: Thank you, sir.

660 I agree with Deputy Ferbrache; really the question is, do we need to do the water part now? I am unconvinced. I am going to explain why. Really, it is a question of what are the chances? What are the chances of this severe drought? The statistics are not in the policy letter in any real detail. So this is about the one in 500-year drought event that I mentioned before. That equates to 0.2% in any given year. Over 10 years it is about 2%, in 50 years it is about 10%.

665 Sir, if you look at page 64, page 9 of the water report there, of the appendix, one of the things it says there is, 'Without intervention, temporary rationing would be necessary.' Well, yes. I would expect there to be. So these figures here, the deficit is predicated on there being no rationing whatsoever. That is where I go, well, hang on a minute, in those severe droughts people would be expected to, hang on, let us just think about our water usage. Maybe we should lower that.

670 It was interesting, Deputy Cameron raised some figures. He said 68% of people are metered. I thought, wow, okay, so 32 – metered users use 24% less water. So the 32% remaining use about 4 million L of water a day. So a 24% reduction, if everybody was metered, that would have a saving of around 960,000 L a day.

675 Here is another interesting statistic. In 2023, it was reported that every property loses wastage, leakage, 66 L per day per property. So on account of there being 27,000 properties, I make that around 1.8 million L a day. So, in total, 2.7 million L a day could be saved if we metered all properties and we reduced the leakage. I am not saying that reducing the leakage by 100% is even feasible. But it used to be 55 per household. It is now up to 66. I am just saying, from a statistical chance

point of view, if 0.2% of a severe drought is happening, and we get to have the same water usage as we have right now, I am saying, well the 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 years of waiting while we sort out Black Rock is absolutely fine. I am more than happy to wait.

680 The only other thing that I wanted to mention, sir, is that we do not know the cost of purchasing the quarry or any of that. But I would just give some context. So for the decommissioning of Longue Hougue Reservoir that Deputy Gollop was talking about, £17 million. Members, £17 million, that is a one-off decommissioning, plus another £1.6 million to get it ready. For 65,000 people, that is an extra £260. Members have mentioned this before, or some Members, they say, 'Well, do not worry, 685 that is not taxpayers.' Yes, well, kind of; it is not really, is it? Because the people paying the water bills are also paying tax. So it comes out of our pockets, so it is £260. That is a lot. I am just saying that for some context so that people know these costs are a lot.

As I say, as Members have said, Deputy Murray said before, we just do not have this level of money. That is just for £17 million. We do not even know the quantum of it.

690 So, Members, I really do thank Deputy Helyar and Murray for bringing this amendment. I, like Deputy Ferbrache, will support the Black Rock and I will not support the water.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Mahoney.

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Deputy Mahoney: Thank you, sir.

We find ourselves in the somewhat depressing or worrying practice each term of cramming difficult or sensitive or controversial into the very last meeting of a States' term. This has happened again; this is another one. Two days before the end of school now and we have still got some discrimination legislation, noisy motorbikes and the mythical pathway to net zero to discuss. It seems to me that Committees are daring Members to not support something just ahead of an election.

700 Before I continue, I just have to make a comment on Deputy Cameron's opening statement, here we go again, unpicking work that has been done, said seemingly with no irony whatsoever given it perfectly sums up exactly what he did in the many education debates that this Assembly has suffered.

But back to the points –

Deputy Cameron: Point of correction, sir.

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The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: I have never picked apart anything in education. I have always tried to back stakeholder engagement all the way.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Mahoney.

Deputy Mahoney: I am not going to bother commenting on that.

720 The point of this policy letter, I do not understand why on earth are these two issues, Black Rock and Les Vardes, so pressing that proper and reasoned discussions cannot be had by the next elected Assembly in a couple of months. It is just a couple of months away. That is all we are talking. Given that we have had four years, eight months nearly to do this, does a couple of months make much difference? Not to me.

725 Nothing in the policy letter has convinced me of an urgency that could not wait just a little bit longer while better numbers, better figures, more accurate stuff could be provided. One of the beauties of being one of the few Members that is not standing in June is that you do not have to play the I dare you game. So I am not going to.

730 Not that long ago, the potential development around Delancey was being heavily criticised by many, including E&I, for the number of houses being proposed and the resulting traffic chaos that would ensue at the junction on the seafront. We all know it. Yet now E&I are entirely comfortable that an additional potentially 500 houses and the associated traffic can be accommodated and anyone that has lived in St Sampson, me included, or to the Vale, knows the traffic situation along the front when they have been trying to get into work in any mornings. People have seen many times the traffic backed up along Bulwer Avenue or all the way along the road off to the golf course.

735 Sir, I question that anyone sat here truly believes that the infrastructure for schools, road, power, drainage, sewers or water can be put in place to cope with the development at Fontaine, Kenilworth, Data Park and now potentially Black Rock. I previously stated I have been impressed by the speed at which the GDA have returned to the States. I stand by that. They have done their job that they were asked to do. I will stand by that absolutely.

740 But we have to recognise that there is a reality gap here. Let me remind Members, it took four years to fix some steps on the cliff path. Four years to fix some steps. Maybe, just maybe, the next Assembly will have some braver souls than this one or the last one or the one before that, and we can keep going, to be honest. But as a gambling man, sir, and I am one, I am telling you the smart money would not follow that bet.

745 Whilst we persist with this style of government, too many Members were more interested in keeping their job than doing it. We have seen it this term and we will see it next term. Let us be honest, even with the GST package, which this Assembly finally passed, which may be overturned by the next Assembly, we do not have the money to do this. It is just not there. The prices in here are not realistic. We all know it is going to be double, triple, whatever is in here. It is a grand plan and it is getting bigger with each iteration.

750 But this should be left for the next Assembly to decide as they are the ones that are going to have to sort it out and find the money to pay for it. Talking of which, surely no one here believes these numbers. We all know they will be massively off the mark. At least recognise that when you vote this through shortly, sometime later this morning.

755 As for the folly around Les Vardes, I do not even know where to begin. Lots of fantasy figures in here, some scaremongering by various Members, but no common sense. Let us fill a hole with water so we can empty an existing hole currently filled with water into which we can then pile inert waste that we could have sent straight to the empty hole that we have got. No net gain in water capacity to counter the try-drinking-dirt scaremongering that we have had.

760 As for the commercial sensitivity around the cost of Les Vardes, there are no negotiations with Ronez at the moment; there are none. We are not negotiating with Ronez about the price of Les Vardes. Let us get that clear. So there is no commercial sensitivity around it at all since we are not talking to them. I cannot let –

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

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy de Sausmarez.

770 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I am really sorry, I cannot let that stand. Deputy Mahoney is clearly misinformed. That is absolutely not the case.

The Bailiff: Deputy Mahoney.

Deputy Mahoney: Thank you, sir.

775 I thought that might come up, so this morning, and I have been given permission to share this, I texted the director of Ronez, which he has given me permission to read out. It is Steve Roussel, Mr Roussel, Steve, I know him, he is a rugby referee, I know him very well:

Steve, are Ronez currently in negotiations with the States to purchase Les Vardes?

Dave, no. I have been told it has been handed to States' procurement, but I have had no meetings and there is nothing scheduled.

780 That to me says we are not negotiating with Ronez. I cannot let Deputy Le Tissier's comments of yesterday, I think it was, slide without a few words. He asks who is responsible for not tying the extraction rights at Chouet to the future use of Les Vardes. Well, it was an E&I policy letter, but I have to say, hands up, it was me, *mea culpa*. It is a fair cop. Although, to be fair, I was joined by the other members of P&R that voted, all six principal Committee Presidents and 17 other Members
785 in the vote, September 2021, 27 pour, 9 contre, and 2 abstentions, with Alderney Member Roberts being absent. There were no amendments to tie the two matters together brought by any of the then 39 Members of the Assembly. So, of course, Deputy Le Tissier is quite right, he had nothing to do with that whatsoever because, unfortunately, he was having to listen from home during that period.

790 So, the numbers as for the Black Rock matter, they make no sense. I have said that already, I am not going to flog that horse anymore. We do not own Les Vardes and they cannot tell us what it would cost because there are no negotiations. Seriously, how can we sit here and make any decisions at all about Les Vardes? It is absurd. It is total madness.

795 I will not support Proposition 1, unlike most people, because I do not believe our current system of government will enable it to happen in any event and we have no money. I will not support Proposition 2 because it is simply a poor decision that should not be taken now.

800 Shortly, I hope, we will be talking about the aforementioned fantasy pathway to net zero. In rugby parlance, that will be perhaps the biggest hospital pass we can give to the next Assembly. Another 'we dare you to not support' policy letter. Please, Members, I urge you to not add another dodgy pass by pretending we need to decide Les Vardes today.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Parkinson.

805 **Deputy Parkinson:** Thank you, sir.

Although this debate has wandered off in various directions, there are essentially two questions before us this morning. First of all, why do we need to identify Les Vardes for water storage? Secondly, why do we need to make that decision now?

810 Of course, Les Vardes is already identified for future water storage. It was first identified for water storage in 2006, almost 20 years ago. In fact, the States are not really being asked to decide anything new. It is being asked to decide not to change a nearly 20-year-old decision. There are various reasons why, as the Environment Committee have ably set out, Les Vardes should be used for water storage, why we should stick with this 20-year-old decision as set out in the policy letter and the appendices.

815 In summary, the Water Resources and Drought Management Plan has identified that the Island faces the risk of a significant water shortage in the event of a severe drought and that that risk is increasing. The supply deficit, as others have said, is about potentially 3 million L today and forecasts to grow to 4.3 million L by 2040.

820 That obviously assumes that we are able to use all the water we have got in storage and, unfortunately, that is not the case. Some of the water in storage is failing water quality tests and we cannot draw on it. There are streams on the Island which would be potentially valuable sources of water which we cannot draw on because the water in the streams is too polluted, and it would not take very much to set all these calculations and send them rocking if a major reservoir was in the long term put out of use. At the moment, we cannot draw water from our largest reservoir because
825 it fails water quality tests.

So, I would say, number 2 in this category, the only realistic options for addressing the water shortage potential are a Les Vardes or a desalination plant. Les Vardes, of course, is significantly

cheaper, expensive though it will be, than doing desalination. Desalination also has severe environmental downsides.

830 So, moving on to the second question: why do we need to start now? A lot needs to be done before Les Vardes could be used for water storage. It would take a great deal of planning and the quarry would have to be connected to the rest of the mains raw water network. Guernsey Water estimate that putting in those connections would take five to seven years if we started today. So there is a vast amount of planning to be done, any part of which could derail the project. There will
835 have to be hydrogeological surveys, there will have to be monitoring of groundwater, there will have to be environmental impact assessments, and so on.

It is entirely possible that, somewhere along the line, we will hit a deal breaker. There will be some reason why we cannot use Les Vardes for water storage. It is possible. The sooner we find out whether this is possible or not, the more resilient our planning can be. If we decide wilfully not to
840 look into this today, we are putting back the date when Les Vardes could possibly come online as a major Island water storage resource. We are putting it back by years and potentially beyond the point where we need that supply to come online.

There are other reasons why we should take the decisions today. In doing the planning for the work that would be needed, phasing the cost over several years would help mitigate the impact on
845 consumers. If we choose not to start the planning now and then start it in four years' time, for example, then the period in which we have to do this work will be compressed and the cost to the consumers will be significantly greater and more painful.

Phasing the work would also make more efficient use of the Island's resources. If we are going to be digging up a lot of roads, which we always seem to be doing. It is worth planning ahead so
850 that we can plan those roadworks in with other necessary roadworks and try not to over strain the capacity of the Island to deliver the project.

As I have said already, I think starting the planning now would increase the resilience of the project. If we do not start for four or five years and then hit some major roadblocks we are going to be much more in a critical situation – as others have used the pun – between a rock and a hard
855 place. We will have much less road to manoeuvre on if we get to that situation. There is absolutely no question in my mind that filling in Les Vardes with inert waste would be the most senseless thing to do that it is almost possible to imagine.

If we filled in Les Vardes with inert waste at the end of the process after whatever it is, 25 years, Le Vardes imagine is full of inert waste, what are we going to do? We are going to have a few extra
860 fields on which we could graze cattle. There is no other potential use for the land at Les Vardes. Why not use inert waste – somebody has said that inert waste is a valuable resource and on a small Island it is gold. The opportunity to create useable land, valuable land, where we had none before, is something we should never pass up. Using the inert waste to reclaim land at Black Rock or using inert waste to reclaim land at Longue Hougue South, which was the States' previous policies before
865 this term of Government, both would create valuable land which would be a resource for this Island. Filling in Longue Hougue Quarry would also, as I said yesterday, create commercially valuable land on which we could build commercially valuable assets for the benefit of the Island. It would do something useful which filling in Les Vardes never would.

To me I am really puzzled that States' Members are struggling so much with this. To me it is a
870 no brainer that Les Vardes should be used for water storage. There is room for a reasonable discussion about what you do with the inert waste, the very valuable inert waste that you do not put into Les Vardes, and we could discuss what other options there are beyond Black Rock, but I think most people in the Assembly are happy – I give way to Deputy Oliver.

875 **Deputy Oliver:** Thank you.

It was just the point that you just said now, that we could discuss potentially where inert waste could go. We have been discussing nearly for the last nine years where inert waste could go. We have had various sites and none of them have come to fruition, so what makes the Deputy think that it will happen in the next five years?

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Deputy Parkinson: Well, the States are being asked to decide today on a solution that will last the next eight years and if the States decide to support the Black Rock proposals then that gives us at least a medium-term solution as to what to do with the inert waste, as some Members clearly are not minded to support the Black Rock proposals. Then the question that Deputy Oliver poses should be turned to those precise Members and they should be asked, 'Well, what else are you going to do with it?' We can stockpile it for a while but at the end of the day this inert waste needs to go somewhere.

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Before this States' term it was clear. The States had decided that we were going to reclaim land at Longue Hougue South, land that would be potentially commercially very valuable. The States in their wisdom overturned that decision and have left us with a vacuum which is now being filled by proposals to reclaim land at Black Rock. But if the States decide not to do that, having already decided not to reclaim Longue Hougue South, then Deputy Oliver is quite right. We will be in a bit of a mess, but that will be down to, frankly, the conduct of this Assembly.

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Almost one of the very first acts of this Assembly was to bin the Longue Hougue South proposals. If one of the last acts of this Assembly is to bin the Black Rock proposals then this Assembly will be criticised, justly, for being the most indecisive, negligent Assembly that the Island has ever seen. For goodness' sake, make a decision. It is really quite simple.

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Black Rock, in addition, in my opinion, to being an exciting idea, does offer a solution for eight years or thereabouts, a period during which further decisions will have to be taken about what we do with the inert waste after Black Rock. But there is absolutely no case in my view for saying, 'Oh, well, we should decide not to do Black Rock because we might want to chuck the inert waste in Les Vardes Quarry.' That would be just an insane thing to do. It would create no value at all. For goodness' sake, this Assembly has not covered itself in glory. Let us at least make a sensible decision to progress matters so that there is a plan for the next whatever it is, eight or 10 years. Yes, future Assemblies will have to decide what happens after that, but this sort of Luddite, 'Oh, well, we cannot do anything' attitude has got to come to an end and fortunately, hopefully, it will come to an end very shortly. This is a postscript to a really unproductive four years and for goodness' sake do not sabotage one of the few projects that has managed to make any progress at all in this period. Let us support both of these Propositions.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Meerveld.

Deputy Meerveld: Thank you, sir.

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I will be supporting the first Proposition regarding Black Rock. I think most Members would agree after some initial concerns that the GDA has come out with a very interesting and good proposal and, yes, it needs working up in more detail, and this Assembly have decided to give them the necessary funds and the decision to go ahead with that, and this will obviously enable that to progress. I will definitely be supporting Proposition 1.

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Proposition 2 I will not be supporting, and I hark back to Deputy Inder's comments at the start of this debate yesterday about the commercially ridiculous approach of debating the use of an asset you do not own (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) We are told that we are the only buyer, that Ronez will have to sell to us, but we are not told what price they will sell to us at. Unfortunately if you go to a landowner and say, 'I want to buy your field to build a house and look at my wonderful plans for my mega-mansion that I am going to build there. But, by the way, I am the only buyer you have so will you give me a discount on it?' they are going to say, 'What a wonderful plan you have got but, no, I am not going to discount it because I know you want it very much.' Here we are saying that this is the only hole in the ground we have that is suitable for storing water and we need it today.

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Okay, it was mentioned we can have compulsory purchase based on the fact that it will be valued as an exhausted quarry. As a businessman what would I do? First of all, I would say, if you are comparing it with the price of exhausted holes in the ground in the UK then probably a county in the UK that has one quarry would have several. If you cannot buy this quarry there will be another

one down the road which will affect the values, so instantly you have the Guernsey premium as being the only hole we have available of this size. Then I would say, if you want to go for compulsory purchase you can because under our compulsory purchase Laws it can only be actioned if it is strategically important to – I give way to Deputy Oliver.

Deputy Oliver: Thank you.

They could also value it on hope value, as well, which could put the value up a lot because they could say a huge amount of things. It is just crazy that at the open planning meeting for Chouet I mentioned and asked, 'Has a deal been done with Les Vardes?' 'No, no, that is not part of the planning application', which is quite right, but that is when it should have been done and everything. **(Several Members:** Hear, hear.) We just always ties ourselves in knots but I really think what you are saying is completely right but the other way of valuing is hope value.

Deputy Meerveld: I totally agree with what Deputy Oliver has said and I will come more to how we got to this position shortly.

Yes, as a businessman I would say, okay, so compulsory purchase can be valued by UK standards and add a premium for it being Guernsey and being the only hole available. Then I would say, if Guernsey Government want to do a compulsory purchase route, which they can do as a strategic asset for the Island, then it will take a couple of years and it will have significant legal costs so then I will put on top of the premium that I have already developed for the fact of its unique location and the only one available. I will put another premium on that reflects the delay and the legal costs that the States of Guernsey would incur by going through that process. Then I might put a little bit more on top of that just for a negotiating margin but what you have done is you have increased the amount the States will pay.

It is interesting because, as Deputy Oliver pointed out and as Deputy Mahoney mentioned on 30th September 2021, we debated the Island's future aggregate supply. One of the Propositions in that policy letter was to instruct E&I and P&R to go away and negotiate the purchase of the quarry. I agree with Deputy Oliver, it should have been done beforehand because of course if Ronez are asking us to grant them something that is the perfect time to negotiate to receive an asset in return at a discounted price. That is when you have maximum leverage but of course we failed to do that. **(A Member:** We did not.) Yes, we as a States in aggregate but more specifically the then Policy & Resources Committee under Deputy Ferbrache failed to do that.

Roll forward in time two years ago, for different reasons I approached members of P&R and said that we need to purchase that quarry, we need to get it done. At that time I was told about conversations in bars with certain senior people at Ronez and a number of £8 million was told to me. That was the price we could buy it at two years ago. Now we get a number in an amendment mentioning £12 million. Oh, 50% inflation in two years. It should have been secured long before we got to this debate.

We should not be discussing the use of an asset that we do not own when it may impact on the pricing, but this is not a failing of E&I. It was not a failing of E&I back in 2021 with the aggregate policy, it was not a failing of E&I today in bringing forward proposals within their mandate to utilise that quarry for whatever. No, it is a failing of the P&R Committee. I will not say it was the current P&R Committee. It was the previous P&R Committee. I will give way to Deputy Haskins.

Deputy Haskins: I am grateful to Deputy Meerveld for giving way. What I wanted to do was just highlight that in the future aggregate policy letter Proposition 2(b), I will just read out the Proposition for you, sir, and for Members:

To direct the Policy & Resource Committee, in consultation with the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure, to continue negotiations with land owners in relation to Les Vardes Quarry and Chouet Headland, including, where appropriate, in relation to the acquisition of land or the right to use land, in order to best achieve the States of Guernsey's strategic aims in relation to on-island quarrying and other potential future strategic uses and to bring forward its recommendations to the States of Deliberation.

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So just as Deputy Meerveld is saying that it is entirely P&R, the recommendation here is also in consultation with Environment & Infrastructure. I am unclear as to whether that consultation has subsequently happened with either P&R.

Thank you.

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Deputy Meerveld: Yes, it is somewhat interesting as well that Deputy Mahoney says there have been no negotiations with Ronez. Fine. Then where did the £12 million value come in his amendment, because putting that number in there and saying that the previous P&R –

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The Bailiff: A point of correction from Deputy Ferbrache.

Deputy Ferbrache: A point of correction. I am sure Deputy Mahoney would have done it but my recollection of what he read out is there were no current negotiations. Not previous. He said current negotiations, if that helps and I know I am right.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Meerveld.

Deputy Meerveld: Yes, I acknowledge that.

1000 Sir, I believe there is a meeting today to discuss it, so I think conversations have been going on because obviously that £12 million number was a number given to the previous P&R under Deputy Ferbrache, so there were negotiations at some stage otherwise where did that number come from and why was it not pursued before we got to this stage?

1005 So, basically in summing up I will support Proposition 1. I think it is a very interesting plan; it needs more work doing on it to work out exactly how it will work financially and practically but I am very happy to support it.

1010 Proposition 2 I am not supporting because you do not start making plans and determine that things are essential to us before you own the property, and that is a conversation that should be done later. But I lay the blame for that failure very squarely at Deputy Ferbrache's Policy & Resources Committee's feet. I find it interesting that he refers to this States as being inept on a regular basis. Well, I would like to point out to Members that he and his Committee were the ones leading us in ineptitude for the majority of this term and certainly this is a perfect example of how his P&R was thoroughly inept.

Thank you, sir.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, sir.

1020 Sir, I support building more housing on Black Rock as the Island is in desperate need of homes for our young people and families who are struggling with the high cost of housing and lack of availability on the Island.

1025 We spend a lot of time in this Assembly debating matters that seem to the outside world as trivial or unimportant or not particularly urgent compared with our most pressing problem, a housing crisis that is affecting many of our Islanders. While many in this Assembly are relatively comfortable there are people in Guernsey who are struggling to afford their rent along with the rising cost of living, and that is those lucky enough to find somewhere. We know there are many who cannot find a place to rent or to buy in their budget at all. The Propositions in this paper will not help them in the short term. The Black Rock land reclamation is a long-term project but it will provide a location for inert waste for the next 12 years. The main component of inert waste is rubble and other byproducts of the construction industry. If we want to build we must have somewhere to put it.

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Land reclamation is one of the best uses for inert waste. In fact although we call it waste it becomes a useful commodity when used to make something new. With a use for inert waste for at least the next 12 years there is no real case for using the quarry at Les Vardes for inert waste. Any intention to do so would literally be a waste of space. For this reason the use of Les Vardes is intrinsically linked to the Black Rock development.

Sir, I support the use of Les Vardes for water storage. Although there has been much made of the total volume of water storage on the Island, in my view the raw numbers Deputy Helyer had quoted in a previous amendment do not tell the full story. Islands need to have larger storage capacity than mainland locations because there is no opportunity to pump water from areas with high rainfall and storage during drought conditions.

But there is another reason why our water availability is more constrained than it might appear. Members may remember that before I joined E&I I seconded an amendment from Deputy de Lisle regarding the regulatory limit of forever chemicals in our groundwater supply. The amendment did not pass but it did put a spotlight on an issue of increasing importance around the world.

This is something that authorities around the world are just waking up to. PFAS exposure has been linked with health issues such as kidney and testicular cancer, weakened immunity, fertility problems and decreased birth weight. Members will know that PFAS contamination has been a particular problem in Jersey where some affected residents have been tested and found to have high levels in their bloodstream.

In Guernsey, PFAS can be found in streams in all parts of the Island. The streams with the highest levels are in the south of the Island, which are affected by known sources of historic groundwater pollution. These can no longer be collected from to protect our drinking water quality. This includes two of the three streams that flow into St Saviour Reservoir and the Petit Bot streams. Other streams in the north of the Island are also becoming less reliable due to the level of pesticides that they contain. The Vale Pond catchment area has been particularly affected.

Being unable to collect from these streams puts the Island's water supply in deficit if we were to experience a severe drought. That is expected to become even more pronounced due to forecast population growth. Guernsey Water is initiating plans to improve water treatment in line with requirements that are in place on water companies in England by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. We do not have those regulatory requirements in Guernsey but Guernsey Water does stick to the limit as if it were in place, as it is in England.

No decision has been made on how this will be achieved but improvements will be phased with all treatment meeting the new standards by 2035, and this will enable future collection from those streams that are currently impacted by pollution and will improve the Island's drought resilience. However, stored water is of greater benefit than collection from streams during drought when flows will be substantially reduced. The reduction in flows and increase in demand is the reason reservoir levels drop every summer. During a severe drought this will be more pronounced as many streams would dry up altogether.

Guernsey's existing water collection system is efficient with available reservoirs filling during 31 of the last 36 years. The constraint is reservoir capacity so the ability in future to collect from streams currently affected by pollution will have limited benefit without additional storage. There is similarly very limited benefit investing now to increase capture from those streams that we currently collect from and that additional capacity would, in any event, become unnecessary once water treatments to remove pollution have come online.

Water treatment improvements and additional water resource are both needed in the next 10 years with a reservoir at Les Vardes being the preferred water storage option. At the same time Guernsey Water needs to continue investing and maintaining existing water and wastewater infrastructure. A decision on the future of Les Vardes as early as possible will enable all of this to be delivered in a way that spreads the cost to customers over several years and avoids sharper increases in bills. As far as possible, it will also enable delivery within the constraints on the Island's resources; that is the suppliers and contractors that require more time.

Sir, I would rather us be debating ways to resolve the housing crisis in the immediate term today, however, for the reasons outlined, I support the Propositions which will in the long term help our housing crisis and improve our water supply resilience and I urge Members to do likewise.

1085 Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Murray.

Deputy Murray: Thank you, sir.

1090 I think I probably should declare an interest. I use Signal toothpaste. I do not have any shares in the company but I do not know whether that qualifies or not.

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. If I was the GDA listening to this conversation this morning I would probably be tendering my resignation tomorrow because we clearly cannot agree on anything. Five months ago – I think it was only five months ago – we had resounding support for what the GDA's vision said we were going to do. Five months later, we have got various Members saying it cannot possibly happen, it is going to be a slum, whatever. I am out of words, sir.

1095 It is no wonder that we cannot get to any conclusions. We are 40 people with 40 different attitudes about things even when we have agreed things. I am not entirely sure where to start with what I have heard this morning. It has taken a bit of an unfortunate turn with what appears to be payback from various people, and I do not want to go down that route but let me start maybe with Deputy Queripel because I think he wanted to be reassured that we were doing the right thing with Black Rock. He also mentioned Belgrave/Fontaine and why we cannot just fill that up and use it.

1100 Part of the problem there is that we have a £5 million bill if we want to move the cesspit emptying point. We must have known that, whichever Assembly agreed to buy the vinery, but unfortunately the GHA proceeded with plans and then recognised that it would be completely unacceptable to have an emptying point there, and quite rightly that is not acceptable. But to move it at £5 million would put the costs of the whole development in jeopardy. So they had to think again, and there have been iterations from that point forward as a consequence of that.

1105 Griffith's Yard also has emptying points, so the planning of our wastewater system is clearly really important and all of these things are definitely interconnected, but they have become iterative because certain new opportunities have come up as we have been going through this process. Certainly the GDA at the moment are more than aware that the costs of doing what they wish to do, despite its vast opportunities for Guernsey including the flood defences which opens up the whole opportunity for St Sampson and the environs, is going to be so much cheaper if they make use of the inert waste that we have got planned and we have got to have somewhere to put it; we all understand that.

1110 It is part of the puzzle but that is all predicated on moving the blast zone, the tanks from the blast zone. If that cannot happen they cannot do what they want to do. Therefore Les Vardes Quarry would be probably the second opportunity that we would have to move some of that stuff because if it falls apart at the last minute because we cannot achieve even that, and it is a big ask, it is a huge ask – we have had those tanks for a very long time. Moving them and re-siting them on Longue Hougue, which is the plan, just may not happen.

1120 So for me at the moment, and I completely accept E&I's approach, they are trying to look as far forward as they can but we can only look so far forward as our opportunity to be sure about what it is that we need to do. For me Les Vardes at the moment is a safety net until we know that we have got the progress that we have got for the rest of Black Rock. We have now got North Rock. I do not even know where that is, frankly, at this point in time. It might be another alternative but that is the issue, that with the best will in the world and looking as far forward as you can you also make plans just in case they do not come to fruition. There are a lot of ifs, buts and maybes here.

1130 This is not a reflection by not voting for Les Vardes Quarry for water on E&I. They have done what they have been asked to do and from their perspective they can see – and I can see – the advantages of it. I do. But at the moment I cannot vote for it until I know that Black Rock is going

to happen. I just cannot because it is my safety net and that is the way that I look at it at the moment. It is a safety net. There is no suggestion that we are going to build another slum at Black Rock.

1135 That is not the intention and I will say here, sir, on my website, and I am not going to mention it (*Laughter*) as of last night there is a webinar on there with the Director of the GDA, with one of our notable local builders, myself and Deputy Kazantseva-Miller discussing all of this. So I would suggest if you want to look at that and understand a bit better, there are other websites available but maybe not other webinars; I do not know.

1140 For me, Black Rock has to happen. It is a direction of travel that we agreed no more than five months ago. We were excited by the vision. It opened up all sorts of opportunities but it comes with a warning, and they have been quite clear. That warning is they must be able to move those tanks and if they cannot then we are going to have to think again. So as an interim measure I cannot vote for water storage at Les Vardes. In six months when we might know the situation I might because
1145 then it might be clear that it is a direction of travel that we can go in, but at the moment I cannot, which is why I wanted to have them separated in the amendment. So we have got that.

This is not to give E&I a hard time. This is from my perspective to assist the GDA and Guernsey to proceed as far as they can to demonstrate that they can deliver what they promised us and if that changes then we will have to think again. Strategic thinking absolutely ticks every box but, at
1150 the moment, there are other implications that have to be taken into account.

So please, Members, at this stage do not look so far ahead but everything could fall apart for us by making a decision today that might close a door that we might need in six months' or 12 months' time.

Thank you, sir.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Moakes.

Deputy Moakes: Thank you, sir.

I think that was a very good speech there by Deputy Murray. I do not think anybody is trying to
1160 slam doors shut here. I think people are simply trying to keep options open because this might happen or that might happen. Keeping it simple, because lots of people have spoken already, this policy letter is about housing and water; that is all it is. Housing and water.

As it stands today we have sufficient water to sustain the Island's needs. As it stands today, we
1165 have a massive shortfall in housing. As we have already said housing for first-time buyers, housing for families and housing for down-sizers. That shortage is across both social and private housing as a result. I believe that our focus today needs to be on housing. Black Rock can play an important part in delivering much needed housing. It will not solve all the problems but it could help drastically.

I believe this Proposition will receive universal approval today because everybody is on the same
1170 page. Housing is a major, if not the major, priority for the entire Island. Having said that, water provision is also really important but there are a number of factors that need to be addressed first. That seems to be the overriding feedback from Members today. As I said at the beginning, nobody is slamming doors shut but people seem to have questions that need to be answered. I will be voting for the Black Rock proposals but I will be voting against signing off Les Vardes as the preferred
1175 option for freshwater storage.

What I recommend is that having raised lots of questions today perhaps E&I address those
1180 concerns and return to the Chamber very early in the new term with answers and a plan that is in sequence, because that is something that people have raised today but also, and this is crucial, includes contingencies. There are risks, as people have already identified in this debate. That is all I am going to say.

Thank you very much.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

1185 **Deputy Blin:** Thank you, sir.

It is nice to have my voice back as well from yesterday. Mine will be very short, sir. I think Deputy Murray hit the nail on the head. Separating out the two, Black Rock is just not a hole to fill. It underpins and, above all, it underpins the strategy of the GDA, which we all supported. It reminds me a little bit of the debate yesterday when we had strong support for the wind farm and then we started having discussions about the OREC, which could undermine it.

1190 In the same way here if we do not unanimously I hope support it, because I do think there is strong support for Black Rock, then it will just undermine the whole of the rest of the strategy for the homes, the public realm, the breakwater, the flood defence and all these other things (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and all we are doing is we are turning a waste management necessity into affordable land creation, regeneration and coastal protection.

1195 We are taking what we see as some waste, etc., but we are giving it a true value into the future. I will also be supporting the aspect for the Black Rock but will not be supporting the aspect for the water reserve. It is not because I do not support the belief that there will be a requirement at some point, but we have time to get on to discuss that later, whereas for the aspect here we need to be all in line to make this work to the best effect.

1200 Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Fairclough.

1205 **Deputy Fairclough:** Thank you, sir.

The GWP, anyone remember that? That document and process in which we invested hundreds of hours and countless resources and that we all signed up to. I cannot remember the last time it was even referred to inside or outside this Assembly. In case any Members have forgotten, in the Policy & Resources Committee Government Work Plan 2023-25 policy strategies and plans, the latest and last iteration and last instruction, the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure was directed by this Assembly to prioritise its resources to discharge its responsibilities in accordance with its Committee Work Plan in appendix 7 of that document, namely to propose a future inert waste disposal solution strategic use of Les Vardes Quarry.

1210 Under the title 'Regeneration' in that document, to ensure that the Island's infrastructure does not restrict essential development in all sorts of ways. It is worth noting that the actions to achieve before the end of this term were: develop local planning brief for harbour action areas, DPA; tick. Establish Guernsey Development Agency, P&R; tick. Agree future direction for harbours, P&R, E&I, STSB; fail. Ensure Island's infrastructure is fit for purpose, e.g., determine the future strategic use of Les Vardes, E&I, P&R; to be decided today.

1220 In every iteration of the Government Work Plan, E&I was directed to determine the future strategic use of Les Vardes. Here it is. Incidentally, another parallel workstream, a parallel workstream in the GWP for P&R, is the purchase negotiation for Les Vardes which in the 2022 version was supposed to be completed a year ago. It is and has always been a separate workstream, again as agreed by this Assembly.

1225 My colleagues on E&I will vouch for the many times we have asked for updates on this work and the minutes of our meetings will reflect that.

Sir, this particular P&R and the previous one has been and is responsible for those commercial negotiations which we are told are ongoing. I will say no more than that other than the fact that E&I is delivering what has been asked for it, as it has done on many occasions this term. Later than expected, yes. It should have been back in front of us before now but extra time has been taken to factor in the Black Rock option for inert waste before Members today.

1230 Anyone who has studied the timelines in appendix 6 of this policy letter, and we have heard very little reference to them, will see that they dovetail but only if a decision is made today, and I thought Deputy Parkinson gave an excellent speech speaking to that point.

1235 So, Members, we missed the boat on cheap borrowing. We watched it sail into the sunset on a strategic harbour decision. Let us not make the same mistake again here. I urge Members to stop

dithering, be bold and get on with what we agreed to do four years ago and every year since, and support the two Propositions now before us.

Thank you, sir.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Brouard.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you, sir.

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We are just not good at making decisions and yet somehow we all manage to make enough decisions to get here today. We all manage to park our cars and move our bicycles and put the kids on the right buses, etc. But when we get here collectively we seem to go into a state of freeze. We have been talking about Les Vardes Quarry in this Assembly for the best part of 20 years that I know of. So please – I go along with Deputy Fairclough on this – let us make a decision today. Let us get on and move Les Vardes closer to becoming a storage for water because we do not know what the climate is going to be like in 20 years' time, 50 years' time or 100 years' time, and we do not have that many holes in the Island, or new ones. We will have one at Chouet eventually but we have got a fantastic opportunity to use Les Vardes for water.

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The other part of it, I cannot think of a better use of inert waste than to increase the size of our Island. I do not want to get as big as Jersey but at least we can put a few more useful items on to our foreshore with housing and also as we have done with Longue Hougue. We have got very valuable land there where people do not want things on their back doorstep but at least at Longue Hougue it is as far away as it can be from any built-up areas. So please let us take this opportunity to use our inert waste in a positive way. That is my call. I will be voting for both Propositions.

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Thank you, sir.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

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I certainly am going to be supporting the reclamation at Black Rock. Les Vardes, I just do not know what the complete urgency is now because obviously it is earmarked as strategic water storage reserve in the SLUP and in the IDP. I do not think that is going to change unless this Assembly makes a different decision. We have got a lack of resources; we have got a lack of money, so my concern is if we go ahead and pass Proposition 2 we are going to be spending money and resources on something that we do not have to at this moment. This is my concern. Forget about if it is going to change to inert waste or not, and I will apologise to Deputy de Sausmarez for not reading the FAQs that she pointed out yesterday about the overburden, so I would like to apologise for that. I had not seen that document, which was quite handy.

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It is going to cost a considerable amount of money if we are going to go down this road of changing over from Longue Hougue and Longue Hougue gets used for inert waste, and we can realise that area of more valuable land or, as Deputy Parkinson pointed out, we have got potential reclamation at Longue Hougue South. He also pointed out that inert waste can be a very valuable asset but I am just not convinced that making this decision now is the right thing to do and spending time and energy on this is needed. I really do not.

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I think that the important decision to be made is Black Rock. We all supported the GDA's vision. It would have been nice if we were in a better position to be a little bit more informed because I would like to see the GDA's vision right the way across the east coast and St Peter Port because then we can have a bigger long-term strategic understanding of where inert waste can be used, because there was talk about speeding up Black Rock by using inert waste from other parts of their proposals. But those proposals are not in the public domain and I do not think they have come completely to fruition.

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We are looking at a bit of a picture at the moment rather than the entirety. I think we should focus on what we have got and what we can understand at the moment and focus on allowing the GDA to be able to continue building out their plans. Clearly we know that reclamation at Black Rock

1290 is going to be a considerable benefit towards the flood defences that we are going to have to invest in down there anyway, so anybody that is going to now, at this point, start getting nervous about the reclamation at Black Rock I think needs a good hard look in the mirror. I think it is a no brainer.

1295 Deputy Brouard just pointed out that we have got a finite area of land and at the moment Jersey went and grew their population by 20,000 and they can still grow more and not have the population density that we have. So we are very limited in our small area of land for what is a growing population. I think the estimates now have gone up from 350 houses at Black Rock to about 500, and that is not to be sniffed at, bearing in mind that we have got a massive housing crisis. But we have not got an immediate water storage crisis. Deputy de Sausmarez is nodding but the water storage crisis is not something that anyone has mentioned to me whatsoever, and I do not think anybody in this Assembly has told me and there has certainly been no evidence that we have a water storage crisis.

1300 We have a housing crisis. We admit that, do we not? We know that. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) We do not have a water storage crisis. We have not had a hosepipe ban since I was a kid so – I will give way to Deputy Gollop.

1305 **Deputy Gollop:** Yes. I agree up to a point with Deputy Leadbeater but we have frequently had warnings from Water of some of the issues already referred to about the Vale Pond area, Vale streams being contaminated, and the risk of contamination due PFOS in other areas and the occasional restrictions of water.

1310 I think a point, too, that I wanted to make about the desalination plant, it is actually the costs Deputy Gabriel and others referred to did not seem too bad, £2 million in a year or the Jersey equivalent. I would say apparently desalination plants cost 15 million in America or the Middle East, and I forgot to mention – which is why one always has to have more context about policy letters and reports – that the original desalination plant was at the La Hure Mare, not at Longue Hougue, so I do not quite understand why it says in the policy letter it only is at Longue Hougue.

1315 Of course, a desalination plant would be an alternative way of dealing with our water shortages, but I believe the water shortage issue is more a combination of the risks of pollution and contamination and increased population and maybe increased use for Data Park and things rather than a crisis. I also think, by the way, the report undersells the dangers of drought. It says it will be a 6% chance of a really hard drought year. I think, given the fact that we have the hottest April on record virtually, we have to be careful.

Deputy Leadbeater: If that is evidence of a water storage crisis, then (*Laughter*) I rest my case.

1325 Just looking at the timelines, because it is quite handy, Appendix 6, actually, to show you because we have the constrain reserves. Currently, the overburden we know is being taken away from the new quarry at Chouet. It is being tipped down at Les Vardes at the moment. There is extraction of – I think they are going to go down about 100 foot or so. Currently, my mate Colin and a couple of other people are constantly taking stone from Chouet to Les Vardes to be processed, and then once they are down enough that the plant from Les Vardes can be moved to Chouet, then the plant will be moved across and then it will be a process of mining the constrain reserves, which are underneath that plant at the moment, so they can maximise the reserves that they can get out of Les Vardes. That will be trucked along to Chouet and be processed there.

1330 This is a considerable piece of work that is going on here and it is going to take – some of the predictions in these timelines may not be completely accurate. It may take a bit longer. I do not think it is going to be any shorter. One thing that Deputy Ferbrache referenced before the meeting we had down at Les Vardes last term – I initially went to Jersey with Home Affairs, with Deputy Prow, Deputy Oliver at the time, the former Deputy Graham and Deputy Lowe, and while I was over there a friend of mine who works for Ronez, he was seconded across as a quarry manager to St John quarry in Jersey. So I stayed over there and spent the next day with him because it was in the run-up to our waste debate last term.

1340 I wanted to understand a bit more what was going on in Jersey, and it was really good because I met Mike Osborne, who was the boss of Ronez CI. We sat in his office and we talked about different options for inert waste in Guernsey and he actually identified Black Rock during that meeting as a potential and as his favoured – this is a guy who works in Jersey – because Ronez consider all these strategic things. They consider this work.

1345 One interesting thing I found at that meeting was that Ronez had offered the States of Guernsey to start recycling some of the inert waste that was getting filled at Longue Hougue quite a few years before. Ronez offered, say, £3 a tonne that they would pay the States and they would take it and they would crush it and recycle it and sell it for £8 a tonne or whatever. That was turned down. So for years and years and years and years Longue Hougue was getting fuller and fuller and fuller and
1350 we had a commercial opportunity to actually make some money and slow down that and slow down the import of aggregates and the use of the stuff that we are bringing from Les Vardes. We had these opportunities and they were missed. This is why Longue Hougue is coming to the end of its life now. It could have been extended considerably more if we were a bit smarter. But anyway, we are recycling now, thankfully, and that should slow down the process of the inert waste that is going
1355 to be available to us. Anyway, at least we are recycling.

Then I am trying to think of the point I was getting at actually. (*Laughter*) I have gone around in circles now. (*Interjection*) The missed opportunities, yes. So actually we are doing that now, but the amount of recycling, etc., is going to dictate the longevity of Black Rock, for example. We talk about the amount of water usage, etc., that we have and the amount that it has changed and the fact that
1360 we have not got a growing industry anymore and that was using loads and loads of water, but the growing industry did have wells and boreholes, etc., so it was not always drawing on the same strategic reserves. Construction uses a massive amount of water as well, and we are going to have to construct loads of houses and schools and hospitals and all sorts and all sorts and all sorts.

Clearly, we do understand that water is important and we have to think strategically about the future, but why now? Why now in 2025 when we have lots of other problems, lots of other things to concentrate on? Concentrate on what we are doing with our inert waste. I think we need to agree
1365 on Black Rock and then we need to look a bit further to look at other reclamation, concentrate on the Eastern Seaboard, the GDA's plans, and support them. For example, is there going to be a St Malo style underground multi-storey in the North Beach, so there could be inert waste that we have pumped in there could be taken out to speed up Black Rock? There are all these kinds of
1370 things, and I think there is probably something creative in the mix that is going to be coming forward from these guys at some point in the future.

Anyway, I have waffled on here and I have probably not made much sense, but I am going to be supporting Black Rock even though I probably think that Les Vardes will be a strategic – it is identified in documents already as a strategic water reserve and it probably will turn out to be that way, but I really do not think it is necessary spending a lot of time and effort and money on looking
1375 at that now when we have so many other competing priorities that we should be concentrating on instead.

Thank you.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Oliver.

Deputy Oliver: Thank you.

My speech has got smaller and smaller, people will be glad to hear, because a lot of people have said what I wanted to say. The DPA have worked really closely with the Guernsey Development Agency and I think that the way that they are going is a really good thing. It is not just filling in the inert waste in Black Rock. It is also what it can be used for afterwards that is really quite exciting. It can actually lower a lot of costs, particularly with flood defences, if the costs are right for Black Rock. So I will be supporting Black Rock wholeheartedly.
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Many of you know that I have lived on a boat and I know how important water is and the storage of water. I know Deputy Leadbeater said, 'Oh, I have waffled on' but I actually really enjoyed his
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1395 speech and a lot of it resounded with me. I think that the key speaker actually that completely changed my mind was Deputy Helyar and Deputy Parkinson because last night I actually went and reread the policy letter again. I had read it ages ago and you do forget things when there is so much to read. I was just like, do you know, there is no point in filling one hole to transfer water to fill another hole. It is not being transferred, I will say, sorry. It is not being transferred; it is just being used.

1400 I just think that we need to actually look at what we have. We need to take a step back, and I do not often say take a step back. I am normally like, 'Continue, full force'. Take a step back and look at things and say, if Les Vardes Quarry was in our ownership and this was a pure policy letter about our future water storage I might feel differently but it has really been muddled with the inert waste and everything like this. I just think that it might be proven wrong that Les Vardes will be used for water at a later date, but I just think that we need actually to have bought Les Vardes and actually to properly know what we are doing with it rather than just this Assembly going, 'Do we want water there? Do we not?' There are a lot of statistics to say that we do not need it, so I will not be voting for that today.

The Bailiff: I will turn to the President, Deputy de Sausmarez, to reply to the debate, please.

1410 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir, and a very happy birthday. I am so sorry we are putting you through this.

The Bailiff: That is all right.

1415 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I will ask Members' patience to bear with me because I have a lot of notes and I do not want to miss out any answers to questions, etc. I am going to do my best to consolidate into some themes, but it might get a little bit scrappy because I have not been able to keep up with the rate of debate in terms of making it a bit tidier. So I will see how we get on.

1420 Okay. So we have before us now two Propositions, one to agree Black Rock as the preferred option for inert waste, and the other to agree Les Vardes as the preferred option for water. I am going to start with inert waste.

1425 Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was quite right yesterday to point out the tension between the objectives of an inert waste site and a site for housing development where typically you would want the former to last as long as possible and the latter to be completed as quickly as possible. That is something indeed that I have explained in many a previous inert waste debate in the past. It might be easier to think about it in terms of the waste hierarchy because, strictly speaking in technical terms, Black Rock, rather than an inert waste disposal site, it is easier to think of it as inert waste diversion for reuse, which is a greater priority. So it does reduce that tension a bit.

1430 In real life it still obviously means that we would have to find somewhere else to put our inert waste once it is complete, but the GDA – and this is a point that speaks to some of the comments that have just been made quite recently – is confident that we will have further projects that will require inert waste beyond Black Rock's completion, meaning that hopefully we will not need to identify an inert waste disposal site for quite a long time. Actually, Deputy Leadbeater quite recently referred to a few of those as well. There will be a harbour to extend or build or rebuild, coastal defences to bolster and all kinds of other macro infrastructure that the Island is likely to need inert waste for in the decades to come.

1440 So Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was right to manage expectations around the timing of housing delivery. As I mentioned in debate on the amendment yesterday, the GDA is keen to explore and, if possible, deliver the development in phases so that some housing can be brought forward before the fill area has been completely filled, which could be done through partitioning. It is still true to say, as I mentioned yesterday, that Black Rock is not going to address our housing supply pressures in the short term. It will, however, play a very important role in the delivery of housing in the medium to long term.

1445 Deputy Le Tissier had some concerns over the future development that the land reclamation at Black Rock would enable. Understandably – and his concerns were echoed by a couple of other speakers – some of his concerns focused on the pressures of infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure. Deputy Mahoney talked about that as well. I can assure them and other Members that one of the things that the GDA's plans will do is greatly improve the transport infrastructure in that area in order to address those very problems. That is literally a core part of the brief and a core part of the plan's *raison d'être*. We all totally recognise that the traffic flow, etc., is really problematic in that area and the GDA are very focused on addressing those issues and making sure that they are resolved.

1450 Actually, creating extra space is an excellent way to help resolve some of those issues. They have some very interesting plans that we think will be effective in improving traffic flow, reducing congestion and actually just generally improving people's options for getting around that area and the Island more generally. I would encourage them to meet with the GDA to find out a bit more about those plans because I think Deputy Le Tissier and others may be reassured actually by those conversations.

1460 Deputy Helyar raised some concerns, as did more recently Deputy Murray, around the Black Rock development or the risk that it could be delayed. Deputy Murray did this as well. As Deputy Oliver has just mentioned actually, the GDA have engaged with Planning and have done so from a very early stage to mitigate any potential delay further down the line. Work has been done previously looking at the impact on tidal flows and land reclamation on the east coast and we are confident that it is possible to design the reclaimed area in such a way as to mitigate any impact. 1465 The EIA, which has been under way for about three months now I think, will examine any predicted changes to tidal currents and any resulting impact on the coastal and marine processes. It is also worth remembering that EIAs do not prevent development. They are there to inform the mitigations that might be necessary as that development takes place.

1470 The DPA has recently confirmed to the GDA, subject to any findings of that Environmental Impact Assessment, that the proposed land reclamation at Black Rock should not require a local planning brief and that is likely to speed up considerably the delivery of the project. I think I will just crack on; I have quite a lot to get through.

1475 **Deputy Oliver:** Point of correction. Sorry, it is not an open planning brief, it is a local planning brief.

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Oliver.

1480 **Deputy Oliver:** It is not an open planning brief; it is a local planning brief, sorry.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Yes, that is exactly what I said, or at least what I thought I said. That is what is written here.

1485 Deputy Murray more recently has introduced some concerns about the relocation of the fuel tanks. I do not want to go into all the specifics but I would absolutely like to reassure Members that I think that risk has been very much overblown for a number of different reasons. The one that I am comfortable to go into is that actually even – and I do not think it would ever get anywhere near this – in the worst case scenario it is still worth reclaiming Black Rock because I do not think it would have the impact that Deputy Murray is suggesting. I have actually just been in touch with the Chair of the GDA who has confirmed my view. Even in the worst possible case scenario, it would still absolutely be worth reclaiming Black Rock and putting our inert waste there if for no other reason than the fact that it has such a significant positive impact on our flood defences, which we know we are going to need. 1490

So I do not think there is any substantive risk to the delay of the Black Rock reclamation project going ahead. Even worst-worst case scenario, which I do not think is likely, even if it could not be

1495 used or it could not all be used for housing, there are still plenty of other really good uses that it could be used for, including various public amenity uses.

To Deputy Le Tissier's concerns as well and various other people touched on their concern that it might be overdeveloped, actually as various people – Deputy Burford, Deputy Inder – pointed out, there is going to be a mix of housing in the area. That is the plan. I am sure the GDA would very much welcome the States' input in terms of the balance of some of those housing types. One of the most interesting, as Deputy Burford touched on when she spoke, was actually I think she called it modestly priced housing for local people. I think that is a really good way of avoiding the term 'affordable housing', which can be so confusing, but actually lots of different models, including things like affordable private rent and attracting investors in terms of build to rent and stuff. So there are some really interesting and exciting plans for housing in the area.

1505 To Deputy Le Tissier's concerns as well, part of the plans is a really generous stretch of public realm, which will actually go along the new frontage, the new waterfront, and that will provide a really nice amenity for people living or, indeed, just passing through or visiting the area.

1510 So the GDA has asked States' Members to get behind their plans, and I certainly think that we should be supporting them to progress Black Rock as a strategic priority. The need to fund the future inert waste disposal facility was acknowledged in the recent Green Paper that was debated in January 2025, this year, and that sets out the portfolio of essential infrastructure projects. I am very much hoping, along I know with many other Members here, that that proposal will be strongly supported and it will be another vote of confidence in the GDA's strategic direction and the future of the Bridge generally.

1515 Many of the contributions, however, of this debate have focused on Les Vardes. I think the canard that I would like to shoot first up is this assertion that we already have adequate water supplies. That assertion is, I am afraid, just simply not substantiated by the evidence. I am sorry that evidence did not come through clearly enough for Deputy Leadbeater to clock it, but the statistics that Deputy Helyar references, I have no idea where he sourced them from but the suggestion that the UK has only got storage when full of about 3,550 L per person is highly questionable. It is not substantiated at all by the statistics from Water UK, which is the official representative body of the UK water industry, which suggests that the current daily consumption in the UK is 137 L per person. The 3,550 L per person storage capacity quoted would, therefore, represent less than four weeks' supply, and that is just not feasible.

1520 Even just taking the raw water storage of a few of the largest English water company reservoir systems like in the Lake District, London, Derwent Valley, Rutland Water, it gives a total storage of 491,029 ML. Assuming a UK population of about 70 million, that would give a per capita figure of 7,015 L per person. That is before you include the rest of the English reservoirs and all the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland large reservoirs, which would push the per capita figure up much further, and it ignores all the groundwater sources that are used. The UK is arguably far better equipped at dealing with severe drought conditions at an interconnected regional level than Guernsey would be as an Island. I think we do have to appreciate that our options are just geographically more limited than somewhere which is part of a larger land mass.

1535 Notwithstanding the above, so notwithstanding the fact that we are already significantly behind, water companies across the UK are facing the same challenges resulting from population growth and climate change and have recently published plans to invest billions in the creation of multiple new reservoirs to increase their water supply resilience. I know that it is always tempting to compare us with Jersey but it is really not comparing apples with apples. It is a very different situation. 1540 Although Guernsey currently has 2.6 times more reservoir storage per person than Jersey, it is not a like-for-like comparison because Jersey has a desalination plant that is capable of meeting just over half of the Island's demand during the drought. So when this storage equivalent is taken into account, Guernsey's available water resources per person are only about 10% greater than Jersey's but both of us as jurisdictions are well behind where we need to be. As testament to that, Jersey 1545 plans to increase the capacity of their desalination plant, increase supply from boreholes, and either

develop a new water storage reservoir or increase water storage at one of their existing reservoirs. These are big decisions; a lot of investment in Jersey going into that.

1550 When this increased water storage equivalent and forecast population growth is taken into account, Guernsey Water's plans for Les Vardes reservoir and the improved water treatment combined would provide 1.2 times more million litres of water storage per person than Jersey. However, Jersey Water are updating their plan and preparing for more severe drought than they did in 2021, which was the last iteration. To do this, they are using the same drought resilience standards as water companies in England and as we have based our plans on here. So we have already applied this standard to the updated water resources and drought management plan for
1555 Guernsey, which is what underpins the proposals for Les Vardes.

So I know that there have been a lot of figures in that and I am sorry, but the upshot is that we are behind England, and I think it is safe to say that England has probably got more pressure on its supplies than Scotland and Wales, which are typically blessed with a lot of rain. Speaking of which, climate change is expected to result in hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. However,
1560 the point is, and I think Deputy Le Tissier touched on this, we cannot collect additional water. It does not actually matter how much it rains if we do not have the means to collect it. So we need the available storage in order to be able to improve our water resilience. We know that our water resilience is currently not where it needs to be. We are not even today well enough equipped to withstand a severe drought.

1565 Deputy Haskins mentioned probability. It does sound like quite a low figure until you look at what happens in practice. So the probability that Deputy Haskins quoted, I think it was 0.2% of a chance of occurring in any one year, well, the last time that occurred was 2022 across two thirds of Europe. Actually, Houston in the US – it was a different type of event but we are talking about the probability here –experienced at least three events of exactly that probability three years in a row.
1570 So these events are much more common. There is a one in 17 chance statistically that that kind of event will occur over 30 years and we are talking about long-term infrastructure planning here.

So a one in 17 chance is actually quite high and we have seen from our very near neighbours that actually it does happen. We have had such probability events very near us very recently. So I really would ask Members to take this seriously. We currently have a water supply deficit. We do
1575 not have enough water stored in Guernsey for the kind of event that we were very lucky to just about dodge a few years ago. It does not feel like it is going to be very far away so we do need to increase our water storage capacity. I am not giving way.

Deputy Oliver: Sir, sorry, it is nothing to do with Deputy de Sausmarez. I am really struggling to
1580 hear Deputy de Sausmarez because so much chatter is going on in the Assembly.

The Bailiff: Members, if you are going to talk to your neighbour, can you do so as quietly as possible (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) rather than the level of volume going up so that Members cannot
1585 hear what Deputy de Sausmarez has to say?

Deputy de Sausmarez to continue, please.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you.

So yes, the problem is if we do not have a means of actually collecting that water, we lose it as runoff. So it does not matter if we are getting wetter winters, if we cannot collect any more of that
1590 water it is absolutely of no use to our water resilience whatsoever. So that is one of the reasons that it is really important to increase our water storage capacity.

The other reason is what Deputy Matthews touched on, is because actually all other things being equal, we actually have less water availability to us just because of drinking water standards. So if we create a mental map of all the streams that are running into the various reservoirs, we cannot
1595 actually even collect from a number of our streams, and that number is increasing because of the levels of pollutants in them and the fact that for all the right reasons our drinking water quality is

improving. Deputy de Lisle is getting very animated on this point; I know he agrees with this. *(Laughter)* But he is absolutely right.

1600 So what we have here is we have a situation where all other things being equal, we have less water to collect in the first place and we have no additional water storage for any additional rainfall that may or may not occur. So our water resilience is dropping and the main driver behind all of the demand – and I will come on to the demand which Deputy Inder raised in a minute – is population growth, but hold that thought.

1605 Gosh, this is where my notes might – yes, okay. I am going to have to see if I can find the bit that deals with Deputy Inder's points on supply. Because Deputy Inder was quite right to say that water demand has fallen. I think other people have pointed out that that is statistically correct. The main driver of that reduction in consumption – and I am doing this from memory now because I cannot find the bit in my notes – is the metering. So we know that when people move on to a water meter, they typically consume in the region of 25% less water. So that is the main driver of the historic
1610 reduction in consumption, irrespective of the population growth. However, most of the Island, a significant proportion of the Island, I think in the region of 70% of the Island, is already metered. So we have got much less potential for that water consumption to reduce in the future. We combine that with the fact that we have got less availability of water to collect.

1615 Deputy Inder is looking a little bit confused, so basically he was right to point out that the water consumption did drop historically, but we know that the reason for that was because so many people moved on to meters, but most people have already moved on to meters and so – okay, I will give way to him.

1620 **Deputy Inder:** I was not confused. If 70% by Deputy de Sausmarez's figures have moved on to meters as a reason, it is still a 500 ML drop per year. So if she says there is less capacity, there is 30% more capacity to move people onto meters so it could drop even more. That is the effect of the real logic of her arguments.

1625 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, but the point is that that is not the only factor. The one factor I have already mentioned is the fact that there is less water available to collect in the first place. The other factor, and this is the real biggie, is that the population growth, which has been very steep, far, far, far outweighs the efficiencies gained through metering. So that is the main point, is population growth is absolutely the key driver of this, because when you take the picture in the round and you look at all of those different things, population growth drives demand up. So notwithstanding any
1630 efficiencies that can bring water consumption down, population growth is trumping it, and we know this because we have got the current statistics and we have done the future projections based on this Assembly's strategic population objective, which we are required to plan infrastructure around.

1635 Deputy Queripel, Deputy Inder, Deputy Mahoney and Deputy Meerveld have queried whether it is possible to make strategic decisions over an asset in private ownership and whether we could negotiate or should be negotiating or should have negotiated the acquisition of Les Vardes. A few points on this.

1640 The States have been making strategic decisions over Les Vardes and indeed plenty of other things it does not own. For example, the land adjacent to the Airport, the fuel storage sites, privately owned housing allocation sites, etc., for decades. As Deputy Brouard has pointed out and others, Les Vardes has been designated for water storage since 2006, which means once it is no longer being used as a quarry, under our planning Laws, the only thing that anyone could apply to use it for currently is water. We know from the outset that there are really only two viable uses in any case. It is either going to be water or it is going to be an inert waste.

1645 It has been safeguarded for water since 2006. So if we support the proposal in the policy letter, nothing changes in this respect. Actually, even if we do not support the proposal, nothing changes in that respect. It is still going to be safeguarded for water storage in the IDP. The States have already made a strategic decision. This is by no means without precedent. I cannot remember what year it was, it is going back a few political terms now, but when the States made a strategic decision

1650 to expand some of the taxiways it needed to expand the perimeter of the Airport, for example, that
was land that was not already in the States' ownership and a strategic decision was made over that,
and that is what happened.

So there is plenty of precedent for the Island and, indeed, that is our job. Our job is to make
these high-level strategic decisions. There is plenty of precedent for that. I think it was first 1994 or
something that Les Vardes was mooted for water. We have had several decades of expectation that
1655 Les Vardes will be used as a reservoir for fresh water.

I think its eventual acquisition by the States have been an inevitability for about 30 years.
Actually, I would have thought that from Ronez's perspective, once it is no longer being used as a
quarry, it will be a stranded asset and a liability of no real use to them but still obviously costing
them. So I think there is good motivation for both parties. There is benefit for that in both parties.

1660 Deputy Inder suggested yesterday that agreeing Le Vardes as the preferred option for freshwater
storage would significantly increase its value, leaving the States over a barrel. That is kind of what
he suggested in terms of negotiation. But I can assure him and any other Members that are
concerned about that, that that is not an accurate analysis of the situation. Deputy Inder likened the
situation to a site which increases in value because it has been given planning permission. But that
1665 is not the right parallel to draw. Les Vardes is, as I mentioned, already safeguarded in the IDP for
water storage, which means that once it is no longer a quarry, no one can apply to use it as anything
other than as water storage or for water storage. Agreeing it as the preferred option has no impact
whatsoever on its planning designation or value because it is already designated for water storage
and water storage alone.

1670 In any case, I do not believe that is how the valuation for an asset like Les Vardes would work.
Even if it did, this is a point I think is quite interesting, even if we were worried about making a
strategic decision over Les Vardes and that bumping up the price, I would have thought that actually
designating it or suggesting it could be used for inert waste would probably have a greater impact
in that respect because the inert waste site has got a more direct income revenue stream, so it could
1675 confer a higher value. However, the conversations that – I do not want to go there, listening to my
own advice when I opened on this, I do not really want to go into the nuts and bolts of conversations
that have and are taking place. But I think it is fair to say that what we are looking at is the acquisition
of what will eventually become a disused quarry. There are various factors that will feed into that
negotiation.

1680 **Deputy Inder:** Sir, just point of order.

The Bailiff: Point of order.

1685 **Deputy Inder:** I have to ask whether the President is misleading the Assembly and this is really
quite –

The Bailiff: That is not a point of order, Deputy Inder, it is a point of correction.

1690 **Deputy Inder:** Okay, I beg your pardon, point of correction. I would like to ask, sir, through you,
because we have just heard from Deputy Mahoney, via text, that no negotiations are taking place
and that is from the Director, from the one person who should know – I think that is reasonable to
say – yet it has been repeated here, unless someone is playing a game here, Deputy de Sausmarez
is again repeating that she will not go into the nuts and bolts but there are things going on. We
1695 have heard specifically from a text this morning that there are no negotiations. So who is telling the
truth?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

1700 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Right, I can try and provide a bit of clarity on this. The States' Property
Unit works very closely and attends meetings on a very regular basis with Ronez and that is partly
with a view, or probably wholly with a view, to what I have just mentioned, the fact that we have
always known that an acquisition of Les Vardes is likely. Deputy Mahoney is right to say that that
has handed over to Procurement, Procurement are involved, and Procurement are actively looking
1705 at this. I cannot speak to that because both of those functions actually sit under P&R, not E&I.

I would say that, as Deputy Fairclough mentioned, it has been a source of some frustration to
E&I, who have asked repeatedly and tried to move this on since that Proposition, since that
Resolution of the States in 2021, for that process to take place. So we have, as a Committee, done
our absolute best. The Proposition, helpfully read out, I think, by Deputy Haskins was indeed for
1710 P&R to take that process forward. I am slightly staggered, yes, it is slightly ironic that we are getting
criticised by people who were on that very Committee directed to do that, and we were the ones
asking politely, but fairly insistently, if we could please see some progress. It is a source of much
frustration to the Committee that that did not happen then, but the next best time for that to
happen is now.

1715 I think irrespective of any strategic decision that is taken over it, the only potential buyer,
irrespective of whether it is eventually use of water or waste, is the States. When you look at the big
picture, there are various other factors that I am sure will feed into those conversations, but I am
very reticent to go into any detail because I do not think it is appropriate to try and pre-empt
negotiations that will be taking place. I will give way to Deputy Trott.

1720 **Deputy Trott:** I am grateful to Deputy de Sausmarez for giving way, because what we are
witnessing here is, with the greatest respect, a number of armchair experts. However, I have in front
of me an email from the Head of Procurement, a man who wakes up every morning and considers
procurement matters, goes to sleep every night I am sure with procurement matters on his mind.
1725 In other words, a genuine expert who endorses – strongly endorses – the comments that have been
made by Deputy de Sausmarez.

I would ask the Assembly to bear that in mind. What she is saying is what the professional
Procurement Department are telling her.

1730 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you.

Deputy Helyar's central argument seemed to be that we should not agree on several – no, I am
not giving way. The only other thing I will add is I am absolutely mystified by some of the figures
that have been bandied about, and I think that was very unfortunate they have been introduced in
any shape or form into the debate, because I can certainly find no substantiation for any of that.

1735 Deputy Helyar's central argument seemed to be that we should not agree Les Vardes, and
actually this was the view as well of Deputy Murray, Deputy Mahoney, as the preferred option for
water because we might need to use it in the event that Black Rock is delayed and we have run out
of time for stockpiling at Longue Hougue. But that assumption is totally incorrect for reasons that
I will explain.

1740 So assuming Black Rock is delayed, and I have already mentioned some of the factors that gives
me confidence that actually it is and it will continue to move in a timely manner through the
planning process, and full commendation incidentally to the Planning services and the DPA and all
others who have been involved in that respect, because I think it is a good example of lots of
co-ordinated work. But even in the scenario where Black Rock is delayed and we run out of our—
1745 beyond our time limit for stockpiling at Longue Hougue, it is wrong to assume that Les Vardes
would be the only alternative place where waste could be stockpiled. In fact, not only are there
other options, but all of the other options are preferable to Les Vardes. There is actually room, first
of all, for up to eight years' worth of stockpiling at Longue Hougue itself, and I appreciate that the
planning conditions at the moment are for three years, but that does not negate the fact that the
1750 next EPA could agree to extend or grant a new planning permission for more stockpiling to take

place at Longue Hougue. There is certainly the capacity of an additional probably five years for that stockpiling to take place right there.

1755 So that is one option, and I think that would be a pretty good option. But there are others as well. We have also been advised very helpfully, or the GDA have been advised rather, or Guernsey Waste have been advised, that stockpiling – again, the preferable locations, if not there, it could take place at any of the Island’s key industrial areas or key industrial expansion areas. There are a number of those, including Fontaine Vinery, for example. There are many other options for stockpiling if, for any reason, Black Rock is delayed. They would be preferable to Les Vardes because the costs would be lower. That is generally because most of those locations would be nearer, would be closer geographically, to where its final destination would be.

1760 In other words, even if Black Rock were to be delayed, and I am the first to accept that that is a possibility, we would neither need nor indeed want to use Les Vardes as a location for stockpiling. I am not giving way.

1765 Just very quickly, Deputy Leadbeater did mention the issue he raised yesterday, and just to add to that, there is a very important distinction to be made between Les Vardes being used for inert waste and stockpiling, and the kind of contamination risks that I was talking about with dual use. The difference being obviously that stockpiling is temporary and interim and the quarry would be prepared for water storage, whereas what we deemed to be unacceptable was a level of fill of inert waste capped by a material and then water storage on top. They are two very different Propositions there.

1770 I will try to just whizz through this. This is where I am afraid it might get a little bit more disjointed, but I will do my best to string it together as best I can. We know that if we are not going to increase our water storage capacity – well, first of all, we know that Les Vardes is the only feasible way of increasing our water storage capacity. Very important fact number one.

1775 We know, very important fact number two, that if we do not increase our water storage capacity, that the alternative is significantly more expensive and it has a number of other issues into the so-called bargain. So if we do not secure, if we do not back Les Vardes as the preferred option for water, we are making it much more likely that the community will have to incur higher costs. It will be this States’ decision that will bring higher costs to bear on the public.

1780 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Haskins.

1785 **Deputy Haskins:** Sir, the President said that the only way of saving money for this option is the most cost effective. I did highlight two things in my speech, which was the leakage being approximately if 100% of leakage was to be prevented, that would equate to 1.8 million L a day and the metering, if you are using Deputy Cameron’s figures of 68% metered and they on average use 24% less water, that would equate to 960,000 L a day.

1790 **Deputy de Saumarez:** Any figures that Deputy Haskins quotes, I can assure him that the forecast takes account of improvements in water treatment and any other efficiencies to that infrastructure, which will increase collection. It also takes into account demand management measures, such as universal metering and networking and gradual replacement of domestic appliances with more efficient appliances. But the single biggest factor in terms of the future deficit, and that future deficit is increasing, is the anticipated increase in population in line with States’ agreed policy.

1795 Also just to step back and look at this bigger picture, we have got multiple options for stockpiling. We have got multiple potential future options for inert waste and some of those, especially the ones that have got additional strategic use, are much preferable to just sticking inert waste in a hole in the ground. However, we have only got one option for increasing our water storage capacity. Les Vardes is in no way even a good backup solution in the event that Black Rock is delayed. I know there has been some focus – again, I am not sure where some of these numbers are coming from, but being asked to spend £20 million, no, no, no. If we can make a decision that

Les Vardes is the preferred option for fresh water storage, that is by far the best way of managing cost impacts on water consumers.

1805 We, as a States, are not being asked to contribute tens of millions of pounds or anything. It will be funded through Guernsey Water, but Guernsey Water assured us that the most cost-efficient way of enabling us to improve our water resilience standards and reduce that supply deficit is through this means.

1810 I have now found the notes I could not find earlier on on Deputy Inder's points on water consumption. I think I have covered them. Yes, it is not just about demand. As Deputy Haskins actually has alluded to, if we want to understand the Island's water resilience requirements, and we have done some very – well I say 'we', people other than me who really know what they are talking about in terms of those technical details – very detailed work. We need to look at the supply side as well. A factor that counteracts the historic fall in consumption is the fact that our ability to collect

1815 water has also fallen over the years because of water quality issues and that has reduced the potential catchment. That has contributed to the current ongoing resilience issue.

To explain it in another way, the main reason that we have a deficit today is because several streams in the north and south of the Island can no longer be collected because of pesticide levels and tightening drinking waters for PFAS. That is just to put a bit more detail around that. I know

1820 Deputy de Lisle is nodding.

So in the event of a severe drought now, the Island would have an estimated supply demand deficit of some 2.9 million L per day, rising to a peak of 4.3 million L in 2040, when our population is projected to be bigger. So for all of the people who are not persuaded that there is a problem to be addressed, that is the problem. It is a problem that is getting bigger every year we do not make

1825 a decision and act on this. It is going to become increasingly difficult and then our options will be incredibly curtailed if we miss the boat with Les Vardes.

That forecast takes into account improvement in water treatment, increased collection from streams, demand management measures, etc. But it is, as I mentioned, really about the fact that our population is anticipated to increase.

1830 It was this Assembly, let us not forget, who adopted that strategic population objective back in October 2022. I stressed at the time that that decision would require significant investment in infrastructure. It would be a disjointed Government indeed to agree that population objective on the one hand and then fail to plan the infrastructure to support it on the other. The long and the short of it is that we have a water supply deficit today and we know it will continue to increase in

1835 the future. Notwithstanding all the other measures, the improvement in water treatment and the other efficiencies, this deficit can only be fully addressed by the creation of a new water resource. The realistic options for that are a new reservoir at Les Vardes or a desalination plant.

Now using Les Vardes for water is a significantly less expensive option than desalination plant but it is also a better option for several additional reasons. Desalination has a significant negative

1840 environmental impact on the marine environment whereas reservoirs have a positive effect. They support biodiversity and provide immunity spaces which the public can enjoy. Desalination has a high energy and carbon footprint and ongoing maintenance costs, as well as other operational and delivery risks, and we do not have the expertise on Island. The most pertinent point was made in relation to desalination by Deputy Burford in fact. For those people who are sitting in the Chamber,

1845 and I appreciate Deputy Oliver might be struggling to hear again because there is an increased level of chatter, but I think this is a point that bears repeating by Deputy Burford. For all the people here that are really supportive of the GDA and really want to – oh, yes, I have just noticed the timer, we will speed up – support their plans and see that go ahead, if we do not agree Les Vardes we are frustrating their plans because the only place a desalination plant could go is at Longue Hougue,

1850 and that would really mess them around.

I hope I have answered the questions from Deputy Queripel, whizzing through my notes here. I have dealt with a mix of housing. I think basically to conclude, we are not actually being asked to commit resources. We do know that, as Deputy Parkinson pointed out, the more detailed plans will

1855 come back and it is important to know sooner rather than later if there is anything that might mean that they have to change.

But none of the arguments, by the way, about the Longue Hougue Reservoir in any way impact our proposals because we are not proposing Longue Hougue Reservoir or quarry as the next inert waste site and we are not even predicating its use following that. It is just there, it is one of the things we looked at, we are not saying that that is going to need to be used, so any complications around that are absolutely irrelevant.

1860 In conclusion, I think politicians are sometimes accused of existing in a bit of a bubble, divorced from reality. On this issue, I have been scratching my head about the disparity between the real world view, as I understand it, and the political view. As Deputy Brouard pointed out, we have been debating the strategic future of Les Vardes for literally decades. It has been earmarked for water storage now for about 20 years and never has it been considered to be contentious until this political term. Ask anyone who lives in the area whether they are concerned about its use for water and they will say, 'No, of course not. That is what you have been telling us it is going to be used for decades. What is more, we are actually really looking forward to having a lovely reservoir there instead of an industrial plant. Thanks very much.'

1870 So, it is not a contentious proposal in the real world. I think people understand that we live in an Island and they understand the importance of securing our water supplies, especially given that we have a supply deficit now. So anyone that has shared their views with me, I have to say, has been really supportive. I think the political contention has been that – well, actually, especially in the days of the Longue Hougue South proposal, there were lots of people who did not support that. When Les Vardes was being dangled as an alternative option for Longue Hougue, I can understand a bit of political resistance. But that is not what we are proposing now. We are not proposing Longue Hougue South as the next inert waste site or, indeed, even probably the one after that or the one after that.

1880 We know that we do not need Les Vardes for inert waste beyond Black Rock either for the foreseeable future. But, on the other hand, we know that we definitely do need Les Vardes for water storage. We know that the alternative of desalination is unacceptable in terms of its cost impact, energy impact, environmental impact, and impact on the GDA. But using Les Vardes, on the other hand, it has lots of benefits. It will improve our freshwater storage to the necessary standard and improve our water resilience in the most cost-effective way. It will provide an opportunity for greater operational efficiency, as some of the more expensive quarries could potentially be decommissioned, because it would enable that to happen within the water resilience standard, and therefore reduce some of those operational costs and minimise cost impact again, and various environmental and immunity benefits as well.

1890 So why now? Why do we need to make this decision now? The Island's drought resilience has reduced very recently because of what I described earlier about the streams that we cannot collect from. This decrease in resilience will continue to decrease as the population grows. All the new houses that we want, they all need water. It is a really important part of this Proposition. So a decision can be made before we have severe water use restrictions or we can wait until that happens and react afterwards. But that is much more expensive and much less palatable.

1895 I think most water customers would want us to plan ahead. A decision now reduces the risk of having to react after the event, which will have much more severe impacts on Islanders' well-being and on the economy. Les Vardes is the most important part of the solution and it could take 10 years to bring it online. So delay will increase cost, as actually previously noted by Deputy Helyar.

1900 It could also shorten the timeline for delivery, resulting in sharper increases in customer bills, and it could make it more difficult for Island contractors to be used to deliver the work.

So those are the reasons that we need to make a decision now. I very much hope that a strategic decision will be made on Les Vardes at this time because it would be detrimental to kick this decision any further down the road. We need decisive action and decisive decision-making so that Guernsey Water can get on with the planning, which will take some years. It would be a gross strategic error

1905 on the part of the Government to lose the one-off opportunity to use Les Vardes for water storage when we have alternative options for inert waste.

For those reasons, I would strongly urge Members to please support both Propositions.
Thank you.

1910 **The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, there are two Propositions. I am going to have a vote on each of them in turn, and I am going to invite the Greffier to open the voting on Proposition 1.

There was a recorded vote.

1915 *Carried – Pour 34, Contre 2, Ne vote pas 3, Did not vote 0, Absent 1*

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

The Bailiff: So in respect of Proposition 1, they voted in favour 34 Members, 2 Members voted against, 3 Members abstained, 1 Member is absent. Therefore I would declare Proposition 1 carried.

1920 We will move straight on to a vote on Proposition 2 and I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on Proposition 2, please. Will you now please close the voting, Greffier?

There was a recorded vote.

1925 *Carried – Pour 19, Contre 14, Ne vote pas 6, Did not vote 0, Absent 1*

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Brouard, Al	Aldwell, Sue	Dudley-Owen, Andrea	None	Roffey, Peter
Burford, Yvonne	Blin, Chris	Hill, Edward		

Bury, Tina	Dyke, John	Le Tocq, Jonathan
Cameron, Andy	Ferbrache, Peter	Leadbeater, Marc
de Lisle, David	Haskins, Sam	Meerveld, Carl
de Sausmarez, Lindsay	Helyar, Mark	Snowdon, Alexander
Fairclough, Simon	Inder, Neil	
Falla, Steve	Mahoney, David	
Gabriel, Adrian	McKenna, Liam	
Gollop, John	Moakes, Nick	
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha	Murray, Bob	
Le Tissier, Chris	Oliver, Victoria	
Matthews, Aidan	Prow, Robert	
Parkinson, Charles	Vermeulen, Simon	
Queripel, Lester		
Soulsby, Heidi		
St Pier, Gavin		
Taylor, Andrew		
Trott, Lyndon		

The Bailiff: So in respect of Proposition 2, they voted in favour 19 Members, they voted against 14 Members, 6 Members abstained, and 1 Member is absent. I will declare Proposition 2 also duly carried.

1930

We will now adjourn until 2.30. Thank you very much.

*The Assembly adjourned at 12.47 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 2.30 p.m.*

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4. Sark's Government – Request for Loan Facility to purchase Sark Electricity Limited – Propositions carried

Article 4.

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter entitled 'Sark's Government – Request for Loan Facility to purchase Sark Electricity Limited' dated 21st March 2025, they are of the opinion:-

1 To authorise and direct the Policy & Resources Committee, working with the Chief Pleas of Sark (or one or more of its Committees) to:

a) agree the terms of reference and constitution of a commission on the future arrangements for the constitutional and working relationships between Guernsey and Sark;

b) establish that commission; and c) bring the relevant findings of that commission back to the parliaments of the islands involved, firstly with an interim report before the end of 2025 and secondly with a final report 12 months after that (before the end of 2026).

2 To authorise the Policy & Resources Committee to provide a loan facility of up to £1.5 million to the Chief Pleas of Sark, for the purpose of purchasing Sark Electricity Limited and/or Sark Electricity Holdings Limited and any remedial work required for electricity generation and distribution in Sark, and to delegate authority to the Policy & Resources Committee to agree the terms of the loan, on the conditions that:

a) the Chief Pleas of Sark participate in the Bailiwick Commission set out in Proposition 1 above;

b) Impôt payments (duties on alcohol, fuel and tobacco collected by the States of Guernsey on behalf of the Chief Pleas of Sark) be used as a security guarantee to repay that loan to Guernsey in the event of nonpayment by Sark of any loan utilised; and

c) the Chief Pleas of Sark undertake a comprehensive review of Sark's taxation regime to ensure that it can acquire sufficient reserves to support essential capital investment requirements, including the aforesaid loan.

1935 **The States' Greffier:** Article 4, Policy & Resources Committee – Sark's Government request for loan facility to purchase Sark Electricity Ltd.

The Bailiff: I am going to invite the Vice-President, Deputy Soulsby, to open the debate.

1940 **Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir.

Ensuring a stable electricity supply in Sark is not just an administrative challenge. It is essential for the well-being of its people and the Island's future. Without reliable power, daily life becomes difficult. Indeed, it can be a matter of life or death for some. Economic growth stagnates, and the community's long-term viability is put at risk.

1945 For years, the generation supply of electricity in Sark have been matters fraught with difficulties. The Island depends on a private company, Sark Electricity Ltd. But issues about pricing, infrastructure and safety concerns, and uncertainty about future ownership, have left Sark in a vulnerable position. In simple terms, when it comes to electricity, Sark has been running on hope rather than certainty, something no community can afford.

1950 Over the last decade, the Chief Pleas of Sark has made several attempts to purchase Sark Electricity, to gain control of the company and its assets, aiming to secure and improve the Island's energy future. The most recent effort in 2022 reached mediation but failed to progress beyond that. Meanwhile, a new consortium, Island Power, linked to University College London, is, we understand, working on acquiring Sark Electricity but, for now, uncertainty remains.

1955 Recognising the current circumstances, including safety concerns, Sark's Policy and Finance Committee, supported by Sark's Future Energy Committee, has asked Guernsey's Government for a £1.5 million loan to facilitate the acquisition. The business case does not fit the usual profile of investments decisions by the States of Guernsey but is suggested that it be considered on social rather than commercial merits.

1960 The Policy & Resources Committee agreed to put the loan request to the States for consideration. Now while Guernsey has no formal obligation to assist, there is a moral argument for support. Sark and Guernsey share a deep historical connection and ensuring stability in one Island strengthens the entire Bailiwick.

1965 Of course, this would not be a blank cheque. It is for a loan facility of up to £1.5 million, and interest would be applied and included in the repayments. The proposed loan also comes with three clear conditions: Sark must use revenues, like Impôt, as security in case of any non-payment of the loan, participate in the proposed Bailiwick Commission, and Sark must commit to a full review of its taxation system to ensure financial sustainability. In short, Guernsey is offering support, but not without safeguards.

1970 The Committee is of the view that we should not find ourselves in this situation often and steps should be taken to ensure that the relationship with Sark is resilient to face the challenges of the modern day. There has been a lot of noise from certain quarters about this policy letter. Sparks have flown, as it were. Various accusations have been made against various people. Questions and statements about who knew or said what and when. However, really that is not central to this debate. There is generally support for the loan across the political spectrum in Sark. There are concerns around the Taxation Review and Commission being tied to the loan, but the concept of the Tax Review and the Commission are supported in themselves. Nothing to date has provided a basis for the Committee to change the Propositions before the Assembly, and certainly not following the failed motion of no confidence against Sark's Policy and Finance Committee that was debated yesterday.

1980 A request was properly received from Sark's Policy and Finance Committee after discussions about the possibility of a loan over a period of months and discussions about Sark's electricity

1985 supply over a period of years. Policy & Resources Committee consider this and wish to seek the conditions in any loan agreement to improve the security against any loan and improve resilience to ensure the request is a one-off.

1990 The Committee is asking Members whether they would be willing for the States of Guernsey to provide a loan to the Chief Pleas of Sark under certain conditions. The conditions, once agreed by this Assembly, are not up for negotiation in the loan offer. It will be up to Chief Pleas to decide whether it wants to take up this offer, under those conditions or not. Sark needs a safe, reliable and affordable electricity provision, something that it does not have at present. The Committee believes that it is morally right that Guernsey offer financial support in these circumstances, for the good of the whole Bailiwick and its reputation, but at the same time not to the extent that it puts Guernsey taxpayers' money at unnecessary risk.

1995 Sark may decide to plot another course to achieve its ambitions, but we make our offer clear. The proposal to use Impôt as security is a simple but clever one which has been used before in relation to a loan provided by Guernsey to Sark in the 19th century to redevelop their harbour. Guernsey collects the Impôt and so has some control in the process. If Guernsey has to use Impôt monies to make up any loan repayments, Sark will face a deficit and will need to agree new revenue-raising measures.

2000 The proposed fiscal review is a sensible way for Sark to plan its own finances and ensure it is able to fund its own capital portfolio. Undertaking the review will be a matter for Sark, but Guernsey will stand ready to provide advice to that review if it can be of any assistance in sharing expertise and experience.

2005 We discussed the establishment of a Bailiwick Commission earlier this month during the debate about the rehabilitation of the Alderney runway, so I do not intend to go into the detail again. There is no Guernsey and Sark arrangement, which is akin to the 1948 Agreement between Guernsey and Alderney, but there is a complex constitutional relationship between Guernsey and Sark, which is regularly misunderstood. Furthermore, while there is no formal obligation for the States of Guernsey to provide services to Sark, the simple fact that Guernsey is a larger neighbour means that Sark residents do use many services, such as education and healthcare.

2010 The Committee is strongly of the view that to review the current relationship and to look to the future, the best option would be to establish a constitutional commission called the Bailiwick Commission, undertaken by an independent panel.

2015 The decision we are asking from Members today is for the Bailiwick Commission, which the Assembly directed to be established with Alderney earlier this month, to be widened in scope to also consider the relationship with Sark, subject to Sark agreeing to work with us to establish a commission collaboratively for our mutual benefit. It is intended that the relationships between Guernsey and Alderney and Guernsey and Sark will be dealt with as separate strands or phases, which would not hinder on the progress of each other. There would need to be co-ordination to ensure that any Bailiwick-wide issues could also be properly considered. Full participation and review from all stakeholders on whichever Islands participate would be encouraged. That would include governments, organisations, legal professionals and members of the public.

2025 The Commission would not have the power to make binding recommendations or to impose actions on any Island. Whether to accept and implement any recommendations would be for the Islands' parliaments and governments to decide on. Sark's inclusion in the Bailiwick Commission will help Sark and Guernsey answer a fundamental question. Is the relationship fit to meet the challenges that we face today and the increasing complexities of the modern age that we can expect to come in the future, as well as those we cannot predict?

2030 Sir, this policy letter has been published by the Policy & Resources Committee and is in front of Members today for debate as a consequence of the strong historical connections between the Islands of Guernsey and Sark and our belief that we have a moral obligation to support our sister Island at its request. So the Committee asks Members to support all the Propositions attached to this policy letter.

2035 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, if you wish to do so, you can remove your jackets this afternoon. Keep your shirt on, Deputy Brouard. *(Laughter)* Well, if nobody wishes to debate the two Propositions – Deputy Le Tissier.

Deputy Le Tissier: Thank you, sir.

2040 I thought lots of people would be getting up. It is all about money. Not Pink Floyd's, but taxpayers' money, and I think we should be very careful with how we use it. I note that the repayment of this loan is to be by income from the sale of electricity. It seems to me it would have to be as the Sark government only have a surplus of around £48,000 last year, up from £3,000 the previous year, so there is no chance of any repayments to a loan coming from that source.

2045 Most of my criticism is down to the policy letter, the principle. A loan of £1.5 million but we do not know exactly what the interest rate is that may be negotiated. If we assume 5% over 20 years, my calculator tells me that the repayment is £119,000 per annum. That is a total repayment, including capital of £2.375 million, of which £875,000 is interest. So can Sark afford this?

2050 I need to be assured with evidence, not optimistic forecasts. We do not want to have this to be turned into a gift in 20 years' time. Hard financial facts are needed, not rose-tinted spectacles. Talking to the Sark representatives earlier this week, I understand that they expect a dividend from Sark Electricity once they have taken over of circa £200,000 to £300,000. Okay, that helps. But I would like to see the accounts to evidence that. I know that is not going to be possible so that leaves me in a quandary because the accounts are for a private company.

2055 Now the policy letter mentions security of the loan but I am not quite sure how that is going to work as the policy letter is a little bit unclear. It mentions the withholding of Impôt duty. That is fine and dandy but it does not explain how. Is it only to be collected when or if Sark defaults on a single payment or at the end of 20 years? How often are repayments going to be made? Is it monthly, annually or is it like an interest-free mortgage, it all gets repaid at the end.

2060 To be a security, I would have expected a binding legal charge to be executed. So one of my questions is: is that going to be put in place? Has P&R budgeted for legal fees should the purchase be forced to become a compulsory purchase and Sark Electricity takes legal action against Sark or even Guernsey? Has P&R received any legal advice of that on the possibility of success of a challenge to compulsory purchase? Court cases are expensive and we do not have a good record in that regard – PFOS.

2070 Then we have the review of taxation. That is a problem for me because a review is just that, a review. The review can come out with no change. I would prefer that the agreement have it stated in the policy letter that at the very minimum some reference to expected outcomes, i.e. that there is an expectation that Sark would seek to introduce new taxes. Now I wonder if Sark government would consider a commercial loan. The policy letter says that because of known unknowns and other risks, a commercial bank would not touch this, but why can we not act as a guarantor? The end result may end up the same either way but hopefully not.

I am undecided if this is a viable option but it is worth investigation as that would avoid the loan as proposed coming out of our limited cash resources that we require locally.

2075 Lastly, I do not want to see this as a precedent. I do not want Sark to become another Alderney. Has P&R received any legal advice in this regard? I am referring to Guernsey having to provide subsidies to Sark. I was dead against this loan but having spoken to the Sark representatives, and they have been very helpful, I am more minded to agree but I still have serious concerns.

2080 I am going to listen to the debate, I hope there is a debate, and hope that P&R can answer some of my queries before I decide which way to vote.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

2085 **Deputy Gabriel:** Thank you, sir.

I will be brief. Maybe if P&R can answer the question or Deputy Soulsby when she is responding, in section 6.8 of the policy letter there is a cut-off date of 30th April 2025 when SEL is rumoured or even it is written that the purchase will be completed by. Has that been reported back to P&R via Chief Pleas and if so do we know any potential new owners and is the loan still required effectively for Chief Pleas to take on SEL, or will the new owners run the facility in the manner that Chief Pleas expect?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

This is a no-brainer for me. The Proposition is spelled out clearly. The safeguard is in place. It is a loan. There is interest going to be paid to the taxpayer. I do not think there is anything we should be too concerned about, in my opinion, and I support the policy letter and the position of Policy & Resources.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, sir.

I will start off with the principle probably similar to Deputy Leadbeater that I look at this as almost as a moral duty to a sister Island in the same way as we work with Alderney. So I think we start on that level. I do not want to denude them or break down all the questions and challenges in a public forum like this, but I do have a number of questions which I am hoping will be answered as we go through.

To be very blunt, there are two sides to this. You look at this as a loan or a business structure but actually it is beyond that because it is actually our sister Island. So what are we being asked? It is the obvious £1.5 million to make this work. Why now? Because actually it is coming to the end of life of the equipment there and something has to be done. What is the other objective, the strategic objective? It is part of a bigger plan of looking towards what they are going to do in the future with the energy network, which was going to cost more money and actually is going to take a lot of investment from the existing usage of it but with a bigger plan.

There is the obvious question – I think actually I listened to Deputy Le Tissier's one of why not do a guarantee? I am curious, I would like to know why that was not considered. The other one, why could it not come under the mandate of P&R within its mandated funds available, although they have – I believe Deputy Soulsby in her speech did clarify that this is a bit different from others.

Really I suppose the kind of questions I would have – the principle is there, yes, but the questions I would have, looking from the policy letter, they have got an independent valuation supporting £400,000 or £500,000 on the purchase of a company and then the rest is going to be towards other costs within. Because this company is in private hands there is going to be a lot of negotiation there, forward and back, to get that figure right. So we do not have that, there is no heads of terms, I understand; there is nothing there yet. So these are business calculations being made. It is important, though, to know what would that be.

Then, of course, because of the expiry of a lot of the equipment and things there, there is a – I do not know if there is a schedule of works required with an exact money, but I imagine as much as you want to do that, it is quite hard to do when the business is in the hands of a private entity, private business. Then, of course, if there is a commission side to control it, the tariff sensitivity, if we are not paying enough to repay the loan on whatever terms are agreed, there may be some control on putting prices up or might be so high that it does not work for an island.

Those are the questions I would really appreciate. And if it got to a compulsory purchase, I can imagine the lawyers, etc. So it is just understanding – the intention, I believe this is a good thing to do, but the questions I am posing, I am hoping that there will be given an answer in the summing

up, because that will be the final part to allow me to support something which we should support but it is also pragmatic that we look at it and ask questions around it.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Ferbrache.

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Deputy Ferbrache: Deputy Leadbeater, it is a no-brainer for me and it is also a point touched on by Deputy Blin, it is not just the financial aspects, it is whether it is a moral obligation. We are a Bailiwick of Guernsey and we should all help each other when we need to help each other. We help Alderney, Alderney help us, we help Sark. I think the Sark representatives realise that they have got to raise their taxes, they are not bringing in enough money and it needs more money to be brought in.

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But I know from my time as President of P&R, and I am sure my predecessor as well, this issue has been going on a long time. It has been creeping towards a disaster for a long time. If we look just at a few paragraphs from the policy letter, which is a very good policy letter, very well presented. Paragraph 4.1:

The current situation for Sark's electricity generation supply. Sark's electricity generation and distribution system is privately-owned by SEL. Electricity in Sark is generated in the small power station equipped with four diesel engines. Those engines are at the end of their serviceable life. It is understood that the transformers located around Sark, which step power down from 6,600 volts to 400/230 volt supply, have an average age of 38 years and some are 70 years old.

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And then paragraph 4.3:

There are two groups of houses (19 in total) in the north of Sark which have been cut off from the electricity grid for several years (since a landowner requested that SEL's equipment be removed from their land). There is no legislation in Sark about wayleaves for utilities.

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They have to get on. There has got to be wayleaves for utilities because it is a nonsense that a landowner can prevent people having access to land. Finally, paragraph 4.5:

The majority of Sark households (those that do not self-generate electricity) are entirely reliant at present on the SEL generation distribution system which is managed as a completely private endeavour.

We really are in the final – and I commend, I have not had the chance to commend before, I commend Deputy Bury, four hours 16 minutes running a marathon last week. We are in the final 385 yards of this marathon and we have got to get on with it.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

Could I possibly ask a couple of questions on this? In paragraph 3.8 it says:

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The current owner of SEL has publicly stated that there is an alternative acquisition in progress that is due to complete by 30th April 2025 by a consortium, called 'Island Power' and linked to the University College London ...

30th April was yesterday, so I do not know if we know whether that acquisition took place or not. I will give way.

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Deputy Soulsby: I thank Deputy Dyke for giving way, because I think the question has already been asked, so I thought I will answer it now before we have anybody else asking the same question. P&R have heard nothing that has come out of those negotiations.

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Deputy Dyke: Okay. The other issue that was concerning me is I cannot quite see what the long-term plan is. I guess that the government of Sark is considering a compulsory acquisition with

all the legal hazards that that involves, and our £1.5 million would be applied to that. But then, in page 5.3, we have got the £11.5 million figure, which is the cost of setting up their electricity system, upgrading it and putting in some green energy and that sort of thing. Do we know what they are thinking about on that £11.5 million? Those are just some questions I have.

2185 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

2190 **Deputy Gollop:** I am obviously a member of Policy & Resources and entirely support this, but I go my own way as well a bit. I popped over to Sark a couple of times, three times last year, once I think it was for the sheep racing, but on another couple of occasions I went to the Chief Pleas and the pub and met some of the Members, of different persuasions you could say. Obviously I regret if there is any disunity in Sark politics and I think I might have struggled to support this today had there been a negative vote in Chief Pleas last night, because we have to tread carefully with these things. What this is really, and it has been expertly managed behind the scenes to people who support P&R, it is to a degree an intergovernmental relationship, an interparliamentary relationship and of course an intra-Bailiwick relationship. It has several elements to it.

2195 Deputy Ferbrache referred to a history and I think Deputy Brouard was aware of a history to this and so on, and possibly a few years ago it could have been done through the Trading Boards but that is not where we are now and I think we have gone down the most effective route of unity. Obviously, if you are purchasing an entity like electricity, which serves a very useful purpose but at the same time has equipment needs, you have to tread carefully.

2200 I am not going to make any observations about those negotiations or the perhaps unpleasant prospect of a compulsory purchase. We just have to let those negotiations ride out and see where we go with them. I see this not as interference in Sark but as support. In fact, we were nostalgic earlier today with Deputy Trott, and I remember a former, very senior legal Presiding Officer of our Chamber, who said to me one day, he said, 'Please do not interfere in Sark affairs, John, Deputy Gollop'. He was right. Sark is a very independent community that has had many hundreds of years of outstanding history and they do their own thing.

2205 I heard rumours one day when I was having coffee with a colleague that there was a degree of hostility from some people in Sark, some political figures, about this policy letter but I realised that they were chasing hares that were not there. There was a thought behind the scenes that somebody at P&R was wanting to do a takeover bid of Sark and perhaps introduce an Alderney-style relationship. Nothing could be further from the truth because Sark's economic and political independence is what we want to see.

2210 We are not going to say that we want to have additional costs or additional bureaucracy. Perhaps the Alderney relationship has added strong moments and less strong and we are working with that. Certainly this is not about that. Deputy Le Tissier made a point about the loan, well it is £75,000 interest, £75,000 repayment of capital, but it is very much as a loan to support a part of the Bailiwick, is not in any way linked with a political relationship and so I want to disabuse that. Nor is it an attempt to gain Income Tax from Sark for Guernsey. This is just, as I understand it, a conversation as to how Sark can in the long term ensure the sustainability of its economy because, apart from the needs of replenishing the network, there are other potential issues like the harbour, La Coupee and so on.

2225 Indeed, I think I can partially answer myself one of Deputy Dyke's questions. I attended actually the debate when the Island, supported by a majority, was looking at spending some money to look at an £11.5 million alternative energy greener network approach sustainable in its heart. But I believe that has been put on hold and a more pragmatic way forward has come in supporting this. I want to concentrate really on why we should support Sark. It is not just that they are part of the Bailiwick and that they are a community whose international identity as a dark sky island, as part now of a literary permanent in the book festival, maybe a JK Rowling novel coming out soon as well. It is not just that element that raises the profile of Sark, it is an important destination for Guernsey tourists,

2235 for locals who live in Guernsey and love staying in Sark, some of them even have their own house there. We have Sark Earth Festivals, Sark Folk Festivals, literary events, art events, I believe that there is goodwill from the overwhelming majority of Guernsey people to ensure Sark does not have a cut-off.

2240 I met last night, funnily enough, a resident who lives in the part of Sark where they have no transmission of electricity. Those are the kind of things we need to resolve. So my philosophy is we work with Sark, we would very much welcome them at the Commission so that they can build a stronger bond with Guernsey and with Alderney in terms of us working together. But this is not a way of tying them into paying any tax to Guernsey, any revenue service involvement, any political relationship, nor is it linked at all to some sort of fiscal or political unity. This is just giving Sark the chance. Maybe they could go out and get a commercial loan, but this is the easiest way of achieving change in a satisfactory way and I hope that all the politicians can work there together with the electricity utility and move forward.

2245

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

2250 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, like I am sure everyone in the Assembly, I am very supportive of the Bailiwick and I really believe we need to be doing more together. However, I think it is important to point the Assembly's attention to the risks and the financial modelling that underpins this loan and the policy letter, because I think we are giving this policy letter quite an easy ride and making it sound that the loan is easily repayable and there is nothing to see here. But if you look at section 6.4, it specifies that a part of the loan will be for acquiring the assets. So in the region of £400,000 to £500,000 is ring-fenced for that and about £300,000 to £500,000 will also be ring-fenced for immediate safety works. So this is for the immediate acquisition and remedial work that needs to be undertaken.

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2260 Section 6.7 identifies the financial model that has been provided by the Policy and Finance Committee. What is very important, the Policy and Finance Committee does not have access to the actual financial figures of the company so it is based on their own financial model rather than the actual finances of the company. The model is based on assumptions and estimates from limited information sources because of the lack of information currently available from the SEL. The model is particularly sensitive to changes in diesel prices and general operating costs, and as we know, we live through a very high inflation operating costs period right now.

2265 In addition, very importantly, the model provided does not include estimates for the ongoing CapEx requirements or the impact of inflation over the next 20-year long period. So the current estimates, which are very ambiguous and based on limited sources, do not even take into account the CapEx that they will need to spend to maintain the grid, and it does not capture the inflation period.

2270 My reading into this is that there is a very high probability – very high probability – based on the information we have got in the policy letter, that Sark will not be able to actually repay this loan based on the risks currently projected in this financial model. What that means is that there is a very likely chance that the States will potentially need to fall back on the Impôt duties, which are currently providing 25% of the budget of Sark. While it may be fine for Guernsey to be effectively using part of that budget to continue servicing the loan, it will immediately have a very significant impact on Sark's budget and the delivery of whatever services their government undertakes based on those Impôt duties, so imagine if our budget was cut by 10%, 15% or whatever it is, right? That will immediately cause significant risk to Sark.

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2280 While I absolutely understand – I think there is an understanding that Sark has to undertake a comprehensive tax regime review. We know how difficult it is to undertake comprehensive tax regime reviews. First of all, it takes potentially years, there has to be community and political consensus and cohesion in terms of actually trying to get to a position of what you want to do and to get it through the political system and to get it through the political agenda. Unfortunately, given the back and forth we have had, and whatever is going on in Sark in terms of governance and

2285 disagreements and votes of no confidence, I think there is an unstable political situation. I think I maybe do not have enough confidence that Sark has the ability to be able to come up with a proper package of measures that will be able to raise taxes. This a very similar situation that Guernsey are finding ourselves in, but obviously on a much bigger scale, where we have been under-investing in our infrastructure and we have got to find ways to start to reverse that.

2290 I think, in summary, there are huge red flags here all over it. I am really concerned about Sark's ability to pay this loan and the financial projections, the financial modelling that is currently behind that. We do have to do the right thing and probably just close our eyes and go with it. But I am extremely concerned about actually what will bite us down the line, because the costs are not going to go down, the inflation is going to be there, the picture is not going to get any better. Sark has been struggling with the electricity prices because of all the many different macroeconomic, microeconomic factors that have been affecting them. They will not get any easier. So the situation, the financial model will not get any easier.

2300 It might get easier if Sark develops a proper long-term plan for their community and population numbers, like with any demographic, any island, I will be very critical in that. But I have not yet seen any medium or long-term plan that the community has developed together that has had the full buy-in from the community. So there is an absence of a long-term plan for Sark and then the understanding where their population has to really go up for that Island to be more sustainable.

2305 So I just wanted to make sure that the Assembly was fully aware about the very high risks that are currently associated with this loan, the very high likelihood that, under the current projections and the fact that the current financial model does not include CapEx, does not include inflation projections, this loan is not repayable in its current high-level terms, that the States will very likely need to hold the Impôts duties, and that means the Sark Government has to very seriously consider having a plan, a long-term plan and a short-term plan for tax regime change.

2310 I just wanted to make sure the Assembly was fully aware of what they are going to sign up to. So I am quite hesitant, I probably still will support this policy letter, but there are really significant issues that the government of Sark has to address and address them as soon as possible and show their willingness to create a more sustainable future for their community.

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

2315

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, sir.

2320 So I concur with Deputy Leadbeater, this is a no-brainer for me that we should be supporting Sark. It is not just the moral duty to support Sark, residents in Guernsey get a lot of benefit from being part of a Bailiwick and I have visited Sark many times and spent quite a lot of time in Sark, not all of it in the Bel Air and the Mermaid. I have visited on occasions for the folk festival and stayed over there. One of my concerns about improving their electricity supply is that it would not go in any way to damage the Sark's dark skies designation. It is one of the first islands which has got truly dark sky where you can see the stars very clearly because of the lack of artificial light, which I am sure would not be affected by improvements to the electricity supply.

2325 Sir, just responding briefly to Deputy Kazantseva-Miller because the question was are we sure what we are signing up to, and to my understanding we were not at this stage signing up to a loan. We were authorising P&R to go and set the terms of that loan and how that would be repaid. I know there is a temptation for some Members to do the assessment and check to see is the loan valid and does Sark have the collateral to repay if it does not go well. I see that as a stage further down that officers from P&R will be tasked with doing that piece of work, and we just have to have a little bit of confidence that that will be done reasonably well and that Guernsey will be able to have some confidence that the loan will be repayable through whatever mechanism is chosen for that to happen.

2330 Sir, it is my assumption that the purchase will likely go towards being a compulsory purchase. If this were a straightforward negotiated purchase it would probably just be agreed beforehand and probably would be coming to us at that point. The fact that we are agreeing it beforehand to me

indicates that this is likely to be a potentially contentious and fractious negotiation and that compulsion may well be an element of how that comes to be.

2340 I would just ask the question then: will Guernsey be providing any legal support to Sark in order to operate a compulsory purchase if it does come to that? I see that Sark has recently set up a compulsory purchase Law. I do not know the details of how compulsory purchases will operate in Sark but in general I know them to be expensive and difficult to work through all of the options.

2345 My other question is: I can see in the policy letter that this is only really the first stage and that Sark has estimated, it says in section 5.3, £11.5 million to set up a new electricity generation and infrastructure. I do wonder if any consideration has been given to simply setting up an interconnector to Guernsey and being able to use the supply from Guernsey rather than using the new generation in Sark.

But on the whole, sir, I am inclined to back both of the Propositions.

Thank you.

2350

The Bailiff: Deputy Mahoney.

Deputy Mahoney: No one has risen, but 26(1) please, sir, just in case.

2355 **The Bailiff:** Can I invite those Members who wish to speak in debate, before I turn back to the Vice-President to reply to the debate, to stand in their places please? Deputy Mahoney, is it still your wish that I move a motion under Rule 26(1)?

Deputy Mahoney: Oh, sir, the power. But how can you refuse that smile? No, sir. *(Laughter)*

2360

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

2365 **Deputy Trott:** Sir, as you rightly say, and I am grateful to Deputy Mahoney for withdrawing the motion, but as you rightly say, the Vice-President, Deputy Soulsby, will be summing up. But there are a couple of points I would like to make.

The first is, and I doubt there is anyone in this Assembly who would disagree, Sark is a great place and we are good neighbours of Sark. But it must continue to modernise, and I do not think there are many in Sark who disagree with that comment. In particular, it must raise sufficient revenues to wash its face.

2370 Again, I doubt there are a few, if any, that would disagree with me, but there is a very different relationship between us and Alderney. We are in partial fiscal union with Alderney and we have made the decision to spend, on a proportionate basis, a staggering amount of money on upgrading Alderney's Airport.

2375 But this is not a grant or a partial allocation, however material it is, from our reserves or from our revenues. This is a loan and it is a loan that completely washes its face. But there is an irony here and that is that the Impôts duties are gathered by Guernsey and paid across to Sark. If there is any issue with this loan, the Impôts duties will simply be used to settle the loan in advance.

2380 The irony is that that will certainly exasperate the problems that Sark has in terms of its fiscal resilience. It was Deputy Kazantseva-Miller made the point that it represents about 25% of their revenues. The consequences of that is it must accelerate the requirement for some fiscal changes in a manner that enables it to build up sufficient reserves to be able to deal with matters of this type.

Deputy Matthews asked about legal support. I can confirm that the Sark authorities will continue to get the support that they require.

2385 So, not only is this completely de-risked from a Guernsey, Alderney, Herm taxpayers' perspective, but it is absolutely the right thing to do from a good neighbourly perspective, and that is clearly the mood of this Assembly.

2390 Deputy Gabriel talked about a sale and Deputy Soulsby intervened and made it clear that we have heard nothing. Certainly the deadline passed last night. I have to say, and this is a personal comment, but I am entitled to make it, this is of no surprise to me. There have been a number of – am I allowed to say false promises, sir; I am not sure if I am?

The Bailiff: It does not relate to any of the Members here, does it?

2395 **Deputy Trott:** It does not, no.

The Bailiff: So you can.

2400 **Deputy Trott:** I can. Yes, I thought that was the case, but thank you for confirming nonetheless. There have been a number of false promises made by an individual who we are not absolutely certain is in fact the ultimate beneficial owner of this entity. This has in itself posed some challenges.

2405 But remember what we are doing here is we are asking this Assembly to approve, in principle, a loan under these conditions for further negotiation with Chief Pleas. Not only that, Chief Pleas will need to ensure that its government, its parliament, its assembly is content with the terms that we offer. But these are the terms. They are not open to negotiation. The terms are explicit and are extremely unlikely to be amended.

2410 Sir, this is a good neighbourly thing. We are unquestionably helping a friend. We are creating an environment whereby reform is more likely than not. So it is a no-brainer, as other Members of this Assembly have said. In fact, rarely does a Proposition come before this Assembly that is so easy to support for all the right reasons.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: I will now turn back to the Vice-President, Deputy Soulsby, to reply to the debate, please.

2415 **Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir, and I thank Members for their contributions.

The overriding phrase that came out of it was 'no-brainer' and I am pleased that that was the overriding impression from the policy letter and why we absolutely need to support our sister Island.

2420 But just to follow up on some of the questions. Deputy Le Tissier did ask a lot of points about the terms and what interest rates and things. But really, what the Proposition is asking is to give delegated authority to P&R to negotiate the loan agreement. We know what the estimated interest rates might be and we also know Sark's 2025 budget, the Impôts is estimated at about £350,000, so it is more than sufficient to cover any repayments should that be needed. So I just thought I would reference that. This is not the end of it. Clearly, P&R will have a role to play and hopefully we can reach terms with Sark. I am sure both sides will be willing and able to do that.

2425 In terms of legal fees for any compulsory purchase, that would be for Sark's Chief Pleas to consider. Yes, legal advice has been sought in preparation of Propositions and policy letters required by the Rules. There was also a question around legal advice to Sark around compulsory purchase and I can see His Majesty's Procureur nodding away to say yes, that support and advice has been given. I am very pleased that our staff, our officers and Law Officers, have been willingly helping Sark through this and hopefully that bodes well for the future.

2430 I will move on to Deputy Gabriel. I think I responded in terms of we are not aware of anything that has happened since yesterday when there was meant to be a deadline. I thank Deputy Leadbeater for his support.

2435 Again, Deputy Blin seems to talk a lot about terms and concerns really, which will be part of the negotiations that we have. P&R did not need to, under its delegated authority, bring this issue to the States but we thought, as it was linked to dealing with a separate jurisdiction, it is something that we should do and it is right for Members here to be able to put their views across and debate it.

2440 The purchase of SEL will be a matter for Chief Pleas, of course. What this States are being asked is for a loan to facilitate that. But the arrangements for the purchase is for Sark, and they will, again, seek legal advice to support that purchase. I understand from Sark, the valuation is a public record. It is linked to regulated asset value from the Pricing Commissioner. I think it is based on the 2020 purchase price that the commissioner was aware of.

2445 Deputy Ferbrache, I thank him for his support. Again, he was saying, yes, we have got to do it. This is a no-brainer. I know that he knows that this has been going on for a while. I know, certainly, for at least eight years, and I am sure it would be before that. So this is something long overdue, and that is why Guernsey feels we really need to help Sark out here. I do thank Deputy Ferbrache for his support.

2450 Deputy Dyke, the loan request is for the purchase of SEL's assets only to secure the current generation and supply, so it puts Sark in a stronger position to deliver its longer-term plans. It is not about the purchase of the whole kit and caboodle. On that, the £11.5 million is for the complete restoration of the electricity supply on the Island. It is not necessarily all needed and the biggest cost of this, in response to Deputy Matthews, is in terms of the connector and where you get the electricity. The biggest cost of this is the grid, and bringing in a grid more fit-for-purpose in this century. I will be clear on that.

2460 Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, yes, if you look at this in the cold light of day, and you look at the risks and rewards, there are issues, which is why we have said we believe this is the moral obligation for the States to support Sark with that loan. That is a point, whether it would be easy to get a commercial loan for this one, is another matter. But, yes, it is not straightforward, clearly, but as set out in the policy letter, very much believe that there is a moral obligation to support Sark here.

2465 We have recognised the risks, we have made it very clear what they are, and balanced the risks and reward, and understood what those risks are before doing it. Many of us on P&R with commercial financial experience are aware of what potential obstacles and difficulties there could be, and I believe we have gone as far as we can and should do in terms of balancing that and making sure that we are thinking about the Guernsey taxpayer, which is our ultimate responsibility here.

2470 Yes, I have answered Deputy Matthew's questions. He did ask about the interconnector. An interconnector might be difficult in terms of Guernsey's own electricity supply at this present moment, we just have an Electricity Strategy which says how we need to upscale that one, so possibly in the future but not at this particular moment in time.

I thank Deputy Trott for his comments, as ever, and I am pleased this will be the last policy letter that I will have opened and closed, and I hope that in the future I will have more opportunities to go and visit our wonderful sister Island, and I ask Members to vote for the policy letter.

2475 **Several Members:** Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Members of the States, there are two Propositions. Does any Member wish to vote differently on the two Propositions? On that basis, I propose to put the two Propositions to you together, and I will ask the Greffier to open the voting on the two Propositions, please.

2480 *There was a recorded vote.*

Carried – Pour 37, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 1, Did not vote 1, Absent 1

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Aldwell, Sue	None	Le Tissier, Chris	Inder, Neil	Roffey, Peter
Blin, Chris				
Brouard, Al				
Burford, Yvonne				
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
de Lisle, David				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				

Dudley-Owen, Andrea
Dyke, John
Fairclough, Simon
Falla, Steve
Ferbrache, Peter
Gabriel, Adrian
Gollop, John
Haskins, Sam
Helyar, Mark
Hill, Edward
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha
Le Tocq, Jonathan
Leadbeater, Marc
Mahoney, David
Matthews, Aidan
McKenna, Liam
Meerveld, Carl
Moakes, Nick
Murray, Bob
Oliver, Victoria
Parkinson, Charles
Prow, Robert
Queripel, Lester
Snowdon, Alexander
Soulsby, Heidi
St Pier, Gavin
Taylor, Andrew
Trott, Lyndon
Vermeulen, Simon

2485

The Bailiff: In respect of these two Propositions, there voted in favour 37 Members, no Member voted against, 1 Member abstained, 2 Members did not participate in the vote, and therefore I will declare both of the Propositions duly carried.

COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY

18. Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance: Proposals for the Ground of Age and Other Matters – Propositions Carried

2490

Article 18.

The States are asked to decide:–

Whether after consideration of the policy letter entitled "Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance: Proposals for the Ground of Age and Other Matters" dated 21st March 2025 they are of the opinion:

1. To agree that the Prevention of Discrimination (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2022 be amended by Ordinance to include the Protected Ground of age, as set out in section 5 of this Policy Letter, including the exceptions set out in that section and in Appendix 2.

2. To agree that the amendment Ordinance referred to in proposition 1 shall come into force six months after its approval by the States.

3. To note the Report by the Director of the Employment and Equal Opportunities Service, which is attached at Appendix 3 and is submitted to the States under section 7(2) of the Employment and Equal Opportunities Service (Guernsey) Law, 2023.

4. To note the update on the Review of Phase 1 of the Prevention of Discrimination (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2022, set out in section 7 and Appendix 4 of this Policy Letter.

5. To agree that section 36(3) of the Prevention of Discrimination (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2022, be amended as set out in paragraphs 7.5 and 7.6 of this Policy Letter.

6. To agree that section 75 of the Prevention of Discrimination (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2022 be amended to provide that Regulations made under the powers conferred on the Committee by paragraphs 15(3) and 22(2) of the Schedule to the Ordinance (i.e. to prescribe organisations which train dogs or other animals for the purposes of paragraph 15 of the Schedule, and to prescribe "a person who provides supported employment" for the purpose of paragraph 22 of the Schedule) shall not require an affirmative resolution of the States prior to entry into force, and instead will conform to the normal procedure whereby they must be laid before a meeting of the States, where they may be annulled.

7. To direct the Committee for Employment & Social Security to investigate and report back to the States on whether:

i) there should be a requirement under the Employment Protection (Sunday Shop Working) (Guernsey) Law, 2001 and Minimum Wage (Guernsey) Law, 2009 for applicants to notify the Employment and Equal Opportunities Service of their intended complaint, whether pre-complaint conciliation should be available in respect of complaints made under these laws, and whether to enable discrimination complaints to be joined with complaints under these laws; and

ii) to give the Employment and Discrimination Tribunal express power to amend a certificate issued by the Employment and Equal Opportunities Service under the powers conferred on it by section 41(3)(b) of the Prevention of Discrimination (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2022 ('the Intent to Complain Certificate') where it is just and equitable to do so.

8. To approve the Prevention of Discrimination (Education) (Commencement) Regulations, 2025 (as set out in Appendix 5 to this Policy Letter).

9. Noting the underspend on the discrimination transition budget set out in Table 1 of paragraph 8.2, to agree that a budget of £82,000 should be allocated to the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance project (the budget for which is to be managed by the Committee for Employment & Social Security), to be spent across 2025, 2026 and 2027 to complete the remainder of the transition work for Phase 1 and to implement the proposals for Phase 2, outlined in this Policy Letter.

10. To direct the preparation of such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to the above decisions, including consequential amendments to other legislation.

The States' Greffier: Article 18, Committee for Employment & Social Security – Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance: Proposals for the Ground of Age and Other Matters.

2495 **The Bailiff:** I will invite the Vice President, Deputy de Sausmarez, to open the debate.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

I am delighted to be bringing this policy letter to the States, which proposes, among other things, that age discrimination be prohibited, and I hope there is nothing tactless about bringing this Item on anyone's birthday. *(Laughter)*

2500 As you are aware, the Prevention of Discrimination (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2022, was approved by this Assembly in September 2022, and the majority of the Ordinance came into force on 1st October 2023. This was phase 1 of the development of a multi-ground discrimination Ordinance.

2505 Phase 1 provides protection from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment on the grounds of disability, carer status, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. A review of phase 1 is included in this policy letter, and the first report from the Director of the Employment and Equal Opportunity Service is appended.

2510 While the service has had a large number of inquiries, the floodgates have not opened with respect to formal complaints, as had been feared by some. 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 reporting period from 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2024.

2515 Following its review of the Ordinance, the Committee is proposing two minor amendments. However, as those are very minor in nature, I will concentrate on the two main aspects of the Committee's proposals relating to education and age.

2520 The education sections of the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance were not switched on, on 1st October 2023. It was proposed in the Committee's 2020 policy letter that the field of education would enter force by 2026. The Committee has made commencement regulations to bring these sections into force. However, as a result of a successful amendment to the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance, all regulations made under the Ordinance have to be approved by a resolution of the States before they can come into effect.

2525 If the Prevention of Discrimination Education Commencement Regulations, 2025, are approved today, the sections of the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance which relate to education providers will come into force from 2nd January 2026. I note that those sections relating to physical features of buildings and the preparation of public sector accessibility action plans will come into force at a later date.

2530 The policy letter also sets out proposals to protect people from age discrimination. This is part of phase 2 of the development of the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance as directed by the States in July 2020. In quarter 3, 2024, the Committee consulted on proposals to prohibit age discrimination. These proposals were not controversial and the Committee made changes to the proposals in response to consultation feedback. In summary, the Committee is proposing that the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance be amended by Ordinance to include the protected ground of age. This would prohibit age discrimination and provide legal recourse for people who are discriminated against on the basis of their age.

2535 Crucially, the Committee is proposing that objective justification of direct age discrimination be permitted so that employers and service providers are allowed to treat people differently on the ground of age where doing so would be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This differs to the position in relation to all other protected grounds where direct discrimination can never be objectively justified.

2540 The Committee is also proposing that the legislation includes a number of exceptions in relation to the ground of age. This will provide employers and service providers with clarity in respect to the circumstances in which differential treatment on the ground of age would be permissible.

2545 In addition, the Committee recommends that young people will only be able to make a complaint of age discrimination when they reach a certain age in employment, from school leaving age, and with respect to the provision of education or goods and services from the age of 16, and with respect to the provision of accommodation from 18. It is important to note that young people can make complaints of discrimination on any of the other protected grounds currently covered under the Ordinance.

2550 Age discrimination legislation is a key enabler for people to continue working for as long as they would like and are able to do so. With our worsening dependency ratio and increasing health and social care costs, maximising workforce participation is vital. It is really important for our economy and health and well-being that people who wish to do so are able to continue working rather than being forced to retire at an arbitrary retirement age.

2555 I very much hope the States will approve the Committee's Propositions today.
Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

2560 **Deputy Gollop:** As somebody who sat on this ESS Committee for most of this term, and its two predecessors, and was a Disabled People's Champion for two years, I of course welcome these proposals and will support them.

In a way, it is regrettable they have come out so late in this term because they have been somewhat sidelined and swamped by all the other big policy letters and issues and the perhaps

2565 electioneering elements as well. That is a pity because we all deserve to know more about how they work.

2570 Firstly, I wish you, like others, sir, a happy birthday, but do so in the knowledge that sadly some jobs, such as the role of Bailiff, the role of Jurat, are age-barred at the moment. Whether that is within the spirit of the Law, I do not know, I think there is an exemption. But that in itself raises questions about the prejudices of age, but we of course thank you, as we are approaching the end of term, for being a very wise and able Presiding Officer for us.

But there is discrimination at both sides and I questioned a little bit on the Committee why children could not question more age-related discrimination, and that might apply to elements of education and schools.

2575 Another issue which I found hard to take, but we had to draw the line somewhere, was although we allowed guide dogs for deaf people or blind people, we did not necessarily include in provision therapy dogs, and dogs have come up again here as to their role. I would welcome broadening out the categorisation for animals, although I understand that the purpose of it here is to reduce the onerous burden on the Committee to come back on every occasion a regulatory change was made because a few moons ago the States seemed to be of the view that ESS could not be trusted to act

2580 sensibly. I hope that attitude has gone away now and that you have seen a proportionate approach.

Like my memories of Sunday trading a political generation earlier, it was quite interesting how heated those debates were – animated perhaps is a better word – with the proponents of change arguing that we would enter a completely new society which would be beneficial, and the opponents on similar grounds believing that the world would end as they knew it and faith and tradition and the Guernsey Sunday would be extinguished. As it turned out, the change was so

2585 insubstantial that one struggles to find a coffee shop open now in St Peter Port, let alone a shop, on a Sunday.

I mention that because the same attitudes were there in some cases when we looked at the appropriate modernisation and enhancement of the disability and inclusion, because it is very

2590 interesting, Deputy de Sausmarez's speech, and indeed an earlier speech from Deputy Roffey in the media, that there has been from a very able administrator of the Equalities and Employment Commission only 16 substantial cases. There were people who said there would be 160, 600, and there were people who said there would not be any, so what we are seeing is a measured, evolutionary approach, and this legislation before us will achieve the same.

2595 No doubt, when it comes to age discrimination, we will see perhaps more spikiness, not just because of some arbitrary prescriptions on who can apply for jobs and retirement ages, and you see that even in the Armed Forces. I see I am too old even to be a volunteer for the Territorials, but I do not think they would have me anyway. But where I think you will see a challenge maybe in an employment context on age discrimination, and that will be interesting, but the approach of the

2600 Committee and the service is to mediate and inquire rather than dictate. I am sure that will continue to be the case in terms of discrimination of any kind.

The Bailiff: Deputy Queripel.

2605 **Deputy Queripel:** I am sure most people know I will be retiring from politics at the end of this term after 30 and a half years as a Deputy. So, at the age of 73, I will be looking for a new job. As well as having a wealth of experience of helping hundreds of Islanders resolve their problems in that time, I also have a wealth of experience in many other areas such as sales and shop management. I worked for Our Price Records in London for three years and was manager of the

2610 largest record shop in London for two of those years back in the 1970s. As I said in a previous speech, I was chairman of Age Concern for three years, chairman of the Age Concern Fuel Fund Committee for six years, manager of the Vale Age Concern Centre for a year, also President of the Guernsey Walking Football Club for three years.

2615 I am a qualified complementary therapist with qualifications in reflexology, reiki and psychotherapy. I have a food hygiene qualification, due to training to be a carer for two years, for

which I also received a qualification certificate. I have organised dozens of musical and artistic events both here and in London in the last 50 years. I ran my own decorating business for 29 years prior to being elected as Deputy back in 2012. So I have a wealth of experience in property management and maintenance.

2620 I give way to Deputy Brouard, it will be interesting to hear what he has to say, sir.

Deputy Brouard: Thank you, sir.

I was just wondering whether Deputy Queripel picked up the wrong speech. (*Laughter*) He has just read out his CV rather than the Age Discrimination, sir.

2625

Deputy Queripel: Possibly, sir. I have written it so I will make it anyway. It is not very long.

In 13 and a half years in the States, I have served as a member of the Scrutiny Committee, the Seafront Working Group, the DPA and ESC, the Mental Health Steering Group, Vice-President of SACC and currently proud to be a member of ESS. I am an extremely well-organised 73-year-old with a wealth of knowledge and experience. So it will be very interesting to see how this all plays out when it kicks in for people like me of similar age with experience across a variety of areas going up against much younger people for the same vacancies.

2630

Of course, coming from the other side – there are two sides to everything – younger people will be wondering how much chance they have of getting a job when they go up against older people with much more experience. An older person may not have a qualification, could have several years' experience, and while a younger person may well have a qualification but no experience at all. So, sir, we live in extremely challenging times. Who would be an employer in this day and age?

2635

After having said all of that, of course, I am only too aware of what we are told in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8. Going back to Deputy Brouard's point, sir, I think I picked up the right speech, because there is no other policy letter that refers to what I am referring to in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8. But I feel the need to clarify that I am going to support these Propositions.

2640

While I like to think that employers treat every applicant fairly, we really do need to have safeguards in place for people of all ages. I would say especially pensioners, because I am one, so I am going to say especially pensioners, seeing as we are increasing the age Islanders will qualify for their States' pension year on year.

2645

Of course, there is immense value in keeping the older generation in work for as long as possible, because, not only does it give them a sense of fulfilment and put money in their pockets, but it also means they contribute to the States' coffers via Income Tax payments and Social Security contributions.

2650

Sir, in closing, I have always said I like to attain balance, and it is always beneficial to the community when balance is attained. I realise I have spoken more in favour of pensioners, but I would do, would I not? Having said that, I am only too conscious of the fact we need safeguards in place for people of all ages when it comes to employment.

Thank you, sir.

2655

The Bailiff: Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

I am happy to go along with all this, but I do have a problem. I am concerned about Proposition 8, namely extending the Law into the education area. The paper in the text suggests, as most of us would probably guess, that this is probably going to be most applied in the area of disability. So I imagine what is contemplated by this, and what seems obvious to me, is that we are going to get a lot of complaints from people who do not get the SEND designation that they think they want.

2660

We already seem to give a lot of designations. We seem to be at about 25% of children in the schools – I stand to be corrected if that is wrong – which is a very high number. So it seems to me that the Education Department is already being quite relaxed in that regard, and I just wonder

2665

2670 whether it really adds anything. Education have to do what they have got to do. They have got a lot to do. Teachers have got a lot to worry about. I just wonder whether it really adds to the sum total of our education system to have a lot more appeals on SEND issues to the Tribunal.

Personally, I would be inclined to vote against that. We are constantly talking about our economic problems, the bureaucracy, and at some point we should think about whether we really should keep adding to it. So, in my view, this is probably best not done.

That is all I have got to say. Thank you.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Just very briefly.

2680 Sir, I support the proposals. It was really a question, and it is something that Deputy Gollop raised in terms of the number of complaints. It has been described as the number of complaints dealt with over a 15-month period. Is there any more granularity? I understand that half of them have been dealt with by some form of mediation. How many hearings and awards have there been? If we do not know that, could we have an approximate date on which that information will be published by the tribunal?

2685

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dudley-Owen.

2690 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you, sir, and wishing you a very happy birthday today. I am sure you could not think of better company to spend it in.

2695 I am brought to my feet by Deputy Dyke, duty-bound, and I will be very happy to give way because I have resisted the temptation to interrupt him when he was talking, but he made a statement, he said, 'And the Education Department seemed to be very relaxed about that', in relation to the 25% level of special educational needs, or as we refer to it now as additional learning needs. It is not quite 25%, but I am not exactly entirely sure of the exact figure, but I wonder if I give way to Deputy Dyke, he may not want to explain himself, but I just wanted to give the opportunity because I am rather confused about what he meant about the Education Department being rather relaxed potentially about that figure. I give way, sir.

2700 **Deputy Dyke:** I thank Deputy Dudley-Owen for giving way.

'Relaxed' might not have been quite the right word. The Education Department does seem to give quite a large number of designations, no doubt for good reason. That was what I had in mind.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Thank you very much.

2705 I am really pleased that Deputy Dyke has explained that for me, sir, because it is not the responsibility of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture to give determinations, not designations but determinations, and obviously there is an additional learning needs register, but in terms of any specific diagnoses of spectrum disorders, that is carried out by the Committee *for* Health & Social Care.

2710 Members will recall that the Education Committee publishes an Education Strategy report on an annual basis, and in that report what we do is we let the public know, and the Deputies as well of course, what our progress is against our strategic plans. Recently, last year, we have renewed the Code of Practice for additional learning needs, special educational needs, disabilities, and also accompanied that with high-quality and inclusive practice improvement in pedagogy.

2715 That is starting to look at reducing the amount of children who are seeking additional or needing additional learning needs remediation, and that is because, if you catch this earlier, then you reduce the impact of those over the school life of the individual.

Of course, I can understand very much where Deputy Dyke is coming from in terms of additional bureaucracy, additional burden, but the Discrimination Ordinance is a framework of protection, so

2720 I see both sides of the argument here. I am concerned about additional unwieldy or unneeded
bureaucracy and putting in place expensive frameworks. But, to protect people's rights, this is very
important, and as long as we have proper safeguards in place to prevent vexatious or overzealous
2725 applications, there are some of the areas there that we have fed back to Employment & Social
Security about in terms of the panel and how that works and what it looks like, and there is extra
work to do there, but certainly we have seen this coming down the tracks since the Discrimination
Ordinance was put in place.

2730 Committee for Education, Sport & Culture has put in place and has readied themselves for this
framework to be put in place, so for me, I accept it and I will be voting for it, but I completely and
utterly understand the concerns that Deputy Dyke raises. But, as long as we have proportionate
safeguards in place, that the cases that really deserve to be heard and those rights are protected
are in place, that is really important.

Thank you, sir.

2735 **The Bailiff:** I do not see any other Member rising to speak in debate, so I am going to turn back
to the Vice-President, Deputy de Sausmarez, to reply to the debate, please.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

2740 I thank Deputy Gollop for his comments and observations. I do not think there were that many
specific questions – he can interject if I have missed any – but he did say that he hoped that if there
was any challenge from employers or organisations on the grounds of age, then the Committee's
approach would be more aligned with mediation and inquiry, trying to understand what those
concerns are and working with them. I can certainly give him that assurance, certainly from this
2745 Committee. I know that we will not be in place that much longer.

Deputy Queripel, well, I wish him all the very best and thank him for his public service. I am sure
he will have no problem after his sterling CV has been shared with us. I am sure he will have no
problem, and I wish him all the very best for the next phase of his active life, so thank you.

2750 Deputy Dyke had some reservations about Proposition 8, which Deputy Dudley-Owen has just
responded to in part, but it is worth reminding Members that we are not at this point agreeing a
policy. That policy has already been agreed. This is just the switching on of that provision, which
has been a long time in the making. Also his concerns about the number of tribunals. The review
that we have done so far of everything else does not bear out those concerns, so I hope he can take
some assurance from that.

2755 That leads me on to Deputy Helyar's question. He asked how many full tribunal hearings there
have been. There have been 16 formal complaints, which I mentioned when I opened on it, but
there have been no full tribunal hearings, and therefore no awards.

2760 There may well be one or two in the pipeline, but certainly to date there have been no tribunals,
so, again, that just supports the fact that the floodgates have not opened. We have not seen the
complaints that some feared this might catalyse, so in general, it has been a very reassuring exercise
for the Committee, and I just ask the Assembly's support for these next steps.

Thank you very much.

2765 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, there are 10 Propositions. In some respects, they cover an
awful lot of different things, and I am almost tempted to subdivide them into smaller chunks. At the
moment, the best I have got is that Proposition 8 should be taken as a separate vote.

I am looking at Deputy Dyke, that he would like a separate vote. Okay. So, is there any Member
who wishes to vote differently in respect of any of these Propositions, or shall I simply put all 10 of
them to you together? On that basis, we will have all 10 together.

2770 I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on all 10 Propositions, then, please.

There was a recorded vote.

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

2775

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

The Bailiff: In respect of all 10 Propositions, there voted in favour 36 Members, no Member voted against, no Member abstained, there are 4 people absent at that vote, and therefore I will declare all 10 Propositions carried.

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

2780

19. Pathway to Net Zero – Propositions Carried

Article 19.

The States are asked to decide:

Whether after consideration of the policy letter entitled "Pathway to Net Zero" dated 24th March 2025 they are of the opinion:

1. To agree to adopt a seven-year cycle approach with respect to net zero, with the first period of 2025-2032 focused on the delivery of immediately achievable initiatives that are already identified

in States-approved strategies and policies that deliver other benefits to islanders, whilst keeping a watching brief on global developments, and to direct the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, working with other Committees as required, to deliver the aims and objectives of the first 2025 - 2032 period, focussed on implementing and optimising already approved policies and strategies, as set out in Section 5.

2. To direct the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure to revert to the States of Guernsey with an updated pathway for 2033 - 2039 no later than the end of 2032, and to rescind Resolution 4 of the policy letter "Mitigate Climate Change – States of Guernsey Climate Change Policy & Action Plan", as set out in section 6 of this policy letter, which directs that the Climate Change Action Plan is reviewed every two years.

The States' Greffier: Article 19, Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure – Pathway to Net Zero.

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The Bailiff: I will invite the President, Deputy de Sausmarez, to open the debate, please.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

2790

Me again. I do not know about anyone else, I am quite bored at the sound of my own voice. I have got a shortish version, and I have got a really short version, and I am quite tempted to use the very short version. (**Several Members:** Yes.) Okay, after that resounding endorsement, I am going to give a much more succinct precis of our proposals here today.

2795

This is nothing radical. It is a very pragmatic and proportionate proposal for Guernsey, noting technological and fiscal constraints. So, what we are proposing is that the first period that we are looking at just seeks to support and monitor the progress of the implementation of things that the States have already agreed to do in order to reach our 2030 net zero target. I am pleased to say that the good news is that we are on track to do exactly that.

2800

This Assembly has made a number of decisions in relation to electricity, most recently in this meeting and the meeting before around offshore renewables. But also, prior to that in 2023, the Electricity Strategy. That really does an awful lot of the heavy lifting in terms of the carbon footprint of the Island, as we have already agreed and implemented some important actions.

2805

The thing that I would really like to stress is that these reduce the long-term cost to consumers, and that is really important. I know that it is tempting for people, and even Members of this Assembly sometimes fall into this trap of portraying anything to do with decarbonisation as a cost to the States, but it is quite the reverse. This is the much more cost-effective way of achieving anything, of keeping costs down compared with a higher carbon alternative.

2810

But what we have done in this policy letter is really focused on identifying co-benefits to Guernsey, whether they are fiscal benefits, health benefits, environmental benefits, or indeed commercial benefits. So, things like healthier lifestyles and improved choice, better energy security, better resilience, and the use of renewables, and affordability has been a key focus all the way through.

2815

It is underpinned by a detailed report. That includes lots of potential interventions, but the Committee agreed that a super-ambitious pathway would just not be credible. So, we are not proposing anything like what was potentially outlined in that report. It is only fair to point out that, at the moment, the way to describe it in practical terms is that, given where we are at the moment, we are on track to reach the 2030 target, which is important.

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These targets, by the way, are not just there for the fun of it or because anyone thinks it is just a fun thing to do. They are an integral part of our international obligations and they relate very directly to things like trade agreements.

But we are proposing this approach because it means that we can scale the ambition to what is practical and proportionate and achievable and workable. It is important to recognise that, given where we are at the moment, we do not have a pathway to net zero by 2050. But we do think that,

as technology advances and we see more innovation, that pathway will become available in future years.

2825 Members may have seen in the news over the last couple of days, yesterday it hit the headlines, an intervention fronted by Sir Tony Blair, who had some things to say about the UK Government's approach. I have lost track of which ones remain extant and which ones he backtracked a bit on. But Members can take comfort from the fact that Guernsey's approach that we are proposing here of not banning hydrocarbons or not taking anything like those approaches which are going to have
2830 a negative impact on people's lifestyles or cost them more money is much more in line with the approach that he is advocating. So we are instead looking at how low carbon alternatives and technological advancements can help.

It does not mean to say that we are not aiming for decarbonisation, far from it, we are just seeking to do so in the most pragmatic and affordable way. We know that will have a number of
2835 benefits, both for individuals, if they are living in more energy-efficient buildings, and for businesses and indeed for the Island as a whole.

So there are certain things, for example, buildings and transport, more transport choice that will have those bigger advantages, that is the lower hanging fruit, that is where the first phase is focused. Things like emissions from aviation will follow at a later date, because it makes sense to let those
2840 bigger and more global workstreams progress and mature before jumping on them and trying to reinvent the wheel.

The Siemens report does present commercial and circular economy opportunities to use waste resource to produce power. That is an area that our fuel providers and power suppliers are exploring and developing. Affordability has been a key consideration throughout.

2845 There are various things that probably 10 years ago were not terribly common, things like heat pumps, and I know solar PV has been around a while, but it is again a technology that has advanced a lot. Electric vehicles, e-bikes, these are all playing a really key supporting role. We are seeing these help people in their everyday life and making the quality of their life even better.

Smart meters and smart energy grid considerations, those are the kinds of things that will need
2850 to come through further evolution of our electricity system. Anything that relates to the energy efficiency in housing, that is of course a key part of the Guernsey Housing Plan as well.

So, in short, we are not doing anything radical. We are just proposing to focus on the things that the States have already agreed. It is all very pragmatic. The important thing is that there is not a single element of this which is being proposed for its own sake in terms of carbon reductions. We
2855 looked very specifically through a lens of wider benefits. So, if it did not wash its face, if it could not stand on its own two feet in terms of those wider benefits, irrespective of any decarbonisation potential, then it did not make the cut.

That is the approach that we have taken. We think it is very proportionate and practical. It does mean that we can start at a small scale and, if something is working, we can scale it up. If it is not
2860 working, we adapt it or drop it. We think it is a really, really proportionate and pragmatic approach and I hope Members will support it.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Murray.

2865

Deputy Murray: Thank you, sir.

The pathway to net zero is paved with good intentions. But, to begin with, I do want to thank E&I for their welcome proposals towards a more pragmatic approach to a seven-year cycle of reviewing Guernsey's net zero objectives.

2870 But, before they get too carried away, I would have to liken their previous approach to be something similar to Trump's approach to deal making. Threaten Armageddon as an opening gambit and then have your opponent be grateful for anything less. Just to confirm that, on the Executive Summary, and I will just paraphrase here, unchecked climate change will have increasingly acute and negative economic, social, environmental effects, including to economic growth, public

2875 finances, agriculture and food security, water security, energy security, the cost of living, health outcomes, lifestyles, and natural ecosystems.

So there is a lot at stake here, obviously. But that said, this approach reflects what I believe is a changing worldview over setting over-ambitious targets under the emotive guise of variously a climate crisis, a climate emergency, or just plain old climate change. I would contend only the latter has any basis in reality.

2880 This growing back internationally is amply evidenced by the fact that in February, of the 195 countries signed up to the Paris Agreement, only 10 submitted updated targets to the UN and, of the 10, only three were G20 countries, and only one, the UK, confirmed its commitment to the target of 2050.

2885 As Deputy de Sausmarez has said, in relation to the UK, hot off the press yesterday, and I will be able to confirm what he said, Tony Blair called for a radical reset of the Government's green agenda. He said:

It is wrong that people are being asked to make financial sacrifices and changes in lifestyles, when they know that their impact on global emissions is minimal. Politicians must face inconvenient facts, which show that any strategy based on phasing out fossil fuels was doomed to fail.

2890 So that set the cat among the pigeons.

Also yesterday, at the European People's Party Congress, Germany's next Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, stated that a better balance had to be found between fighting climate change and de-industrialising the German economy.

2895 So E&I can take comfort from recognising that Guernsey too is not alone for clarifying that much of the technology required to reach net zero is yet to be developed. Despite which, had they been minded to follow the more ambitious pathway being recommended, which I do recall would have had a price tag for the Island of about £1.2 billion, we still would not have been able to reach net zero.

2900 So, sir, we have been made aware that technically it is not yet going to be possible to reach net zero by 2050. But I would further add that figures from the International Energy Agency forecast that the world as a whole does not possess the mining capability necessary to achieve this ambition by 2050 anyway, regardless of how much money we throw at it. So the climate emergency or crisis is going to have to wait a bit longer, especially for those who cling to the idea that CO₂ alone is the control knob to adjust climate.

2905 I would also add that this transition is clearly going to take far longer, and will as a consequence cost far more, since the scale of what is being attempted is staggering and an estimated \$14 trillion spent so far has hardly moved the dial on fossil fuels, which still dominate 80% of the world's energy usage. By comparison, and perhaps quite topical for us, wind and solar account for 3%.

2910 Now in contrast to our enthusiasm for pursuing offshore wind locally, Lord Offord of Garvel, a self-confessed net zero supporter, recently addressed the House of Lords on the UK's pursuit of net zero, and he said:

The reality is that a 20-year experiment with renewables, winds and solar, has failed, because the add-on costs of subsidies, levies and grid upgrades have doubled household bills. Their intermittency means they can never provide reliable and consistent base load, and we will always rely on gas as our reserve.

2915 Sir, Members will also be aware that the whole of the Iberian Peninsula lost grid power this week, and it is being suggested that this was triggered by the low level of inertia afforded by a grid principally powered by renewables that cannot adjust quickly to the variable fluctuations in maintaining grid frequency.

2920 We have finally a sense of realism coming to the fore, rather than the alarmism of only a few years ago. Nevertheless, I still have concerns around some of the content contained in this policy letter, because we are still working under the belief that CO₂ has to be eliminated, because it will considerably impact future temperatures. I take issue with that, sir. Not for technological reasons,

ideological reasons, but for sound scientific reasons, and I am going to mention two of them which Members can check out for themselves.

2925 Firstly, CO₂ accumulation is logarithmic. This means that once it hits its saturation point, which is known to be 400 parts per million, its ability to further retain heat is exhausted. That is a fact, but it is not one that is considered in the popular narrative. Even a doubling of this is only expected to add half a degree to temperature.

2930 The second issue is that water vapour, clouds, contribute 97% to the warming effect of greenhouse gases. Now this presents a major problem for the IPCC, who admitted in their fifth assessment, and I quote:

The simulation of clouds remains challenging. There is a very high confidence that uncertainties in cloud processes explain much of the spread in model to climate sensitivity.

So this then explains why their CO₂ driven models are so out of sync with real monitoring data from satellites, weather balloons, and monitoring stations.

2935 I also have some concern when we seek to measure our own emissions. I have to question quite how accurate they are as a true reflection, since we do not account for our imported emissions, the food we eat and the things we buy. This approach to counting emissions is nowhere more nonsensical than when we export manufacture of the very devices such as solar panels we seek to reduce our emissions with to China, allow them to produce them using fossil fuel coal and then buy them back in, having exported those jobs in the process.

2940 So, sir, I am sceptical about emissions and therefore very wary of what we as Government choose to impose on Islanders in this pursuit for a 2050 goal that we know is not achievable, particularly when it may come at additional cost. Although there is much else I have reservations about, I merely cite in particular paragraphs 1.14, but especially 1.15, and the creation of yet another quango, the Net Zero Forum. But I recognise that most Members, probably not having done the extensive amount of research that I have over many years, will be happy to pursue this direction. So, as a compromise, while I cannot support Proposition 1, I will support Proposition 2.

Thank you, sir.

2950 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

2955 **Deputy Gollop:** I am always interested in Deputy Murray's extensive analysis and perspective, even if I do not always share it. Because, of course, years ago when I was much younger, I joined the Green Party of England and Wales and I am still a member and occasionally go to their conferences. If you really want to hear radical left-of-centre opinions, I would recommend States' Members going to that conference because they are not on Sir Keir Starmer's table at all, it is fair to say.

2960 The thing is, yes, I remember at one time Deputy de Sausmarez and others, it might not have been Deputy de Sausmarez, but we spoke of citizens assemblies as well. The arguments were perhaps that the public were potentially more radical than decision-makers. I welcome the Net Zero Action Forum.

2965 But, of course, not all of it has been achievable and we have to say we have seen pushback to Green people in other places. They halved their representation in the Canadian election from 2% to 1%. They have gone down to 1% in some parts of Germany, which is really surprising, given the strength of the Green Party in Germany. They did rather well in England at the UK General Election, if you can say winning four seats was outstanding. But there has been a genuine rebellion from some elements of small business and, if you like, the working class to environmentalism. Because they have seen it as an additional cost and a reduction in their standard of living.

2970 Whether they are influenced by false information or propaganda is another question. Yesterday evening, I was tired, but I still went along to a Young Business Group (YBG) chamber forum, where we had excellent speeches from the Little Green Energy Company and Unity, and

Mr Rollo de Sausmarez. The message was very compatible with this particular policy letter, because it was very much about pragmatic, sensible changes and decision-making on the level of reusing, of adapting, of recycling to a degree, of not necessarily using carbon by buying new stuff all the time, and by changing attitudes.

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We already had a debate, did we not, about water and how whether you put a meter in, as Deputy Cameron said, influences you. Again, the advice was it would be good if consumers were more aware of what they were using and awareness then leads to behavioural change, and you need champions in the workforce. This paper is all there.

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One argument, though, that I need to understand more is some of us received a letter from an environmental practitioner – another one – who wanted to see more emphasis on solar technology alone. Deputy Murray has raised the theory perhaps that it may have contributed to issues. There has also been Facebook commentary and resistance to a Jersey experiment, where they have turned a whole farm into a solar farm, but with perhaps aesthetic downsides, with little sheep going on television underneath the solar panels.

2985

But I would like Deputy de Sausmarez to respond as to whether we need to intensify the Energy Strategy in a different way, so it is more focused on a micro level, to encourage behaviour change and investment by the consumer in Guernsey into renewables on a smaller scale, such as solar technology and other ways of maintaining and retaining energy, and whether our policy, too, should be involving loans and grants in order to reduce our commitment. I remember Deputy de Lisle some time ago wanted a change of perspective in energy towards that.

2990

The other point that came out of the seminar last night was that the Energy Strategy has to be adaptable to young people, who have less money, less resources, maybe a first-time buyer, and perhaps the mortgage market – we believe there is one provider of mortgages, there could be others – a Guernsey bank maybe, could encourage low-energy use by offering favourable mortgages.

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The other element, of course, is transport, which involves a whole different range of topics. But again, Environment & Infrastructure are working closely on active travel with other bodies, including the Health Prevention Commission, and it has other benefits, as Deputy de Sausmarez identified, not just of choice and social participation, but also potentially enhancing the economy in some areas, and reducing resource of land and capital that is put on parking so that you may get greater efficiency from buildings. So that is another area to look at.

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But I really would like to see more substance as to how people can buy into this technology, rather than just have it as a burden, because we are seeing at the moment a little bit of the tide flowing away in other places of the commitments. We seem to be behind the curve in terms of the acquisition of electric cars and the infrastructure necessary for significant use of that technology. There are perhaps question marks in Guernsey of our infrastructure generally to support the changes.

3005

But I do support this policy letter and hope it gets more detailed consideration in a future term.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Dudley-Owen.

Deputy Dudley-Owen: Thank you, sir.

I just wanted to make a few comments because I do not disagree with the Propositions as they are set out in front of us, and I think that bringing the States-approved strategies and policies together in a coherent way is ultimately a sensible thing to do.

3015

However, I understand Deputy Murray's concerns, but I also think that Deputy Gollop has made some good points. As someone who is a self-confessed quiet environmentalist, I have been disappointed this term that we have not made more progress on our natural environment here in Guernsey, an area that we can really get our hands around. Pollution has been something of a real scourge here locally. We could have tackled plastic. We could have tackled the herbicide issue. We have got issues with pesticides on pets, etc.

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3025 While this is very high level and looking at our CO₂ emissions, there are some things that were really tangible. Obviously, there is really great work done by the third sector, which now obviously the work comes under the Nature Commission with the Biodiversity Strategy. Those third sector organisations, Pollinator Project, Guernsey Trees for Life, which I do have an interest in, they all do fantastic work outwith of the efforts of Government.

3030 There has been a pushback against green policies, which is really sad because there is so much to be gained from it. But it is because people have started to discover that, for their environmental advantage over here, there is huge environmental damage done over there. So when we talk about increasing the use of electric cars and our reliance on the lithium battery, let us just take a moment to think about the huge environmental degradation that is done in developing nations, at their expense, at the expense of their people's health, their natural environment, so that we can feel better about our own environmental sinning. Is it not better to run our vehicles into the ground and then possibly not replace them and think about another mode of transport than it is go and buy the latest new lithium battery electric vehicle?

3035 So we have got to be pragmatic, but we have also got to have a sense of ourselves as consumers in all of this. So I very much welcome and I am supportive of the principles of reuse, adaptation, sustainability and reduction, because we are all big consumers, even the least affluent in our community are big consumers.

3040 As an aside, the GST package is a great way to start to push more sustainability and to increase the second-hand market, which is already really strong in Guernsey. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) So we need to be a little bit more creative, a little bit more imaginative, because what would our grandparents say about the level of chucking stuff out that we do now, without even thinking about fixing it, not sewing a button on, we would rather give it to charity, and going out and just buying things that we do not really need.

3045 I would like to just also mention that the carbon offset, the narrative around this particular subject does get overtaken by fads and modes, to be honest. Carbon offset for a while was the thing. Whenever you did a long distance flight you would be able to pay a little bit extra and plant a tree somewhere else and that made me feel good for a while.

3050 But those are akin to buying penances for sinning, to be honest. If people are really that worried about it, they need to cut down on their consumption again and their travel. A lot of these carbon offset projects, they were *de rigueur* for a long time within corporates, and they seem to have fallen out of favour, because people are now rolling up their sleeves on the weekend and going planting trees in their local environment instead.

3055 I do not think I have got anything further to say other than our own CO₂ emissions, we are not too bad as an Island, apart from when we fire up our power station on the odd occasion, and do quite a bit of damage to people's boats and cars down St Sampson as well as our air quality. But I would say that I am pleased that the Environment & Infrastructure are concentrating on this particular area, but would that we could have got further with our natural environment over the last four years.

3060 I really hope that there is a serious concentration, and this is no criticism of the Committee, because Committees have had a huge amount to deal with just to get back to business as usual after the delays and disruptions of the pandemic, but please, next term, can we really look at our natural environment and look at protecting that, because once we have lost it we do not get it back again.

3065 Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

3070 **Deputy Helyar:** Thank you, sir.

As I interjected this morning, my first degree did involve studying climatology, not climate change, but climatology, which is the measure of climate and historical paleoclimates at the University of East Anglia in Norwich at the Climate Research Unit, which is one of the world's

3075 foremost centres for it. Every now and again, I do drop into an interesting website in America, a US governmental website, which is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website at Mauna Loa, because that is the place where atmospheric carbon is measured in the northern hemisphere. Every now and again it erupts and they have to move it somewhere else, but they do measure it there.

3080 In 2015, when the Paris Agreement was first signed up, the atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide were about 400, just passing 400 parts per million. Since then, it has gone up to 428 parts per million. That is about 219 billion t of carbon dioxide that has gone into the atmosphere. The intention obviously of the Paris Agreement was to try to limit, try to hold us to a temperature limit, rather than the rise in CO₂.

3085 So where am I going with all this? The reason we have heard from Deputy Murray, and he is a sceptic and he knows a lot about his subject, I am not necessarily so much of a sceptic. I am more of a pragmatist about this, because we need to get over the idea that we can, even in the West, contribute to a reduction in carbon dioxide emission, because we have not even got any coal-fired power stations in the UK that you could shut down. Even if we could shut them down faster than they are being built in other parts of the world, and I will not mention them, there is nothing that we could do about it.

3090 People that are very concerned about it, and I have a lot of children, they are very concerned about this, I really believe that the best thing that we can do for our future is to acknowledge that we are absolutely not in a position to be able to change the outcome of what is happening and, if we are going to invest locally, we should be doing it in making ourselves more resilient to what may be coming down the track at us. That is the best way to invest for our children's future.

3095 So, despite perhaps holding slightly different views about the science from Deputy Murray, I do agree with his summary of the outcome, so I will not be voting for 1, but will be voting for 2. I think we need to get over this idea that this is some moral crusade. It is not. It is really happening, you can go and look at the readings now, and this is the highest CO₂ content measurable in the paleoclimate for 2 million years, and it is going to have inexorable effects on all sorts of things which will affect our quality of life. Bankrupting ourselves in order to have a moral badge at the end of it is not the right approach.

3100 Thank you.

3105 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Dyke.

Deputy Dyke: Thank you, sir.

3110 I quite like Deputy Dudley-Owen's term 'a quiet environmentalist'. I care about the environment quite a lot, and there are various issues that worry me. The one that worries me, possibly more than the CO₂ issue, is the plastic issue that we have, plastic all over the place, it is appearing throughout the oceans, it is in pretty much everything, including our own bodies. But I guess that is an aside because there is not much we can do about that unless we all stop buying as much plastic and throwing it all away.

3115 I agree with what Deputy Murray has said, I am somewhat sceptical about some of the information that we are fed, but I also agree that whatever the rights and wrongs of that, whether Deputy Murray's view, which I tend to agree with, is right or if it is wrong, as Deputy Helyar has said, there is pretty much nothing that we in Guernsey and everyone in the UK and the whole of Europe, can do about it. There is pretty much nothing. The rest of the world is burning CO₂ and they are not going to stop. So we must acknowledge that is simply the case.

3120 What do we do? We have got our policy, and credit to Deputy de Sausmarez, I do not think it is a terrible policy. It is reasonably pragmatic in most areas and one can be supportive of a lot of it. I am quite supportive of the proposal 2 here, whereby we look more at a seven-year programme of review and the proposal that by 2032 we have looked at the programme for 2033 to 2039 is a good one because in the next few years the whole thinking about what we should do about the climate issue, what we should do, what we should not do, what everyone else should do and will do or will

not do, we will have a better idea of where we are, knowing that at the moment thinking across the world is changing quite a bit.

3130 In the meantime, we should be looking at our flood defences. Looking at reducing our consumption of power is a good thing, so long as in doing so we do not impoverish our people, that is obviously a good idea. Reducing our use of everything is a very good idea to make us more sustainable, less wasteful, but without ruining the quality of life of the people and in particular it is at the lower end where you cannot take percentages off of income very easily. You cannot add to the electricity bill very easily without causing great concern and fiscal problems for people. We are
3135 seeing that in the UK now with the great increases in power prices.

We do not quite have the issues that they have in the UK because we do not have heavy industry, we do not have manufacturing to lose. We do have a lot of finance sector, which does use quite a lot of power for its computers. So, I am inclined to vote for Resolution 2, not Resolution 1.

3140 There are a couple of things that concern me. The Net Zero Forum, I am not sure about that to be honest. We have got the Environment & Infrastructure Department and we have got this Assembly. We are elected to do this sort of thing at the end of the day, so I am not sure that adds very much.

3145 The one thing that does worry me in here is there are a lot of proposals regarding housing standards and environmental certificates based on power use. I sit on the Development & Planning Authority. One of the things we are focusing on in particular, and I think the whole Assembly is focused on, is the price of housing. We have to be very careful with that. I am not saying it is all a bad thing. If we can make houses better insulated so that they use less power, that is a very good thing, so long as there is a proportionality with it all. Personally, at my house I have solar panels which have been for me economic. I also have air source heat pumps and it is possible that I have
3150 had a particularly bad time, but they have been pretty bad for me. If my experience is anything to go by, I would not want to foist them on other people, but my experience has possibly been slightly peculiar, owing to the contractors I used.

3155 So, the last point I had is a question, a push-comes-to-shove question to Deputy de Sausmarez, if I may burden her with one last point. I did raise the question a couple of weeks ago in the context of another debate, but I did not really get an answer because either she or Deputy Roffey may have misheard the point. We have either started or about to start negotiations with EDF for our power supply from France. I do not know how this is going to go, and probably Deputy de Sausmarez right now does not know how this is going to go. It is quite difficult.

3160 But what happens if the price the French ask us for their power, what if that goes through the roof so that, for example, the price of power from France ends up being twice what it would cost to run our power station? I am saying if. I have been told before that that is unlikely. But what if that happens? Then what do we do? Do we run our power station or do we pay double from France? So, that is a theoretical question I would just like to ask, and how does that fit into this programme?

Thank you.

3165

The Bailiff: Deputy de Lisle.

Deputy de Lisle: Thank you, sir.

3170 It is very difficult to mention a host of things in a meeting of this nature because we all want to be fairly brief and to the point. But, from my point of view, there is a general reluctance to change and we have seen this within the whole area of pollution.

3175 The whole business of not being prepared to clean up our environmental misdemeanours, for example, that is something surely that we should have been continuing over the last number of years and taking action. The PFOS issue, which has been mentioned today, with regard to our water resources that needs cleanup. The glyphosate issue that is a worldwide problem now and we allow it to go on here in Guernsey instead of taking action.

The pollution of our coastal waters, extending the pipes out into the sea rather than taking direct action and bringing in sewage control and a sewage plant. That type of thing. We could have been

3180 more active in the last number of years and we have not responded and we have been negligent.
Ladies and gentlemen, we have been negligent and we could have taken the bull by the horns in
some of these issues.

Turning to this particular document, and one cannot take all of it, but I just took a look at the
key areas of focus that are starting on page 23. Two of those areas, which are at the beginning, the
3185 first one, energy efficiency of buildings, and the second one being the Electricity Strategy in the role
of renewables. Those two areas, they are key areas of focus. They require support to households to
attain some of the objectives stated in the policy letter.

Just to take those first two areas, for example, the energy efficiency of buildings, now that could
be a major winner for the Island. The only problem is the people generally, households generally,
do not have any money to actually implement some of these initiatives. If you look at the initiatives,
3190 it is to encompass a range of improvements, including insulation, air-tightness – my place leaks like
a sieve (*Laughter*) – ventilation, solar shading, window and door upgrades, low energy heating and
lighting and smart controls.

All this requires money; money that people do not have. We can insist in new buildings that
these things are brought in. But again that adds to the cost of buildings and building construction.
3195 The second one there is the Electricity Strategy and role of renewables, another key area that we
need to implement, if we can, locally. One thing that is mentioned right at the beginning is the
additional interconnection. Not only technologies to support the electricity system, but additional
interconnection.

That additional connection; we already have connection, we have already got interconnection.
3200 We have just spent £30 million to £40 million on a new cable to Jersey, through Jersey then on to
France. That is giving us 90% of our needs, in terms of electricity interconnection and electricity
needs. The additional interconnection that is being talked about here, in the next few years, is a
£100 million bill for a new direct interconnector to France. If that money was spent, rather than the
£100 million to the French, on our households, we could be placing a £3,000 grant to every
3205 household in this Island.

Now they could then put PV on their buildings with some help from Government. We know that
if everyone was to do that, we know that we would be looking at somewhere near 100 MW, which
would be our current needs for electricity supply. I just feel that we have to be looking really quite
differently at a lot of this. I only take a few spotlights from this particular document to share in my
3210 issues and problems with Proposition 1 and the concerns there that we are not really helping
ourselves and we are not helping the people here in Guernsey.

That is important, and my last point, not helping the French, but helping the Guernsey man and
the Guernsey woman here locally.

Thank you, sir.

3215 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Soulsby.

Deputy Soulsby: Thank you.

I will be brief. I would thank the Committee for their pragmatic policy letter. Of course, we hear
3220 various views on climate change but it is nothing new. Like, Deputy Helyar, I did study environment
change as part of my degree at King's College London a long time ago. It was such a long time ago
that in the books that we are reading then, I think I brought it to the States last term when we were
debating it, that the calculations for how much global warming is going to increase, it has increased
substantially from those decades. It goes to show from the predictions then it has got worse since,
3225 so we are not doing a very good job globally.

The other point that Deputy Helyar made, which was interesting, was about his children care.
That is why I care, because I believe the earth will survive whatever happens. We can create all the
heat and that, it is just whether humans are going to be able to survive the earth. The earth will
come back and replenish itself long after the humans are gone, and before that the problems that
3230 humans will have to put up with if we do not do anything about it.

Hence, people migrating from the hottest parts of the world and currently places where you could grow crops that you cannot now when things are not changed. So, for me, the major reason why I am supportive of continuing to do all we can is because I care about the future for my children and their children, if that happens, and hopefully not in the very near future, but anyway.

3235 Deputy Dyke spoke about heat pumps. I could write a book about our heat pump and a very long one it would be. I think part of the problem was when we brought it – it was quite a while ago, our first one. That gives an idea about where we ended up. I think only Guernsey Electricity were able to – oh no, there was one other organisation. But, anyway, Guernsey Electricity were doing it, but then there were so very few on the Island, there were very few people who knew how to deal with it. So when it went wrong – it always went wrong just before Christmas and never got right until about after March or April. The second time, I think, it did not work – the catalogue of errors and it took two years for it to be sorted and then we had a new pump and, touch wood, seems to be behaving itself now.

3240 I think there is a concern certainly that Guernsey Electricity were telling everybody to get a heat pump, but you could not actually find anybody who could actually put the heat pump in. The numbers we had were very small. I do think that is changing now, which is good, because they are actually a good thing to have, when they do work.

3245 I do, again, thank the Committee for what is a very pragmatic approach. I think it has avoided all the issues that the UK is currently facing. I did actually end up spending last night reading the Blair Institute's Report, which I did actually think had some very valid points in it, particularly around carbon catcher. I wonder we could do more along those lines.

3250 But I do think this is a policy letter for Guernsey. Some will be disappointed in it, I think, but I do think it is a practical approach and I do hope that Members can support it.

3255 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

3260 I am going to be supporting the Propositions. I just wanted to make a brief comment on the initiatives over the seven-year period they are going to be focusing on. It is just the energy efficiency of buildings. I have just got concerns about the rental market and about any imposition of – we have Energy Performance Certificates and there might be certain bars that rental properties have to hit. Obviously we have got spiralling costs, rental costs at the moment in the private sector. The concern I have is anything that we impose on landlords which may have a negative effect on the rental market. So I just wanted to put that marker in the sand, that I have a concern about that.

3265 Apart from that, I am going to be supporting the Propositions.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Haskins.

3270 **Deputy Haskins:** Thank you, sir.

That last point from Deputy Leadbeater was exactly what I had my concerns about. That is the main essence of it. I will expand on it. Really it goes to paragraph 5.22. Initially the EPCs, the Environment Performance Certificates, would initially be on a voluntary basis. Then the bit that I really do not like is the very last bullet point on there:

3275 The potential eventual introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards.

3280 That, to me, seems a bit odd. It was the 'potential eventual'. Members, if you read the rest of the policy letter, it is quite clear from the Siemens report that is one of the main ways in order to reduce the emissions. The reason why I have a little bit more of a hesitation is because of the housing standards that we have already put in just a few weeks ago really, which again it is linked to the rental market.

3285 So now, with powers to inspect, one could think, 'Actually what we will do –' and it does not say here over the time that we will put in the potential eventual minimum standards, 'There will be a minimum standard. If you rent the property, we will inspect it, make sure that one has got the minimum standard, otherwise one cannot rent it.'

That is my main bug bear, so I would like an assurance that a minimum standard like that would come to the States beforehand, because throughout the policy letter what it says, page 29, 5.37, at the end of the paragraph it says:

3290 Any initiatives that require any additional funding would be subject to future funding request(s) from the States.

That is littered throughout. If you go to the Rule 4 information, it is mentioned multiple times, basically, 'Do not worry, this is not going to cost anything. If there is any initiative that is going to cost something, we are going to come back.' So my request to the President is, with the minimum standard for rental it might not cost anything, but there are costs to economy and elsewhere. That, I would hope, does come back to the Assembly because the costs of implementing retrofitted energy-performance measures will just be passed on to the tenants.

3295 You might also think that there is going to be reduction in supply of properties. The question is: what is the impact that that is going to have on our economy? There is my main concern there. Just two more things, sir, is that – really I do agree with much of what Deputy Murray says. Really it is 100% of what Deputy Helyar says. I did enjoy that speech.

3300 One more, sir, actually, it is mentioned here, 5.22, reviewing building control. So building regs, you have an R value or a U value, which is thermal transfer rate through surfaces. We follow the UK or I think we are slightly above the UK now, if Deputy Oliver is listening. We can increase that and that can, for all new properties, be a very quick way to increase energy efficiency. That is something that we could do very quickly. I shall support Proposition 2.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

3310 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

As Deputy Bury would say, a cynic in me would look at this policy letter as just superficially kicking the reporting cycle by effectively further out ahead and further from the next political term. Currently with the Paris Agreement, your key reporting cycles are five-yearly periods, so 2025 to 2030. So it is interesting that a seven-year cycle has been proposed.

3315 The cynic in me would say we are going through a turbulent time politically, there is retrenchment from the net zero agenda, and we do not want the next political Assembly to come in and change the direction of travel. So let us just kick it out beyond the next political term, so it is out of the way.

3320 I guess we can do that, because actually we will hit our 2030 target, not because of anything we have done this term or in the last term or in the term before or in the term before that or in the term before that. I think we will only reach our target because we have built the interconnector to France 20 years ago or more than that. So that is the absolute prime reason why we will be reaching the net zero 2030 target is because of the interconnector to France that supplies electricity from a largely nuclear basically power grid.

3325 To some extent, whether we approve Proposition 1 or not, there are certain workstreams in train that will continue. So I do not think actually it makes any difference whether we approve Proposition 1 or not, because it is not asking for any specific commitments, even though it is suggesting a direction of travel.

3330 I do want to talk also about the energy efficiency in buildings, which is the first key bullet point mentioned, because I am worried about the effect it may have in terms of the amount of time and resources this Assembly and industry may need to concentrate on making it happen, as opposed

to concentrating on actually building homes, which is the absolute and most important target for us, in terms of achieving the Guernsey Housing Plan.

3335 One of the initiatives in the Guernsey Housing Plan was to undertake a stock condition survey or all properties in Guernsey. That was a workstream, I think, with a time delivery frame of 2025-plus. This kind of project and workstreams will take a huge amount of resource, time and cost, which we do not have the money, we do not have the people to do and, most importantly, will distract us from the most important objective, which is to build homes. This has been my issue with the overall Guernsey Housing Plan, it has too many things potentially, which take resources and funding, while
3340 the absolute laser focus needs to be on building homes.

So I am quite concerned from – if we approve the net zero pathway today, is whether we are actually committing to some extent to be prioritising this piece of work compared to the other most important pieces of work for us, which is building homes to meet the community needs we have got. So I think there is not a lot of detail in here and that is the problem. While we are giving in
3345 principle high-level commitments, we have not seen the details of what that actually means, what the funding implication will be, and most, importantly, the resource implications as well.

So the other areas to talk about is decarbonisation of heat. One of the key problems of decarbonising heat today is that our grid is not able to support many electric devices because of peak-load times. Even if I wanted today to decarbonise the heat in a home, I would not be able to
3350 do it because the grid is not supporting it in certain places. Are the funding requirements of modernisation of fleet included in projections? I do not believe they were.

Again, the realities of making it happen, we have not seen any implications in terms of funding of what it would mean. So to some extent I am concerned, because what I do not want us to be doing is greenwashing. I do not want to sign to something which actually does not have real
3355 substance behind it. Unfortunately, with this policy letter, this is what I see. I do not really see the substance behind the actual themes in terms of how are we actually going to get there. How much money we need to do that. How many people and resources we need to do that. It is not there.

What I was expecting from a Pathway to net zero is actually to provide that substance to show us how we are going to do it. So while in principle I agree with the direction of travel, which to some
3360 extent is – in terms of the targets, we have achieved the targets because of the interconnector; it is meaningless. But I just do not see the substance behind this policy letter, which is what I was expecting.

I think the other part of it is that having been in planning, having been on Economic Development, there are areas which affect our mandate, but there has not been any engagement
3365 with other Committees in coming up, I think, with this policy letter. This is what I am afraid of, is that if we are serious about the sustainability agenda, it has to be an all-Government effort. It cannot be something that is designed quietly by a Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure*.

So, for example, on building efficiency that we have just talked about, there has not been any engagement whatsoever with the Planning Committee on this; so no engagement whatsoever. So
3370 how can we be designing a realistic pragmatic pathway to net zero with one of the key considerations being the building efficiency when no engagement whatsoever has taken place with the Committee *for Development & Planning Authority*.

So I just feel it is a classic end-of-term policy letter, which is not really saying very much, whether we approve it or not. We do not approve it, it is almost to some extent meaningless. I just feel there
3375 is some greenwashing going on with this policy. I do not want to sign up to greenwashing. I want real stuff making happen and making sure this also does not detract us from the key priorities we have got to focus on next term properly, which is building homes.

I am very unsure about this policy letter. To be honest, whether it is approved or not actually does not matter. It literally does not matter because the only thing it is saying is the next reporting
3380 is going to be in seven years' time. I will listen to the rest of the debate, but I do not want to sign up to a greenwashing policy letter without actual substance that I was really seeking that this was bringing.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oliver.

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Deputy Oliver: Thank you.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller probably looked at my speech, I think, with some of the things. (*Laughter*) I will start that the Development & Planning were not consulted, just to confirm that. The DPA have done a lot of work on this without this actually being agreed or anything.

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Deputy de Lisle was talking about the energy efficiency on buildings. Well, we have actually exempt all of that, so if you want to put insulation on your house you can; you do not need planning permission with that. So we have tried to make it a lot easier.

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The only thing we did not do, much to my regret, is windows. Windows really are the bane of my life. I wish we had exempt them but I did not quite have the support of my Committee on that one, particularly on houses. Just because, I think, windows are actually the biggest loss of heat and here we are not allowing people to upgrade them as easily as they could if they were exempted. They can still go through the planning process and do it, but it is not as easy as if they were exempt.

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I disagree with Deputy Kazantseva-Miller on the parts where – with the building taking away from houses. I do not think this will take away from building houses in the slightest. I think you have two types of developers. You have developers who go out and build houses and you have developers who make extension and new one-build of houses. So I do not think that would be a problem at all.

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Deputy Leadbeater and the policy letter talks about introducing EPCs. When I first read that I was just like, oh no, because I could just see that we go through this very complex thing like England do, and some of the questions are just completely pointless and have no relevance to Guernsey. So I really hope that we make it really Guernsey-relevant, if we are going to do it. Because one thing that does worry me is that Jersey got EPCs and when you look at a lot of companies in England, if they are going to buy a property over there, they look at the EPCs a lot, particularly in London. They are very EPC driven.

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It can actually really affect the value of that property. When they are looking at how their EPCs are done it does not match up. So we have to be quite careful about how we do that and making sure that actually we are not putting Guernsey at a disadvantage with that. I totally agree with what other people have said regarding the substance of this policy letter. There was part of me that went, okay, if we do not agree this, what is the cost of not doing this? We have to protect. We cannot just blindly go in and say, 'You know what? Our Island does not matter, we can just be exempt from everything, particularly if some of the Asian countries are not following this.'

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When I came down to it, I was just like, well actually this is for the future of really our children and making sure we are looking after our Island, to protect it. Then I came back to: is this policy letter actually really going to help? I think my conclusion was actually I am not sure it is. I think a lot of these will actually be done whether we agree to this policy letter or not. I always think if a policy letter does not get through, would I be upset about it? On this occasion I really actually do not think I would be because I think, whether this is agreed or not, we are still going to be continuing to better the Island and to better the energy efficiencies and particularly on our homes, which is the number one that this policy letter says.

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People want cheaper energy costs coming out of their house. I just do not think this policy letter is actually going to do what it says on the tin, so I am a bit disappointed with it.

Thank you, sir.

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The Bailiff: Well no one else is rising, so I will turn back to the President, Deputy de Sausmarez to reply to the debate, please.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

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I will try to make this closing speech shorter than my one before lunch. I am very sorry about keeping everyone away from their food. Deputy Murray got the ball rolling. He talked about grid stability and costs. I think it is important to point out, again, this has been independently verified

by Guernsey Electricity's own economic analysis and modelling. It has confirmed that the Siemens assessment that decarbonisation route is much less expensive than the status quo approach is the case.

3440 So that is a very good thing compared to the alternative. It does show, again, another verifiable independent source telling us we are on the right track there. Grid stability, yes, we are paying a lot of attention to that. Grid management is part of the system requirement regardless of the amount of renewable penetration.

3445 I think also just with reference to Sir Tony Blair, he was not advocating for avoiding decarbonisation. He was just talking about the way to do it. That has been the exact approach that we have taken with amazing amounts of premonition there for what he was about to say in this policy letter. He had some words on carbon dioxide. That is, of course, only one of the greenhouse gases. It is just the basis on which other gases are assessed against it for comparison and simplicity's sake. Gases such as methane are very much in the spotlight of what we are focusing on.

3450 The Net Zero Forum did come up a couple of times. I think Deputy Dyke mentioned it as well. It is not a quango. We are not paying anyone to do anything. They are not a decision-making body. This is very much following in the footsteps and adopting exactly the same approach as the very successful Energy Partnership. It is an information-sharing forum. It is really just for mutual benefit. We have found it to be very useful, in terms of that Energy Partnership and through the Energy Policy and the Electricity Strategy and, indeed, out with any policy development, just in terms of implementation.

3455 It means that actually we are creating a forum where Government and industry can learn from each other, and the community can learn from each other. It is really effective. So I would not like to characterise it as a quango. It could not be further from it. It is just a really helpful forum that comes at little to absolutely no cost. This is where the learnings can come together. Further workstreams may well come out of that, but we just do need to establish that forum first, so that we can develop it.

3460 Deputy Gollop spoke, and I thank him for his comments. He talked about an approach we had had from someone in industry. It is difficult to speak on someone else's behalf, but I think the underlying concern was that the Electricity Strategy, which is already baked into the Pathway to net zero, was not supportive of micro-renewables. But I assured him and I can assure Members that it is absolutely supporting of micro-renewables already, so I do not think that is anything that anyone needs to worry about.

3470 Yes, in terms of transport, it is very much about wider choice. I would not like to characterise it again. It is just about one particular or two particular types of transport. It is very much about broadening things out and looking at things like transport as a service, mobility as a service, and that kind of thing, so sharing models, etc.

3475 Deputy Gollop talked about his concern that people might see some of these things as a burden. I think he was talking about maybe household appliances or something like that. But I would say that this is a key difference between what we do here in Guernsey and what other jurisdictions do, because we not require anyone to do anything. We have not been in anyway heavy-handed. So the only people making those choices are making a choice to do so. They are exercising their right as consumers and many people do choose to adopt greener appliances and products. So we are seeing that, but there is nothing for people to feel as though it is a burden, because we are not imposing anything on anyone. That has been a really specific and explicit choice, and consumers choose it for this type of technology for the benefits it brings them. For example, energy efficiency measures can improve people's quality of living in their own home. They can reduce energy bills. They can improve health outcomes. They can make just the home environment more comfortable. So consumers do choose some of these products and indeed services for good reasons independently, but certainly Government in Guernsey is not in the habit of foisting anything on anyone in that respect.

3480 Deputy Dudley-Owen, she was disappointed at the lack of progress on the natural environment. I am just doing this off the top of my head because I did not have pre-warning of this, but off the top of my head, we have set up the Nature Commission. What they achieve is not outwith of the

efforts of Government, but very much because of the efforts of Government. I attend Nature Commission meetings on a very regular basis. We provide them with the support.

3490 I think the establishment of the Nature Commission has been a very good thing. It has been a step forward. We have also put in place a Pesticide Action Plan. Again, that works across Committee and with third-sector communities. It has helped us to attract £1 million worth of inward investment into Guernsey, which will produce globally significant data. We have introduced water quality legislation. We have done a Marine Biosecurity Plan. We are working on a Marine Spatial Plan. We have done a whole series of Species and Habitat Action Plans.

3495 There is an exciting project about seabirds that I do not think I am in a position to talk about. Our Dairy policy letter had a big focus on a transition supporting our farmers to transition to more regenerative farming practice, more sustainable practices. So that is a just a quick list off the top of my head. Had I had longer to think about it, I could have probably made a significantly longer list.

3500 We maybe have not been as good at shouting about it. Maybe that is where we have been going wrong, but there has been a lot of focus in terms of the natural environment. I know that I and the rest of the Committee wholeheartedly agree that it is a very important area. That is why we have been doing a lot of work on it.

I completely agree with her that it does not make environment sense for people to ditch a petrol or diesel vehicle in good condition in favour of a brand new EV, and that is why we do not incentivise that. Again, we do not take this heavy-handed approach. We have been more focused on enabling actions. So things like publicly accessible EV-charging infrastructure, so that for people who do choose to, and we do know that there are a lot of people who choose to switch to electric vehicles, again, for whatever reasons that they themselves choose to consider, that we are making it easy for them to do so.

3505 I think it is worth bearing in mind that while she is absolutely right that we are not too bad, again there are always improvements. It is also noteworthy that transport is by far the biggest source of our emissions. Our Climate Change Policy is very conscious of the emissions hierarchy and offshore emissions. It is far more responsible than many other people's climate change policies because of that.

3515 Top of the tree is avoid and I never pass up an opportunity to sing the praises of our Waste Strategy, because we get so much praise for it on the international stage and we are held up as an example of best practice in that respect. That is because that Waste Strategy is indeed predicated on that hierarchy where we avoid emissions and we do not create any waste that can be avoided. That is what that is all about. Obviously then we move down the hierarchy. We are pretty good at the recycling bit as well.

3520 Deputy Helyar, I totally agree it is not a moral crusade. It has not been. It never should be. That is exactly why we have taken this approach, precisely because we are focused on keeping costs down, improving quality of life and those kinds of benefits rather than foisting anything on anyone. I will come back to Proposition 1 at the end.

3525 Deputy Dyke, the rest of the world is in an energy transition. Again, it is not a moral crusade. Much of this is driven by the economics because actually it is in people's commercial best interest to move to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources. I think that is, again, a point worth reiterating.

3530 The reason businesses are often well ahead of governments is because there is considerable economic advantage in some of these. I do not think they are necessarily doing it for any altruistic reasons. Many of them are doing it because it does benefit their bottom line. We are very much on the case with flood defences and the other kinds of things that he mentioned. Quality of life, that is exactly what we are focused on here.

3535 So the Net Zero Forum again, he was one of the people that touched on this. I would say that actually, as we do with most of our policy development, we have done this very much hand in glove with key stakeholders, including industry. There have been a lot of calls for this Government-led approach and this organisational focus. So I think the Net Zero Forum has got a lot of benefit. It is something that we can benefit from. It is something where we can road test ideas and get good

3540 feedback from industry. Yes, I think people might have got a slightly wrong impression about what it was.

Housing standards, a few people mentioned housing standards. Again, the focus is very much on reducing costs for householders. I will come back to housing standards because Deputy Haskins mentioned them, as did Deputy Leadbeater.

3545 The EDF negotiations, I am afraid I cannot provide in this public forum a running commentary on the negotiations, but what I probably can say is I think his doomsday scenario is extremely unlikely to materialise. I think it is extremely unlikely but, if it did, basically the mandate at the moment is that we would have to resort, in any case, to the lowest cost option. So if the cost of imported energy were to go absolutely through the roof, which again I have to stress I do not think
3550 is in any way a realistic likelihood, then it would probably result in us producing more power on Island. It is fairly simple in that respect, but I would reassure him that I think it is incredibly unlikely for a whole host of reasons. But I am afraid publicly I cannot go much further than that.

EPCs, they are an assessment tool and they are really helpful to householders because they provide a really practical list of options weighted in preferential order. They take into account the cost of taking certain measures and they analyse the benefits. They are very useful to householders.
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Deputy de Lisle, again, I think Deputy de Lisle was maybe a little bit ungenerous about what we have managed to achieve because I would like to remind him that we have actually introduced, for example, water quality legislation which Guernsey did not have before, things like that, and the Electricity Strategy. I do appreciate he was the only person not to vote in support of that, but anyway
3560 it was generally agreed to be a significant step forward and it has enabled us to do a lot of work on offshore renewables, for example. Again, we have done a lot of work in terms of coastal defences and transport infrastructure and the provision of various other things.

In terms of micro-renewables, which I know has been a focus for Deputy de Lisle for a while, he is talking about, 'Well, where are people going to get the money to do this?' Exactly, that is the question that we want to further explore in this policy letter. There could be various ways.
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We know what other jurisdictions do. We actually have a really close working relationship with other jurisdictions. Some of this is through the British-Irish Council, but we actually have a smaller Crown Dependencies group, which meets more regularly. We talk about all of these kinds of initiatives. It is really useful because actually we are all at different places and we have all tried slightly different approaches. We have a lot that we can usefully learn from the Isle of Man and Jersey about what does work, what does not work so well, and because they are similar jurisdictions in some respects to us, we can have more confidence that it is likely to be more applicable. That has been very useful.
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I would say that he did try to re-litigate the Electricity Strategy debate to a large extent, but I would say that we do have to be mindful – who was it that mentioned this near the beginning? Maybe Deputy Murray - of grid stability. So we could not just switch everything to micro-renewables, because it does not work like that.
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If we have huge amounts of self-generated electricity, that is absolutely great at the height of summer, but it does not necessarily help us at 6 p.m. on a winter's evening, etc. So we do need to ensure grid stability and that we have got that base-load aspect covered as well because, of course, renewables are variable. They have an awful lot of benefits, but there are some challenges as well in terms of integrating them into a system.
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Deputy Soulsby actually highlighted through her anecdote, her personal experience, the importance of skills. Indeed that is something we are very much working on with the Guernsey Institute and industry. Yes, the carbon capture technology could, absolutely, be vital for net zero by 2050. But that tech and innovation is still very much a work in progress. Again, we are not leaping to any conclusion. I think the advantage of taking this approach is we do not have to come up with all the solutions now, and I will come back to this in response to Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.
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But, before that, Deputy Leadbeater had concerns about the imposition on the rental market. Goodness I am being asked to submit feedback to Microsoft, I think I will leave that for another
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moment. Actually, I thought it was really interesting, the juxtaposition of Deputy Leadbeater's comments with Deputy Haskins' comments, because they are two sides of a very important coin.

3595 Because we have housing and energy and climate change in our mandate, we were very sensitive to the potential impacts around any impositions on the private rental sector. That is exactly why we have taken a more cautious approach. That speaks to Deputy Haskins's concern or question about, 'Well, why are you using language like potential eventual minimum energy standards?' Two reasons, first of all we do not have enough data to understand what they might be in the Guernsey context. That is really important.

3600 Even if we wanted to, we could not put in place minimum energy standards now because we do not have the data; we do not know what that would look like in the Guernsey context, to be realistic and workable. But the second is, we are very mindful of an industry that is adapting at the moment to some legislative change. We are very alive to those concerns. We do think we have to approach in a way that is sympathetic to the industry.

3605 This is exactly the benefit of the approach that we are proposing. It is a suck it and see. We are going to have to see. We would not want to come out and go, 'Ta-da! Here is our great big policy. It is all done and all the t's are crossed and the i's are dotted and we have everything figured out between now and 2050'. We have not. But if we had, we would have got so much of it wrong. So we are taking this different approach. It is much more iterative. It is much more practical.

3610 In respect to some of Deputy Haskins's other comments, I think there is a very significant difference between minimum energy standards for new builds and any minimum energy standards that you might want to apply retrospectively. It is a very different beast. But, yes, to give Deputy Haskins the reassurance, of course, minimum energy standards would return to the States. Anything that requires legislation will obviously have to return to the States, but minimum energy standards would.

3615 Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, she is right that the interconnector was indeed a major step-change in terms of our emissions as an Island. But I think it is notable that actually our emissions have been going in the right direction ever since. So I do not think it is fair to say that that is the only thing. It definitely has been the most significant contributor, but actually some of the decisions that even this Assembly has made in terms of the Electricity Strategy, for example, are a very important contributor as well.

3620 To make sure that we can actually guard against re-carbonising, because had we not supported the pathway that we supported through the Electricity Strategy the Island actually, given the extension and the status quo, would have found itself in a position of having to re-carbonise its electricity supply. So actually the decisions that this Assembly has made, along with a host of others, have contributed to that trend. That is why we are on target to meet our 2030 target.

3625 Yes, also things like the Waste Strategy, that has been another big step change actually. If you look at the greenhouse gas emissions and the trends and profiles in that, you can see that actually decisions made in this Assembly have been very significant. I am aware that I am about to keep people late again unless I hurry up. To answer Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's challenge: why have we not got more substantive detail? The answer is because we do not yet know what the best detail for the Island will look like because there is more work needed.

3630 We want to do things in a way where we pilot stuff, we trial it, we start it at a small scale. It is a much less risky approach, because we are not necessarily having to expend big capital amounts into big changes and take a gamble on it. We can do things on a smaller scale, see if they work. If they do, scale them up. If they do not, let us adapt them and bring them back and let us keep iterating.

3635 We think it is a really practical approach and that is why we have not done this big reveal of, 'And here is every nut and bolt that we are going to need to put in place between now and 2050.' Not least, because where the technology is right now cannot actually get us to that final destination. So we need to be in a position to take advantage and that is why we have put in place these seven-year cycles. Again, it is just a really practical thing. It gives us enough time to iterate but also provides

enough chance for the Assembly to make sure that the Island is going in a direction that it wants it to be going in and make any adjustments to that course.

3645 We have actually worked far closer with Planning than, I think, the members of Planning that spoke perhaps appreciate. We have actually had a member of Planning working with us for 18 months on exactly this. The reason we have not consulted with the DPA is because we are not here today in this policy letter proposing specific standards. But as we do say in the policy letter, that is absolutely the next step. So in order to develop those specific housing standards for new builds, that is the conversation that will take place. We are very grateful to the input we have had
3650 from actually across a whole range of different service areas, and Planning in particular. So I do thank them for that.

Really, I think, just to round everything off, Deputy Oliver was talking about – yes, she mentioned EPCs, making sure they work for Guernsey. That is exactly the purpose of why we put them in there, because you cannot just pick up an EPC off the shelf in the UK and expect it to work here. It just
3655 does not. She is absolutely right in that and that is why we need to do this particular bit of work.

For anyone that has expressed some scepticism or lack of enthusiasm for Proposition 1, what I would say is that voting against it – say what you like about what you think voting for it would do. We think that that is a good vote of confidence in taking this pragmatic support.

If Proposition 1 is not passed, we revert to a two-year cycle. So I would suggest that actually the
3660 seven-year cycle is the more pragmatic approach to take but, more importantly, if Proposition 1 is not supported that sends out a very specific signal in its own right.

I do not think that signal would be particularly welcome in terms of demonstrating our commitment to our international obligations, etc., which do play a material role in things like trade agreements. For those reasons, I would ask the Assembly to support the Propositions.

3665 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Well, Members of the States, we are going to have two votes. One of Proposition 1, one of Proposition 2. I would invite the Greffier to open the voting on Proposition 1, please.

3670 *There was a recorded vote.*

Carried – Pour 29, Contre 6, Ne vote pas 3, Did not vote 1, Absent 1

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Aldwell, Sue	Dyke, John	Helyar, Mark	Inder, Neil	Roffey, Peter
Blin, Chris	Ferbrache, Peter	Hill, Edward		
Brouard, Al	Haskins, Sam	Snowdon, Alexander		
Burford, Yvonne	Le Tissier, Chris			
Bury, Tina	Mahoney, David			
Cameron, Andy	Murray, Bob			
de Lisle, David				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dudley-Owen, Andrea				
Fairclough, Simon				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Le Tocq, Jonathan				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Meerveld, Carl				
Moakes, Nick				
Oliver, Victoria				
Parkinson, Charles				
Prow, Robert				
Queripel, Lester				

Soulsby, Heidi
 St Pier, Gavin
 Taylor, Andrew
 Trott, Lyndon
 Vermeulen, Simon

3675 **The Bailiff:** In respect of Proposition 1, there voted in favour 29 Members, 6 Members voted against, 3 Members abstained, 2 Members were absent at the vote. I will declare Proposition 1 carried.

We will move on to a vote on Proposition 2. I will ask the Greffier to open the voting on Proposition 2, please.

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There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 33, Contre 3, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 1, Absent 1

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

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The Bailiff: In respect of Proposition 2, there voted in favour 33 Members, 3 Members voted against, 2 Members abstained, same 2 Members absent. I will declare Proposition 2 also duly carried. We will now adjourn until 9.30 a.m. in the morning.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.35 p.m.

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